

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

A case for Coach Garfinkel: 'Decision making' and what we already know

6

7 **Abstract**

8 The purpose of this paper is to deconstruct the decision making process(es) of sports coaches
9 through the writings of the sociologist Harold Garfinkel. Specifically, we draw upon
10 Garfinkel's (1967) writings on jurors' decision making to challenge current cognitivist bound
11 conceptualisation to better interpret coaches' sense making, in terms of why and how they
12 make the decisions they do. The significance of the work lies in further deciphering the
13 meaningful structures of daily coaching lives; within whose limits coaching decisions unfold.
14 In terms of structure, following a brief review of literature related to coaches' decision
15 making, the principal tenets of Garfinkel's work are outlined. This gives way to an
16 examination of Erving Goffman's work of 'frames of reference' in terms of how coaches'
17 decision making can be developed and improved before a reflective conclusion summarises
18 the main points made and their implications for future coach education.

19

20

21 **Key words:** Garfinkel; Decision making; Coaching; Coach Education

22 **Introduction**

23 Close to 15 years ago sports coaching began to be conceptualised as a negotiated and
24 contested activity (e.g., Potrac & Jones, 1999). Building on initial work (Jarvie, 1990),
25 the case was made that social thought was the under-appreciated, yet crucial, ‘invisible
26 ingredient’ in coaches’ knowledge. Since then, through both theoretical and empirical study,
27 coaching has increasingly come to be accepted as relational and disputed. This has included
28 recourse to the work of thinkers such as Michel Foucault (Denison, 2007; Johns & Johns,
29 2000), Pierre Bourdieu (Cushion & Jones, 2006), Erving Goffman (Jones, 2006a), Carl
30 Rogers (Nelson, Cushion, Potrac & Groom., 2014) and Anthony Giddens (Purdy, Potrac &
31 Jones, 2008) among others. In many ways, each theorist has given a distinctive, valuable
32 perspective on the complex world of coaching, whilst leaving further corners to be discovered
33 by others “from slightly different angles” (Stones, 1998: 5). Such work involves a general
34 attempt to ‘decode’ a culture through uncovering the “constitutive rules of everyday
35 behaviour” (Goffman, 1974: 5).

36 A perspective yet to be engaged with in this respect is that of ethno-methodology as
37 encapsulated in the work of Harold Garfinkel. Garfinkel’s writings explored the various
38 properties of conduct, as well as the conditions and reasoning procedures responsible for such
39 behaviours. It involved an exploration into the background knowledge and shared
40 understanding we have that make social interactions and relationships work (Garfinkel,
41 1967). Social order was subsequently portrayed as “an indexical, practical, contingent ‘on-
42 going accomplishment’, resting upon the ‘organized artful ways’ that ordinary people engage
43 in everyday life” (Linstead, 2006: 400).

44 The purpose of this paper is to do more than merely introduce the work of Garfinkel
45 to coaching. Rather, it is to articulate how Garfinkel's thinking can help explain the social
46 processes coaches undergo when making decisions. In doing so, it considers and highlights

47 some of the rules and features of coaches' decision making, thus better interpreting their
48 sense making in terms of why and how coaches take the decisions they do. In doing so, it
49 builds on the earlier work of Jones and colleagues in positioning coaching as a relational
50 activity, where such relations are developed as part of a socio- historical process (Jones,
51 Edwards & Viotto Filho, 2014).

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

72 further deciphering the meaningful structures of daily coaching lives, within whose limits
73 professional decisions unfold. In this respect, coaches' decision making is located in its social
74 roots and relationships.

