A case for Coach Garfinkel: ‘Decision making’ and what we already know
Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to deconstruct the decision making process(es) of sports coaches through the writings of the sociologist Harold Garfinkel. Specifically, we draw upon Garfinkel’s (1967) writings on jurors’ decision making to challenge current cognitivist bound conceptualisation to better interpret coaches’ sense making, in terms of why and how they make the decisions they do. The significance of the work lies in further deciphering the meaningful structures of daily coaching lives; within whose limits coaching decisions unfold.

In terms of structure, following a brief review of literature related to coaches' decision making, the principal tenets of Garfinkel's work are outlined. This gives way to an examination of Erving Goffman’s work of ‘frames of reference’ in terms of how coaches’ decision making can be developed and improved before a reflective conclusion summarises the main points made and their implications for future coach education.

Key words: Garfinkel; Decision making; Coaching; Coach Education
Coach Garfinkel and decision making

Introduction

Close to 15 years ago sports coaching began to be conceptualised as a negotiated and contested activity (e.g., Potrac & Jones, 1999). Building on initial work (Jarvie, 1990), the case was made that social thought was the under-appreciated, yet crucial, ‘invisible ingredient’ in coaches’ knowledge. Since then, through both theoretical and empirical study, coaching has increasingly come to be accepted as relational and disputed. This has included recourse to the work of thinkers such as Michel Foucault (Denison, 2007; Johns & Johns, 2000), Pierre Bourdieu (Cushion & Jones, 2006), Erving Goffman (Jones, 2006a), Carl Rogers (Nelson, Cushion, Potrac & Groom., 2014) and Anthony Giddens (Purdy, Potrac & Jones, 2008) among others. In many ways, each theorist has given a distinctive, valuable perspective on the complex world of coaching, whilst leaving further corners to be discovered by others “from slightly different angles” (Stones, 1998: 5). Such work involves a general attempt to ‘decode’ a culture through uncovering the “constitutive rules of everyday behaviour” (Goffman, 1974: 5).

A perspective yet to be engaged with in this respect is that of ethno-methodology as encapsulated in the work of Harold Garfinkel. Garfinkel’s writings explored the various properties of conduct, as well as the conditions and reasoning procedures responsible for such behaviours. It involved an exploration into the background knowledge and shared understanding we have that make social interactions and relationships work (Garfinkel, 1967). Social order was subsequently portrayed as “an indexical, practical, contingent ‘ongoing accomplishment’, resting upon the ‘organized artful ways’ that ordinary people engage in everyday life” (Linstead, 2006: 400).

The purpose of this paper is to do more than merely introduce the work of Garfinkel to coaching. Rather, it is to articulate how Garfinkel’s thinking can help explain the social processes coaches undergo when making decisions. In doing so, it considers and highlights
some of the rules and features of coaches’ decision making, thus better interpreting their
sense making in terms of why and how coaches take the decisions they do. In doing so, it
builds on the earlier work of Jones and colleagues in positioning coaching as a relational
activity, where such relations are developed as part of a socio-historical process (Jones,

The significance of the paper lies in providing an alternative to the current cognitively
rooted self-contained conceptualisation of coaches’ decision making. The process portrayed
here has been considered akin to logical chains of propositions that can be unproblematically
elaborated into systems of knowledge (e.g., Abraham & Collins, 2011). Alternatively,
in marking a further attempt to deconstruct coaches’ tacit knowledge, the case made in this
paper is that coaches’ (or anyone’s) decision making is rooted in what Crossley (2011) termed
’sedimented interaction’. It is a belief that no decisions are taken solely in the present,
or within closed self-centered individual circles (Engström, 2000), but also draw upon a
"shared and (broadly) agreed past" (Crossley, 2011: 36). The present, therefore, is never
considered indifferent from the past. Indeed, this is where we differ from much previous
writings on coaches’ decision making which have utilised ‘classical’, ‘naturalistic’ (Lyle, 2010)
and most recently ‘nested’ (Abraham & Collins, 2011) decision making models to make sense
of coaches’ thought processes. Although such work has acknowledged that decisions are
somewhat arrived at through a sense of ‘having been here before’, such a position is a far cry
from Garfinkel’s (1967) assertion that all human action rests on the primordial fact that
persons are able to both make sense of and act on a shared understanding of circumstances
and context. Hence, coaches’ decision making is brought into the realms of ‘social reality’.
Similarly, portraying individuals’ cognitive action as rooted in socio-historical structures
enables a better understanding of why we behave as we do, and what alternatives are possible
(Lemert, 1997). Borrowing from Schutz (1962), the significance of the work also lies in
further deciphering the meaningful structures of daily coaching lives, within whose limits professional decisions unfold. In this respect, coaches’ decision making is located in its social roots and relationships.

