Understanding the Coaching Process: A Framework for Social Analysis

Robyn L. Jones, Kathleen M. Armour, and Paul Potrac

Despite the recent increase of research into coaching, the essential social and cultural nature of the process has received little attention. The purpose of this paper is to suggest a framework for undertaking a social analysis of coaching. Specifically, the case is made for analyzing coaching using three interrelated concepts—role, interaction, and power—in order to critically interrogate coaching practice. We argue that, while not exhaustive, such an analysis can reveal the importance of key, but often underplayed, components of the coaching process, including social and cultural contexts, personal experiences, personal philosophies, professional practice, and the ways in which they are interconnected. The paper is thus grounded in the belief that recognizing and understanding the social sphere of the coaching process is a necessary step toward understanding coaching practice and using that understanding to support coaches more effectively.

Despite the recent upsurge of research into coaching, we have argued elsewhere that this has been limited by its focus on developing theories and methods of training linked, in the main, to the psychological and physical development of athletes (Potrac, Brewer, Jones, Armour, & Hoff, 2000; Jones, 2000). Similarly, like others, we have highlighted the paradox inherent in describing coaching as a unique and complex activity that combines a multiplicity of roles, yet researching and supporting it along bio-scientific, fragmentary lines. Instead, we support the idea that this developmental or progressive view of coaching as "a knowable sequence" (Usher, 1998, p. 26) is unacceptably one-dimensional because the essential social and cultural nature of the coaching process receives little attention within it (Jones, 2000).

Robyn L. Jones is now with the Dept. of Education at the University of Bath, U.K. Kathleen M. Armour is with the Department of Physical Education, Sports Science, and Recreation Management at Loughborough University, Leichestershire, UK. E-mail: <K.M.Armour@lboro.ac.uk>. Paul Potrac is with the Division of Sport Sciences, University of Northumbria, UK. E-mail: <paul.potrac@unn.ac.uk>.

In further developing this argument, it is undeniable that much of a coach's work is linked to a wide range of significant others (athletes, managers, colleagues) in a particular social and cultural context, which makes him/her (like a teacher) much more than a subject matter specialist and a systematic method applier (Squires, 1999). Indeed, sports coaching does not exist in a social vacuum but is subject, to varying extents, to the societal and sporting structures within which it operates (Cross & Lyle, 1999). The coaching process is, therefore, essentially a social activity, which is inextricably linked to both the constraints and opportunities of human interaction (Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2000). Coaches are social beings operating in a social environment, so their activities ought to be examined and explained as such. Indeed, and again like teaching, coaching is fundamentally about making a myriad of connections not only to and between subjects and methods, but as important (if not more so) to and between other persons and life in general (Armour & Fernandez-Balboa, 2000). Inevitably, these connections are fraught with the unique tensions characteristic of social interaction, and this might help to explain why the quest to find a "one-fit-all" generic model of effective coaching has proved so difficult (Jones, Armour, & Potrac, in press; Jones, 2001; Cross & Lyle, 1999).

The purpose of this paper is to suggest a framework for undertaking a social analysis of coaching. Specifically, the case is made for analyzing coaching using three interrelated concepts—role, interaction, and power—in order to critically interrogate coaching practice. We argue that such an analysis can reveal the importance of key, but often underplayed, components of the coaching process, including social and cultural contexts, personal experiences, personal philosophies and professional practice, and the ways in which they are interconnected. In this way, it somewhat answers Lyle's (1999a) recent call to recognize the sophisticated nature of the coaching process through an appreciation of the inherent interpersonal relationships that exist between coaches and athletes within it. The paper is thus grounded in the belief that recognizing and understanding the social sphere of the coaching process is the first step toward understanding coaching practice and using that understanding to inform and support coaches more effectively (Jones, 2000).

The paper also builds upon an increasing awareness that sports performance is an inexact science and that the coaching role goes beyond that of technical expert (Jones, 2000; Lyle, 1999a). There is growing support for the argument that the coaching process is not something that is merely delivered but is a dynamic social activity that actively engages the coach (Potrac, 2001; Jones, 2000; Cushion, et al., 2000; Lyle, 1999b). Indeed, many have identified a need to investigate the multifaceted social relationship between coach and athlete in order to more fully grasp the complexity of the coaching process (Lyle, 1999b; Abraham & Collins, 1998; Strean, 1998). For example, Lyle (1999b) points out that the coaching process is more problematic than previously assumed, commenting that "few studies have dealt with *in situ* coaching behavior and related this to specific role interpretations" (p. 4), which leads him to conclude that "a coach's delivery capacity, within a synoptic view of the process, [has been] treated as a limitation by researchers and not as an essential part of the jigsaw that it is" (Lyle, 1999b, p. 5). Such a view echoes that of Woodman's (1993) earlier call to recognize the significance of social application and individual flair within the coaching process as vital ingredients in achieving desired goals. Similarly, Cote, Salmela, Trudel, Baria, and Russell (1995)

have lamented the lack of research into the many contextual variables which comprise the "complex reality within which coaches work" (p. 2), a reality recently described by Cross and Lyle (1999) as multivariate, eclectic, interpersonal, and contested. Despite such concerns and recommendations, however, little work has yet emerged that seeks to locate coaching firmly in its social context or that even suggests how it may be achieved. In this paper, we attempt to take one small and tentative step toward that goal, at the same time acknowledging that the framework proposed is only one of many potential analyses from a sociological perspective.