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

84

85 *The current situation*

86 In a recent article, Abraham and Collins (2011) postulated that the process of 'doing
87 coaching' was as much a decision-making exercise as anything else. Their case involved an
88 evaluation of both classical decision making (CDM) and naturalistic decision making
89 (NDM), the predominant conceptualisations of decision making currently invoked in sports
90 coaching. Unsurprisingly, both CDM and NDM (as well as a plethora of other acronyms
91 denoting related sub-disciplines) have roots in the behavioural sciences (Lipshitz, Klein,
92 Orasanu & Salas, 2001). CDM is akin to a normative model of rational behaviour: a model
93 which emphasises elements of choice, of 'input-output' orientation, comprehensiveness, and
94 context-free formalisation (Lipshitz et al., 2001). NDM on the other hand, grew out of a 1989
95 conference in Dayton Ohio, aimed to understand how people make situated decisions that are
96 meaningful and familiar to them. The focus here was on representing directly observed

97 behaviour. Borrowing from notions of cognitive psychology, NDM marked a move away
98 from decision making as a domain-independent general perspective, to a knowledge-based
99 approach undertaken by those with substantial experience, thus including a stage of
100 perception and recognition of situations (Klein, 2008). Having taken the qualities and
101 limitations of both into account, Abraham and Collins (2011) subsequently argued the merits
102 of a Professional Judgement and Decision Making (PJDM) model as the “most integrated and
103 parsimonious pathway to improved coaching” (Abraham & Collins, 2011: 373). It was
104 posited that the PJDM resembled a balance incorporating the strength of both approaches; a
105 form of ‘nested thinking’ linking micro, meso and macro level goals.

106 Although both useful and interesting, we believe that the argument presented in this
107 work can be critiqued in many ways. Most notably in the anaemic attention given to the
108 (limited) options a coach can actually select a course of action from. In this respect, too much
109 primacy is given to (1) measurements of options against ‘external criteria’, (2) the influence of
110 ‘what –if’ or ‘pre-mortem’ thinking, (3) of hitting planned ‘important performance and
111 development markers’, and (4) of comprising a rather instrumental reflection level of ‘what
112 did and didn’t work’. An similar critique of such thinking was previously articulated by
113 Simon (1956) through his concept of ‘satisficing’; an idea introduced to the sports coaching
114 literature by Bowes and Jones (2006). Simon’s point here was that in choice making
115 situations, “people have the goal of ‘satisficing’ rather than maximising” (Schwartz, Ward,
116 Monterosso, Lyubomirsky, White & Lehman, 2002). Taking into account the complexity of
117 social life, Simon argued that what most of us do is not to pursue the best option when
118 deciding upon a course of action, but a ‘good enough’ one. Others, meanwhile, have claimed
119 that people make decisions not from a ‘best option’ perspective, but from one motivated by
120 the avoidance of potential regret or loss aversion (see Schwartz et al., [2002] for a fuller
121 discussion here). Schwartz et al. (2002) also problematized the notion of ‘best possible

122 option, as being a relative rather than an absolute one. Here, they argued that the
123 ‘maximiser’s’ domain of assessment was not a “finite and transparent set of possibilities that
124 allowed for complete and unambiguous judgement” (p.1184). Rather, it is one of social
125 comparison; that is, people perceive how well they are doing relative to relevant others.
126 Finally, here, Lipshitz et al. (2001), in deciphering why expert decision makers appeared to
127 think the first option considered was invariably the best one, argued that such individuals
128 were using their expertise to create a ‘good move’ as the first one contemplated. This was as
129 opposed to generating a course of action from a pool of deliberated options. The point of
130 presenting this brief critique is not to totally decry the contributions made by the cognitive
131 psychologists in this area. Rather, it is to highlight where the attention in the field has been
132 focused and, in doing so, emphasize where such investigations can be further developed.

133

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

135 According to Garfinkel, although context and individuality promote agential action, we all
136 make decisions through respecting the routine features of the social order (i.e., the order
137 witnessed in society). Garfinkel’s work then, recognised everyday life as an achievement; an
138 achievement by which ordinary people, through shared understandings, compose perceived
139 logical actions. Meaningful actions, regardless if they involved conflict or cooperation, were
140 considered impossible without these shared understandings. Taken as such, the decisions
141 made by coaches are not done in a social vacuum or from an unlimited range of options.
142 Rather, they are inextricably linked to the social interaction in which they are embedded. In
143 this respect, inter-actors draw on conventions in order to communicate meaningfully, or “to
144 establish a footing in the interaction” (Crossley, 2011: 33). Any decisions made follow a
145 ‘taken-for-granted’ set of norms, and can only be made apparent through those norms. Again,
146 such norms are not newly and immediately contextually created, as such structures comprise