In terms of structure, following a brief review of literature related to coaches’ decision making, the principal tenets of Garfinkel's work are outlined. Borrowing from his writings on jurors’ decision making, their application and usefulness to coaching and coaches are then developed. This is particularly in terms of how people make decisions “while maintaining a healthy respect for the routine features of the social order” (Garfinkel, 1967: 104). The section concludes with recourse to Erving Goffman’s work on ‘frames of reference’ in terms of how coaches’ decision making can be developed and improved. Finally, a reflective conclusion summarises the main points made and their implications for future coach education.

The current situation

In a recent article, Abraham and Collins (2011) postulated that the process of ‘doing coaching’ was as much a decision-making exercise as anything else. Their case involved an evaluation of both classical decision making (CDM) and naturalistic decision making (NDM), the predominant conceptualisations of decision making currently invoked in sports coaching. Unsurprisingly, both CDM and NDM (as well as a plethora of other acronyms denoting related sub-disciplines) have roots in the behavioural sciences (Lipshitz, Klein, Orasanu & Salas, 2001). CDM is akin to a normative model of rational behaviour: a model which emphasises elements of choice, of ‘input-output’ orientation, comprehensiveness, and context-free formalisation (Lipshitz et al., 2001). NDM on the other hand, grew out of a 1989 conference in Dayton Ohio, aimed to understand how people make situated decisions that are meaningful and familiar to them. The focus here was on representing directly observed
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Borrowing from notions of cognitive psychology, NDM marked a move away from decision making as a domain-independent general perspective, to a knowledge-based approach undertaken by those with substantial experience, thus including a stage of perception and recognition of situations (Klein, 2008). Having taken the qualities and limitations of both into account, Abraham and Collins (2011) subsequently argued the merits of a Professional Judgement and Decision Making (PJDM) model as the “most integrated and parsimonious pathway to improved coaching” (Abraham & Collins, 2011: 373). It was posited that the PJDM resembled a balance incorporating the strength of both approaches; a form of ‘nested thinking’ linking micro, meso and macro level goals.

Although both useful and interesting, we believe that the argument presented in this work can be critiqued in many ways. Most notably in the anaemic attention given to the limited options a coach can actually select a course of action from. In this respect, too much primacy is given to (1) measurements of options against ‘external criteria’, (2) the influence of ‘what –if’ or ‘pre-mortem’ thinking, (3) of hitting planned ‘important performance and development markers’, and (4) of comprising a rather instrumental reflection level of ‘what did and didn’t work’. An similar critique of such thinking was previously articulated by Simon (1956) through his concept of ‘satisficing’; an idea introduced to the sports coaching literature by Bowes and Jones (2006). Simon’s point here was that in choice making situations, “people have the goal of ‘satisficing’ rather than maximising” (Schwartz, Ward, Monerosso, Lyubomirsky, White & Lehman, 2002). Taking into account the complexity of social life, Simon argued that what most of us do is not to pursue the best option when deciding upon a course of action, but a ‘good enough’ one. Others, meanwhile, have claimed that people make decisions not from a ‘best option’ perspective, but from one motivated by the avoidance of potential regret or loss aversion (see Schwartz et al., [2002] for a fuller discussion here). Schwartz et al. (2002) also problematized the notion of ‘best possible
option, as being a relative rather than an absolute one. Here, they argued that the
‘maximiser’s’ domain of assessment was not a “finite and transparent set of possibilities that
allowed for complete and unambiguous judgement” (p.1184). Rather, it is one of social
comparison; that is, people perceive how well they are doing relative to relevant others.
Finally, here, Lipshitz et al. (2001), in deciphering why expert decision makers appeared to
think the first option considered was invariably the best one, argued that such individuals
were using their expertise to create a ‘good move’ as the first one contemplated. This was as
opposed to generating a course of action from a pool of deliberated options. The point of
presenting this brief critique is not to totally decry the contributions made by the cognitive
psychologists in this area. Rather, it is to highlight where the attention in the field has been
focused and, in doing so, emphasize where such investigations can be further developed.

**Everyday decision-making: The case for coach Garfinkel**

According to Garfinkel, although context and individuality promote agential action, we all
make decisions through respecting the routine features of the social order (i.e., the order
witnessed in society). Garfinkel’s work then, recognised everyday life as an achievement; an
achievement by which ordinary people, through shared understandings, compose perceived
logical actions. Meaningful actions, regardless if they involved conflict or cooperation, were
considered impossible without these shared understandings. Taken as such, the decisions
made by coaches are not done in a social vacuum or from an unlimited range of options.
Rather, they are inextricably linked to the social interaction in which they are embedded. In
this respect, inter-actors draw on conventions in order to communicate meaningfully, or “to
establish a footing in the interaction” (Crossley, 2011: 33). Any decisions made follow a
‘taken-for-granted’ set of norms, and can only be made apparent through those norms. Again,
such norms are not newly and immediately contextually created, as such structures comprise
"a scene that was there before they (members) came upon it (made by others), and will be there after they leave (again made by others)” (Rawls, 2002: 7). However, lest we paint an overly deterministic picture here, such adherence to the previous does not preclude improvisation and innovation. On the contrary, according to Strauss (1993), innovation is required when conventions break down making interaction problematic. Indeed, taken that no two situations have or can ever be identical, innovation and creativity are always evident in interaction, although, by necessity, they draw on convention. In terms of coaching then, what matters is the normative order which can be identified to form the basis of a coach’s decisions; that is, the stitching together of knowledge between ‘what is seen’ and ‘what is known’ (Lynch, 2013).

So, what do coaches decide on? What are the decisions they take? Some of these decisions include judging what kinds of athletes are worthy of what kind of information (naturally, coaches don't say the same things to the same people). Then, come decisions related to the 'social ordering' of athletes; that is, some athletes need and get more attention, while the compliance and engagement of others are more valued. Similarly, in recommending strategies and remedies, coaches must determine which measures to make matters right (and when). Here, they decide upon a myriad of contextual events, the causes of those events, before considering suitable remedies and solutions to deal with such occurrences.

More specifically, coaches must firstly decide upon what actually happened or appeared to happen in any event at any given point in time. This is a decision about 'what an issue is', compared to what is irrelevant or less relevant in relation to the task at hand. Judgement here must be exercised over what is important for some athletes (e.g., the more or less able) to hear, and what the general group need to hear. Similarly, decisions must be made about the advice given in terms of what should ideally happen, and what is contextually more likely to happen; between an amount of information that covers needs, but is not too much;
between specificity in terms of an event past, and generality so it becomes applicable to future use. Taken as such, the field is complex to say the least.

So, how do coaches make such and similar complex decisions?

Although different courses of action present themselves in the process of making decisions, according to Garfinkel (1967), the claims of such options are sorted through adherence to 'accepted' relational schemes. Here, if the interpretation makes sense, or more sense than the competing options, then the course of action is adopted. In this sense, it is treated as the 'actual' or most likely option to succeed, as opposed to the 'possible' or the 'fanciful'. According to Garfinkel (1967), this produces a "corpus of knowledge that has, in part, the form of a chronological story, and, in part, the form of a set of general and empirical relationships" (p.107). It is this 'corpus' that permits coaches to infer the legitimacy of their expectations and decisions.

Coaches make decisions then primarily by consulting the consistency of constructed 'common sense' models. In doing so, they consider past experiences of somewhat 'being there before'; an adherence to what Bowes and Jones (2006) termed their existing experiential structures. Such structures are often described as 'scripts' or 'frames', referring to the powerful influence that past interpersonal encounters (themselves naturally framed by wider social scripts) have on current behaviour. Here, it has been argued that such experiences function as cognitive maps which help individuals navigate their social world (Fiske & Taylor, 1984).

In addition to referring to interpersonal schemas derived from repeated relationship experiences, coaches’ decision making has also been found to be influenced by what Garfinkel termed a consideration of ‘what kind of people accept what kind of message’. This was clearly witnessed in the earlier work of Jones and colleagues (Jones, Armour & Potrac,
2004), who postulated that coaches often (and consciously) ‘act like coaches’ to function effectively. The onus here was squarely on the perception of the audience in terms of what is expected within a role, as opposed to culturally unaffected decision-making. It is a perspective which recognises that embedded within any decision making processes are culturally presupposed standards, which have to be adhered to; a perception of some consistency of shared meaning.