147 "a scene that was there before they (members) came upon it (made by others), and will be
148 there after they leave (again made by others)" (Rawls, 2002: 7). However, lest we paint an
149 overly deterministic picture here, such adherence to the previous does not preclude
150 improvisation and innovation. On the contrary, according to Strauss (1993), innovation is
151 required when conventions break down making interaction problematic. Indeed, taken that no
152 two situations have or can ever be identical, innovation and creativity are always evident in
153 interaction, although, by necessity, they draw on convention. In terms of coaching then, what
154 matters is the normative order which can be identified to form the basis of a coach's
155 decisions; that is, the stitching together of knowledge between 'what is seen' and 'what is
156 known' (Lynch, 2013).

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

165 More specifically, coaches must firstly decide upon what actually happened or
166 appeared to happen in any event at any given point in time. This is a decision about 'what an
167 issue is', compared to what is irrelevant or less relevant in relation to the task at hand.
168 Judgement here must be exercised over what is important for some athletes (e.g., the more or
169 less able) to hear, and what the general group need to hear. Similarly, decisions must be made
170 about the advice given in terms of what should ideally happen, and what is contextually more
171 likely to happen; between an amount of information that covers needs, but is not too much;

172 between specificity in terms of an event past, and generality so it becomes applicable to
173 future use. Taken as such, the field is complex to say the least.

174

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

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

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

193 In addition to referring to interpersonal schemas derived from repeated relationship
194 experiences, coaches' decision making has also been found to be influenced by what
195 Garfinkel termed a consideration of 'what kind of people accept what kind of message'. This
196 was clearly witnessed in the earlier work of Jones and colleagues (Jones, Armour & Potrac,

197 2004), who postulated that coaches often (and consciously) 'act like coaches' to function
198 effectively. The onus here was squarely on the perception of the audience in terms of what is
199 expected within a role, as opposed to culturally unaffected decision-making. It is a
200 perspective which recognises that embedded within any decision making processes are
201 culturally presupposed standards, which have to be adhered to; a perception of some
202 consistency of shared meaning.

203 In many ways, this was the central tenet of Schutz's (1962) text 'The problem of social
204 reality'. Here, it was claimed that at any moment in time, each individual has a 'stock of
205 knowledge at hand'; a stock constructed both from biography and the "typifications of the
206 common sense world" (Natanson, 1962: xxviii). Consequently, one's biography was seen as
207 responsible for locating and interpreting possibilities and actions, while an actor's situation
208 was taken as possessing a particular history; "a sedimentation of previous subjective
209 experiences" (Natanson, 1962: xxx). Hence, what can be considered new and different can
210 only be recognised as such because it arises against a background of the familiar (Natanson,
211 1962). The stockpiled fund of typifications, in turn, become the basis and information source
212 for subsequent actions. Indeed, it is only through the common assumptions generated through
213 the shared inter-subjective stock of knowledge that joint projects with others are made
214 possible. For Schutz (1962) then, knowledge, and the decision making it engendered, was
215 socially rooted, distributed and informed (Natanson, 1962). Any act of decision making was
216 considered as being necessarily grounded in an inter subjective reality where people are
217 linked to others through common influence and meaning. Consequently, what can be
218 considered as guiding coaches' decision making are the 'normative orders' of interaction; and
219 it is to a further examination of these that we now turn.

220 What concern us here are the social structuring of coaches' decision-making, in terms
221 of the required uniformities or patterns for self and others' sense making. According to

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

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

244 For fear of presenting an overly deterministic portrayal here, coaches' agency is also
245 often seen to emerge in the conflict and contradiction between what they are asked to adhere
246 to through coach education programmes (the 'official' line) and what they actually do in

247 practice (their ‘constructed’ line). Through the former, and the often unproblematic models
248 offered to them, coaches are regularly asked to change their official rules of social
249 judgements. That they rarely do so, has been borne out by numerous studies (e.g.,
250 Chesterfield, Jones & Potrac., 2010; Piggott, 2012). Hence, even though they explain and
251 express decision making and related procedures in objective terms, evidence strongly
252 suggests that, for the more difficult decisions in particular, coaches’ scamper back to the tried
253 and tested formulas of daily life (Chesterfield et al., 2010). This even stretches as far back as
254 to their initial situational clarification, an active step in the manipulation both of the problem
255 and the proposed course of action (Garfinkel, 1967: 111). Hence, even though the rules of
256 everyday and the rules of the official line are both entertained, despite often claiming one
257 approach, coaches tend to ‘live’ another.