In many ways, this was the central tenet of Schutz's (1962) text 'The problem of social reality'. Here, it was claimed that at any moment in time, each individual has a 'stock of knowledge at hand'; a stock constructed both from biography and the "typifications of the common sense world" (Natanson, 1962: xxviii). Consequently, one's biography was seen as responsible for locating and interpreting possibilities and actions, while an actor's situation was taken as possessing a particular history; "a sedimentation of previous subjective experiences" (Natanson, 1962: xxx). Hence, what can be considered new and different can only be recognised as such because it arises against a background of the familiar (Natanson, 1962). The stockpiled fund of typifications, in turn, become the basis and information source for subsequent actions. Indeed, it is only through the common assumptions generated through the shared inter-subjective stock of knowledge that joint projects with others are made possible. For Schutz (1962) then, knowledge, and the decision making it engendered, was socially rooted, distributed and informed (Natanson, 1962). Any act of decision making was considered as being necessarily grounded in an inter subjective reality where people are linked to others through common influence and meaning. Consequently, what can be considered as guiding coaches' decision making are the 'normative orders' of interaction; and it is to a further examination of these that we now turn.

What concern us here are the social structuring of coaches' decision-making, in terms of the required uniformities or patterns for self and others' sense making. According to
Garfinkel (1967), such normative orders can be considered the rules governing perceived
effective decision-making. In a coaching context, such rules include (1) a temporal element in
terms of respecting the time that it takes to arrive at decisions; (2) that decisions do not
require as a condition the adequate exercise of doubt as if a coach knows nothing; (3) that
decisions do not require the adoption of a neutral attitude towards everyday relations; (4) that
a coach can rely on an acceptance of taken-for-granted contextual knowledge and roles,
particularly in terms of the ways that authority, competence and knowledge are usually
distributed among the group; and (5) that other contextual actors are assumed to share the
same common sense social models.

Such practical social thinking, however, conflicts or contests with another set of
uniformities which also struggle for legitimacy within coaches' decision making processes; an
'official coaching line' (i.e., that drawn from more formal or 'given' guidelines or policy).
These include the expectation and belief that for a 'good' coach (1) choices vary
independently of sympathy (i.e., a coach’s decisions should be rational and not emotional);
(2) the 'evidence' (which is socially agreed upon) is the only ground for a decision; (3) that a
coach’s view is interchangeable with that of 'any man' (or woman) (i.e., a coach’s decisions
should be obvious and largely understandable to the layperson); (4) that he or she is
considered neutral without an identifiable position in the eyes of players (and others) among
others (i.e., a coach should be objective). Coaches learn this official line from a variety of
places; from the linear discourse of coach education programmes, from a socialisation
process where they are guided what they think they should think, and from what coaches tell
each other.

For fear of presenting an overly deterministic portrayal here, coaches’ agency is also
often seen to emerge in the conflict and contradiction between what they are asked to adhere
to through coach education programmes (the ‘official’ line) and what they actually do in
practice (their ‘constructed’ line). Through the former, and the often unproblematic models offered to them, coaches are regularly asked to change their official rules of social judgements. That they rarely do so, has been borne out by numerous studies (e.g., Chesterfield, Jones & Potrac., 2010; Piggott, 2012). Hence, even though they explain and express decision making and related procedures in objective terms, evidence strongly suggests that, for the more difficult decisions in particular, coaches’ scamper back to the tried and tested formulas of daily life (Chesterfield et al., 2010). This even stretches as far back as to their initial situational clarification, an active step in the manipulation both of the problem and the proposed course of action (Garfinkel, 1967: 111). Hence, even though the rules of everyday and the rules of the official line are both entertained, despite often claiming one approach, coaches tend to ‘live’ another.