258 A further problem with current rationalistic conceptualisation of coaches’ decision
259 making is that it presupposes a certainty of outcome. Accounts in this regard tend to stress
260 what decisions were expected of coaches and when they should be taken; that is, coaches
261 know what is coming and they use knowledge to either secure or negate the ‘known’ future.
262 Such a vision conflicts with recent work into sports coaching from an activity perspective,
263 which has better attempted to understand the unity of consciousness and practice (Jones,
264 Edwards & Filho Viotto, 2014; Bowes & Jones, 2006). Here, contextual practice is
265 considered to be created by, and to act upon, individuals rather than simply the canvas upon
266 which that activity, through ‘objective’ decision making, is painted (Leont’ev, 1978). Taken
267 as such, coaching is considered to play out as situated action (Jones, Bowes & Kingston,
268 2010) where interactions instigate meaning making processes (Jones et al., 2014). Rather than
269 pre-empting action, such decisions are considered embedded in action, where participation is
270 seen as crucial in structuring thought.

271 In giving credence to socio-historic processes, according to Garfinkel, a person is
272 95% a juror before they become a juror. Although to say the same for coaching would
273 probably be doing coach education something of a disservice, plenty of evidence exists that
274 biography and history exert a much greater influence over coaches' learning and practice than
275 any formal preparation programmes (Light & Hassanin, in press). Such a finding, however,
276 should not be considered surprising. This is because, as argued by Garfinkel, most people
277 make professional decisions using the same beliefs, values and processes that they utilise in
278 the course of their ordinary everyday affairs. To consider that such process can be influenced
279 by 'quick fix' coach education programmes would appear naive to say the least.

280 Such a perspective gives primacy to what Child (1940-1) referred to as the 'intrinsic
281 sociality of mind'. Here, Child made the case that society's influence "extends into the
282 structures of human experience in the form of ideas, concepts and systems of thought"
283 (McCarthy, 1996: 1). The separation between individual and object, a position given pre-
284 eminence in much cognitive influenced decision-making research, is, therefore, rejected.
285 From such a perspective, human experience, inclusive of a sense of 'having been here before',
286 is constituted by cultural knowledge, with everything experienced having been mediated,
287 arranged and 'priced' by the practices of the social world (McCarthy, 1996). In short,
288 perceived objective accounts are anything but. Rather, they are embedded in, and dependent
289 on, the socially organised occasions of their use; the social "is in the picture from the
290 beginning" (Rawls, 2011: 280). Experience then, is only given shape and meaning through
291 existing categories of thought and norms. Indeed, for Garfinkel (2008 [1952]), experience
292 itself is socially organised; "we see things we expect to see" (Rawls, 2011: 279). The
293 limitations of the cognitivists in relation to decision making is consequently highlighted.
294 Here, any developed schemas, as given credence in NDM literature, are interrogated and
295 exposed as being rooted in subjective, constructed culture itself. Far from possessing an

296 objective nature, coaches' decision making can be seen as being forged in group existences
297 and collective action. Coaches don't just make decisions, they don't just look, see and weigh
298 options. Rather, what they see and what they decide upon are, to a considerable degree,
299 already shaped. In the words of the sociologist Karl Mannheim "an individual participates in
300 thinking further what other men have thought before him (sic.)" (1936: 3). Similarly,
301 impersonal reason, constitutive of a 'halo of rationality', is only another name given to
302 collective thought; thought accomplished or enabled through mutual orientation towards
303 shared rules (McCarthy, 1996; Rawls, 2011). Consequently, coaches' making seemingly
304 objective decisions as encapsulated in NDM and other cognitive explanations are exposed as
305 being only a culturally influenced perception of 'what it was like' and 'what I did'. In
306 Garfinkel's (1967) words, the issue is not to do with the nature of the aforementioned stock or
307 corpus of knowledge, but with "the *assembling* [our italics] of the 'corpus' which serves as
308 grounds for inferring the correctness of a verdict" (p.110).

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

316 So, having argued that much of coaches' decision-making lies in established
317 (interpretive) epistemic roots and beliefs, how can such a process be improved? We believe
318 that, rather than continually revisiting what works (or has worked) in terms of previous
319 experience, improvement is conceptualised as widening the frames of reference (or stocks of
320 knowledge) from which decisions can alternatively be informed. Improved decision making

321 thus, is considered more likely to occur by reflecting on and with new knowledge; by
322 considering how expanded frames of reference can be put to use in solving practical
323 problems. Similar to the work of Garfinkel, Erving Goffman's (1974) text 'Frame Analysis'
324 highlighted the point that frames, i.e., the brackets we use to define the meaning and
325 significance of social events, provide the "accounts, excuses [and] apologies designed to
326 reframe what follows after them" (p.16-17). For Goffman, such (social) frameworks provide
327 background understanding for events; "what it [a frame] does can be described as 'guided
328 doings'" (p.22). Here, each event can be perceived in terms of a 'primary framework', with
329 the framework employed providing a way of describing and making sense of the event to
330 which it is applied. The type of framework employed then provides a way of describing or
331 understanding "the event to which it is applied" (Goffman, 1974: 24). Thus, frames can be
332 taken as a way of organizing experience. Although often perceived as somewhat limiting and
333 perhaps defensively in only providing a "lore of understanding" (p.21), Goffman also cast
334 frames as optimistic efforts whose "purpose is to recast the way in which a book is to be
335 taken" (ibid.). Important in this notion of recasting is that of 'keying'. This is where
336 something already meaningful in terms of an existing framework is viewed as something
337 else; that is, meaning is transformed into something patterned on, but independent of, the
338 initial frame. A keying then, allows us to "determine what we really think is going on"
339 (Goffman, 1974: 45). It also permits understanding of a particular framework in terms of
340 another. Doing so, holds the potential to sanction the development of a new coaching
341 grammar, allowing practitioners to better critique and deconstruct their own and others'
342 practice from alternative perspectives. In essence, it can give them what Goffman termed a
343 "subversive phenomenological twist" (1974; 2). This not only encompasses seeing particular
344 events differently, but elevating background incidents and occurrences to the fore, thus
345 reworking or redirecting the stream of perception. In this way, 'out of frame' activity is given

346 increased credence. Consequently, not only are competent individuals considered aware of
347 'frames' and 'rules', they are also capable of (re)interpreting and manipulating such rules
348 which, in turn, "allows the possibility for change" (Mote, 2001: 220). This was something
349 more explicitly defined in Goffman's (1967) earlier work of 'Where the action is' which
350 included notions of individual reflexivity and an 'action space'. The latter comprised of areas
351 "where the possibilities for life changing decisions emerge and are fulfilled" (Mote, 2001:
352 227), with an action itself being defined as "an occasion generated by the exercise of self
353 determination, an occasion for risk taking and grasping opportunity" (Goffman, 1967: 161).
354 Consequently, although appreciating the power of social frames and cultural standards,
355 Goffman constantly alluded to the "possibility to restructure routine activity" (1967: 204)
356 through individuals' creative capacity to redefine contexts and happenings. The challenge for
357 coach educators then is to use such notions as 'keying' and 'alternative frameworks' to
358 develop coaches' abilities to imaginatively engage with considered yet innovative decision
359 making.

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

370 To go beyond the known to new theoretical horizons, thus developing coaches' decision
371 making in increasingly inventive ways.

372 **Conclusion**

373 The practical implications of this paper lie in the hoped for engagement by coaching scholars
374 and coach educators with the social nature of coaches' decision making. This is not only in
375 terms of providing an alternative 'feel' for the strategic functions and roots of such decision
376 making, but also in educating coaches about the boundaries of their knowledge, in terms of
377 what and how they make the decisions they do. Indeed, this is the business of sociologists;
378 "to try to understand our own social world by unravelling its special history" (McCarthy,
379 1996: 9). Through demystifying the process, coaches can be better educated to order what
380 they already know, enabling them both to enrich existing knowledge bases while discerning
381 where and how to develop additional ones. The work builds on the previous writings of Jones
382 (2006b) who argued that coaches' decision making can be made more creative through giving
383 practitioners alternative sense-making frames of reference. Doing so, holds the potential to
384 shift perceptions, leading to a 'transformed view of the subject matter and landscape' and,
385 hence, the decisions taken in relation to them.