A further problem with current rationalistic conceptualisation of coaches’ decision making is that it presupposes a certainty of outcome. Accounts in this regard tend to stress what decisions were expected of coaches and when they should be taken; that is, coaches know what is coming and they use knowledge to either secure or negate the ‘known’ future. Such a vision conflicts with recent work into sports coaching from an activity perspective, which has better attempted to understand the unity of consciousness and practice (Jones, Edwards & Filho Viotto, 2014; Bowes & Jones, 2006). Here, contextual practice is considered to be created by, and to act upon, individuals rather than simply the canvas upon which that activity, through ‘objective’ decision making, is painted (Leont’ev, 1978). Taken as such, coaching is considered to play out as situated action (Jones, Bowes & Kingston, 2010) where interactions instigate meaning making processes (Jones et al., 2014). Rather than pre-empting action, such decisions are considered embedded in action, where participation is seen as crucial in structuring thought.
In giving credence to socio-historic processes, according to Garfinkel, a person is 95% a juror before they become a juror. Although to say the same for coaching would probably be doing coach education something of a disservice, plenty of evidence exists that biography and history exert a much greater influence over coaches' learning and practice than any formal preparation programmes (Light & Hassanin, in press). Such a finding, however, should not be considered surprising. This is because, as argued by Garfinkel, most people make professional decisions using the same beliefs, values and processes that they utilise in the course of their ordinary everyday affairs. To consider that such process can be influenced by 'quick fix' coach education programmes would appear naive to say the least.

Such a perspective gives primacy to what Child (1940-1) referred to as the 'intrinsic sociality of mind'. Here, Child made the case that society's influence "extends into the structures of human experience in the form of ideas, concepts and systems of thought" (McCarthy, 1996: 1). The separation between individual and object, a position given pre-eminence in much cognitive influenced decision-making research, is, therefore, rejected. From such a perspective, human experience, inclusive of a sense of 'having been here before', is constituted by cultural knowledge, with everything experienced having been mediated, arranged and 'priced' by the practices of the social world (McCarthy, 1996). In short, perceived objective accounts are anything but. Rather, they are embedded in, and dependent on, the socially organised occasions of their use; the social "is in the picture from the beginning" (Rawls, 2011: 280). Experience then, is only given shape and meaning through existing categories of thought and norms. Indeed, for Garfinkel (2008 [1952]), experience itself is socially organised; "we see things we expect to see" (Rawls, 2011: 279). The limitations of the cognitivists in relation to decision making is consequently highlighted. Here, any developed schemas, as given credence in NDM literature, are interrogated and exposed as being rooted in subjective, constructed culture itself. Far from possessing an
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objective nature, coaches' decision making can be seen as being forged in group existences
and collective action. Coaches don't just make decisions, they don't just look, see and weigh
options. Rather, what they see and what they decide upon are, to a considerable degree,
already shaped. In the words of the sociologist Karl Mannheim "an individual participates in
thinking further what other men have thought before him (sic.)" (1936: 3). Similarly,
impersonal reason, constitutive of a 'halo of rationality', is only another name given to
collective thought; thought accomplished or enabled through mutual orientation towards
shared rules (McCarthy, 1996; Rawls, 2011). Consequently, coaches’ making seemingly
objective decisions as encapsulated in NDM and other cognitive explanations are exposed as
being only a culturally influenced perception of 'what it was like' and 'what I did'. In
Garfinkel's (1967) words, the issue is not to do with the nature of the aforementioned stock or
corpus of knowledge, but with "the assembling [our italics] of the 'corpus' which serves as
grounds for inferring the correctness of a verdict" (p.110).

Notwithstanding the influence of culture, it's important to recognise that the
knowledge drawn on by coaches to make decisions is actively generated or produced by
them. Hence, the decisions taken with reference to such knowledge possess varying degrees
of refinement and elaboration. Considerable agency then, is seen to emerge in how coaches
engage with, interpret, and act on such knowledge. In this respect, previous demonstrations
are called upon to produce a novel variation, evolved or 'relaxed' demonstration to meet on-
going situational demands.

So, having argued that much of coaches’ decision-making lies in established
(interpretive) epistemic roots and beliefs, how can such a process be improved? We believe
that, rather than continually revisiting what works (or has worked) in terms of previous
experience, improvement is conceptualised as widening the frames of reference (or stocks of
knowledge) from which decisions can alternatively be informed. Improved decision making
thus, is considered more likely to occur by reflecting on and with new knowledge; by considering how expanded frames of reference can be put to use in solving practical problems. Similar to the work of Garfinkel, Erving Goffman’s (1974) text ‘Frame Analysis’ highlighted the point that frames, i.e., the brackets we use to define the meaning and significance of social events, provide the “accounts, excuses [and] apologies designed to reframe what follows after them” (p.16-17). For Goffman, such (social) frameworks provide background understanding for events; “what it [a frame] does can be described as ‘guided doings’” (p.22). Here, each event can be perceived in terms of a ‘primary framework’, with the framework employed providing a way of describing and making sense of the event to which it is applied. The type of framework employed then provides a way of describing or understanding “the event to which it is applied” (Goffman, 1974: 24). Thus, frames can be taken as a way of organizing experience. Although often perceived as somewhat limiting and perhaps defensively in only providing a “lore of understanding” (p.21), Goffman also cast frames as optimistic efforts whose “purpose is to recast the way in which a book is to be taken” (ibid.). Important in this notion of recasting is that of ‘keying’. This is where something already meaningful in terms of an existing framework is viewed as something else; that is, meaning is transformed into something patterned on, but independent of, the initial frame. A keying then, allows us to “determine what we really think is going on” (Goffman, 1974: 45). It also permits understanding of a particular framework in terms of another. Doing so, holds the potential to sanction the development of a new coaching grammar, allowing practitioners to better critique and deconstruct their own and others’ practice from alternative perspectives. In essence, it can give them what Goffman termed a “subversive phenomenological twist” (1974; 2). This not only encompasses seeing particular events differently, but elevating background incidents and occurrences to the fore, thus reworking or redirecting the stream of perception. In this way, ‘out of frame’ activity is given
increased credence. Consequently, not only are competent individuals considered aware of ‘frames’ and ‘rules’, they are also capable of (re)interpreting and manipulating such rules which, in turn, “allows the possibility for change” (Mote, 2001: 220). This was something more explicitly defined in Goffman’s (1967) earlier work of ‘Where the action is’ which included notions of individual reflexivity and an ‘action space’. The latter comprised of areas "where the possibilities for life changing decisions emerge and are fulfilled" (Mote, 2001: 227), with an action itself being defined as "an occasion generated by the exercise of self determination, an occasion for risk taking and grasping opportunity" (Goffman, 1967: 161).

Consequently, although appreciating the power of social frames and cultural standards, Goffman constantly alluded to the “possibility to restructure routine activity” (1967: 204) through individuals’ creative capacity to redefine contexts and happenings. The challenge for coach educators then is to use such notions as ‘keying’ and ‘alternative frameworks’ to develop coaches’ abilities to imaginatively engage with considered yet innovative decision making.

Such recasting, however, cannot be indeterminate; hence, to be credible it must pay homage to Cassier’s ‘law of continuity’, which acknowledges that "each outcome [must remain] a fulfilment of the preceding definition of the situation" (Garfinkel, 1967, p.114). Still, the point here, is that such frames of reference can be recast and reconceptualised, thus breaking free from the cramped confines of the familiar (Jones, 2006b). Indeed, this was the core case made by Jones and others in recently re-conceptualising coaching as ‘orchestration’ (Jones & Wallace, 2005), as a ‘social exchange’ (Jones & Bailey, 2011), and the coach as a ‘practical theorist’ and ‘enlightened general’ (Loland, 2011). The point was to make coaches and coach educators reflective of previously unconsidered theoretical notions, thus giving them the options to think differently about their practice and its consequences (Jones, 2006b):
To go beyond the known to new theoretical horizons, thus developing coaches’ decision making in increasingly inventive ways.

**Conclusion**

The practical implications of this paper lie in the hoped for engagement by coaching scholars and coach educators with the social nature of coaches' decision making. This is not only in terms of providing an alternative 'feel' for the strategic functions and roots of such decision making, but also in educating coaches about the boundaries of their knowledge, in terms of what and how they make the decisions they do. Indeed, this is the business of sociologists; "to try to understand our own social world by unravelling its special history" (McCarthy, 1996: 9). Through demystifying the process, coaches can be better educated to order what they already know, enabling them both to enrich existing knowledge bases while discerning where and how to develop additional ones. The work builds on the previous writings of Jones (2006b) who argued that coaches’ decision making can be made more creative through giving practitioners alternative sense-making frames of reference. Doing so, holds the potential to shift perceptions, leading to a ‘transformed view of the subject matter and landscape’ and, hence, the decisions taken in relation to them.

The paper's wider project, however, was to locate coaches’ decision making firmly within the realms of sociological thought. In this respect, it has argued that intellectual or cognitive judgements (about anything) cannot be divorced from their socio-historical contexts. In this respect, the value of the paper lies in its capacity to draw attention to itself as subject of its own inquiry; to question how an understanding of knowledge (and the subsequent decision making it engenders) can operate as a form of domination or liberation for coaches. In doing so, it further scrutinises the evident 'social turn' in sports coaching literature.
References


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