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

394

395

396

397

398 **References**

399 Abraham, A. & Collins, C. (2011). Taking the next step: Ways forward for coaching science.

400 *Quest*, 63, 366-384.

401

402 Bowes, I. & Jones, R.L. (2006). Working at the edge of chaos: Understanding coaching as a

403 complex, interpersonal system. *The Sport Psychologist*, 20(2), 235-245.

404

405 Chesterfield, G., Jones, R. L. & Potrac, P. (2010). 'Studentship' and 'impression

406 management': Coaches' experiences of an advanced soccer coach education award.

407 *Sport, Education and Society*. 15, 299-314.

408

409 Child, A. (1940-1). The theoretical possibility of the sociology of knowledge. *Ethics*, 51,

410 392-418.

411

412 Crossley, N. (2011). *Towards relational sociology*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

413

414 Cushion, C. & Jones, R.L. (2006). Power, discourse and symbolic violence in professional

415 youth soccer: The case of Albion F.C. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 23(2), 142-161.

416

417 Denison, J. (2007). Social Theory for Coaches: A Foucauldian Reading of One Athlete's

418 Poor Performance. *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching*, 2(4), 369-

419 283

420

421 Engström, Y. (2000). Comment on Blackler et al., activity theory and the social construction
422 of knowledge: A story of four umpires. *Organization*, 7(2), 310-310.

423

424 Fiske, S.F., & Taylor, F.E. (1984). *Social cognition*. New York: Random House

425

426 Garfinkel, H. (1967). *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. Englewood-Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

427

428 Goffman, E. (1967) *Interaction ritual: Essays on face-to-face behaviour*. Garden City:
429 Anchor Books.

430

431 Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*. New York:
432 Harper and Row.

433

434 Jarvie, G. (1990). Towards an applied sociology of sport. *Scottish Journal of Physical
435 Education*, 18, 11-12.

436

437 Johns, D.P. & Johns, J. (2000). Surveillance, subjectivism and technologies of power: An
438 analysis of the discursive practice of high-performance sport. *International Review for
439 the Sociology of Sport*, 35, 219-234.

440

441 Jones, R.L. (2006a). Dilemmas, maintaining 'face' and paranoia: An average coaching life.
442 *Qualitative Inquiry*, 12(2), 1012-1021.

443

- 444 Jones, R.L. (2006b). How can educational concepts inform sports coaching? In R.L.Jones
445 (Ed.), *The sports coach as educator: Re-conceptualising sports coaching*, (3-13).
446 London: Routledge.
- 447
- 448 Jones, R.L., Armour, K.M. & Potrac, P. (2004). *Sports coaching cultures: From practice to*
449 *theory*. London: Routledge.
- 450
- 451 Jones, R.L. & Bailey, J. (2011). Peter Blau: Power and social exchange: Giving and taking in
452 coaching. In R.L.Jones et al. (Eds.) *The sociology of sports coaching* (108-121).
453 London: Routledge.
- 454
- 455 Jones, R. L., Bowes, I., & Kingston, K. (2010). Complex practice in coaching: Studying the
456 chaotic nature of coach-athlete interactions. In J. Lyle & C. Cushion (Eds.), *Sports*
457 *coaching: Professionalism and practice* (15–26). London: Elsevier.
- 458
- 459 Jones, R.L., Edwards, C. & Viotto Filho, I.A.T. (2014). Activity theory, complexity and
460 sports coaching: An epistemology for a discipline. *Sport, Education and Society*. DOI:
461 10.1080/13573322.2014.895713
- 462
- 463 Jones, R.L. & Wallace, M. (2005). Another bad day at the training ground: Coping with
464 ambiguity in the coaching context. *Sport, Education and Society*, 10(1), 119-134.
- 465
- 466 Klein, G. (2008). Naturalistic decision makers. *Human Factors: The Journal of the Human*
467 *Factors and Ergonomics Society*, 50(3), 456-460.
- 468

- 469 Lemert, C. (1997). *Social things: An introduction to the sociological life*. Lanham, MD:
470 Rowan & Littlefield.
471
- 472 Leont'ev, A. (1978). *Activity, consciousness and personality*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice
473 Hall.
474
- 475 Light, R & Hassanin, R.. (in press). The influence of cultural context on rugby coaches'
476 beliefs about coaching. *Sports Coaching Review*.
477
- 478 Linstead, S. (2006). Ethnomethodology and sociology: An introduction. *The Sociological*
479 *Review*, 54:3, 399-404.
480
- 481 Lipshitz, R., Klein, G., Orasanu, J. & Salas, E. (2001). Taking stock of naturalistic decision
482 making. *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making*, 14, 331-352.
483
- 484 Loland, S.L. (2011). The normative aims of coaching: The good coach as an enlightened
485 generalist. In A. Hardman & C.R. Jones, (eds.) *The ethics of sports coaching* (15-22).
486 London: Routledge
487
- 488 Lyle, J. (2010). Coaches' decision making: A Naturalistic Decision Making analysis. In J.
489 Lyle & C.J. Cushion (Eds.), *Sport coaching: Professionalisation and practice* (27-
490 41). London: Churchill Livingstone.
491
- 492 Lynch, M. (2013). Seeing fish. In P. Tomlie & M. Rouncefield (eds.), *Ethnomethodology at*
493 *play* (89-105). Farnham: Ashgate Publishing.

494

495 Mannheim, K. (1936). *Ideology and utopia*. New York: Harcourt Brace & World

496

497 McCarthy, E.D. (1996). *Knowledge as culture: The new sociology of knowledge*. New York:
498 Routledge.

499

500 Mote, J. (2001) from Shutz to Goffman: the search for social order. *The Review of Austrian*
501 *Economics*, 14, 219-231.

502

503 Natanson, M. (1962). Introduction. In A. Schutz *Collected papers. On the problem of social*
504 *reality*. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.

505

506 Nelson, L., Cushion, C., Potrac, P. & Groom, R. (2014). Carl Rogers, learning and
507 educational practice: Critical considerations and applications in sports coaching.
508 *Sport, Education and Society*, 19(5), 513-531.

509

510 Piggott, D. (2012) Coaches' experiences of formal coach education: A critical sociological
511 investigation, *Sport, Education and Society*, 17(4), 535-554.

512

513 Potrac, P. & Jones, R.L. (1999). The invisible ingredient in coaching knowledge: A case for
514 recognising and researching the social component. *Sociology of Sport Online*, 2 (1).

515 Retrieved from: <http://physed.otago.ac.nz/sosol/home.htm>.

516

- 517 Purdy, L., Potrac, P., & Jones, R. L. (2008). Power, consent and resistance: An
518 autoethnography of competitive rowing. *Sport, Education and Society*, 13(3), 319-
519 336.
- 520
- 521 Rawls, A.W. (2006). *Ethnomethodology's Program: Working out Durkheim's aphorism*,
522 edited and introduced by A. Warfield Rawls. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield
523 Publishers.
- 524
- 525 Rawls, A.W. (2011). Garfinkel, Ethnomethodology and the defining questions of
526 pragmatism. *Qualitative Sociology*, 34, 277–282
- 527
- 528 Schutz, A. (1962) *Collected papers 1: The problem of social reality*. Dordrecht, The
529 Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers
- 530
- 531 Schwartz, B., Ward, A., Monterosso, J., Lyubomirsky, S., White, K. & Lehman, D.R.
532 (2002). Maximising versus satisficing: Happiness is a meter of choice. *Journal of*
533 *Personality and Social Psychology*, 83(5), 1178-1197.
- 534
- 535 Simon, H. A. (1956). Rational choice and the structure of the environment. *Psychological*
536 *Review*, 63, 129-138.
- 537
- 538 Strauss, A. (1993). *Continual permutations of action*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter
- 539
- 540 Stones, R. (1998). Introduction: Society as more than a collection of free floating individuals,
541 in: R Stones (Ed). *Key sociological thinkers* (1-18). London: Macmillan.