Coaches' Social Roles

Role theory has, according to Welbourne, Johnson, and Elez (1998), been a concept widely used by researchers in psychology, social psychology, organization theory, and sociology, with roles being defined as positions within a social framework. The traditional concern of role theory has been the examination of how social roles develop and evolve from the expectations of others (Shaw, 1981); it has been concerned with how "human behavior is influenced by the desire to fulfill and satisfy the needs of others" (Shaw, 1981, p. 55). However, this perspective on the construction and nature of roles has recently been the subject of some debate (Callero, 1994). In particular, it has been argued that role theory should focus on the impact of (and the relationship between) structure and agency on the formation and development of social roles, whereas the traditional approach to role theory has tended to emphasize the constraining and determining features of social roles. For example, Raffel (1998) noted that when an individual successfully takes up an occupational role, he or she is meeting the demands or expectations of the social structure through the process of "role-playing." Yet an interactionist approach would disagree with the determinism implied by the structural stance (Callero, 1994), suggesting instead that individuals have much greater independence in the characterization and function of their social role or roles. Hence, it is considered that individuals are actively involved in the process of role-making as opposed to passively role-playing (Callero, 1994; Raffel, 1998) and that this has profound implications for our understanding of the coaching process.

In recognizing the dual impact of structure and agency on the construction of role, Callero (1994) has suggested that both approaches need to be combined if a more complete explanation of role theory and human behavior is to be developed. Indeed, the need for such a convergence in approaches to role theory has resulted in the proposition that social roles would be better understood from a resource perspective (Callero, 1994). This perspective offers a more specific and better understanding of the interdependent relationship between individual action and the collective structure (Callero, 1994) or, as Lemert (1997) puts it, "individuals are who they are only partly because of what they do with what they have. They are also partly who they are because of what the wider social world gives or takes away" (p. xi-xii). The actions of individuals can, therefore, be examined within such a framework, their behavior being viewed as "simultaneously a result of the force of social rules and their own flourishes" (Lemert, 1997, p. 44). In this respect, social actors can be understood as expressing self and fulfilling role all at the same time (Raffel, 1998).

In attempting to understand, explain, and, thus, better support coaching per se, it would be helpful to know more about the ways in which the interplay of

structure and agency influences are manifested in practice. As a starting point, it seems obvious that coaches act both as they choose and how they are influenced to choose (Armour & Jones, 2000). Within the tenets of role theory, it can be postulated that coaches are socialized into behaving in certain styles but that they retain the ability either to conform or resist such pressures in highly inventive ways (Lemert, 1997). Similarly, Coakley (1994) has argued that agency and structure shape the roles and practices of coaches and those who interact with coaches, each reflecting the agency/structure mosaic in unique ways. To an extent, such a notion builds on Sage's (1989) earlier, predominantly structuralist, position on the impact of organizational socialization upon coaches and the coaching process. Organizational socialization has been defined as the process by which neophyte coaches "on the job acquire the skills and supporting cultural ideology necessary to participate as contributing members of an occupation" (Sage, 1989, p. 87). Indeed, Sage (1989) highlighted how, in addition to learning the technical aspects of the job, this social practice inculcated coaches with shared understandings regarding the ideology and critical aspects of the occupation. In short, he outlined how such a process enabled coaches to understand and interpret everyday events related to the job by highlighting "how we do things and what matters around here" (Sage, 1989, p. 87). For example, in examining the instructional strategies of coaches, it could be argued that practitioners have been socialized into them by the expectation of their roles, driven both by personal experience and the perceived needs of employers and athletes. Actions, thus, are considered to be driven by expectations, those that "actors" hold for themselves and those they believe others hold for them (Troyer & Younts, 1997). An interesting question that emerges here is whose expectations really matter in determining action? This leads to an illustration of the interplay between agency and structure and the inescapable place of power within the framework.

It has been argued that a predominantly structural explanation of human behavior tends to reduce individual action to the level of mere mechanical compliance to social expectation (Raffel, 1994). Indeed, although the concept of role conflict recognizes the differing demands of various role partners (e.g. parents, athletes, administrators, fellow coaches), there remains a need to understand more about the individual's "self hood" (Raffel, 1998) within the theory and how it is responsible for guiding action. Perhaps it is here, in the realms of invention, improvisation, and creative independence that coaching research should focus as we search for an understanding of good and effective practice. Certainly, the coexistence of self and socially determined social roles appears to be a rich area of inquiry for coaching.

Alternatively, by giving more credence to the individuality of human action (agency), coaching behavior could be explained in terms of Callero's (1994) definition of role as a cultural object. Specifically, in drawing upon the work of Heise (1977, 1979) and Schwalbe (1987), Callero suggested that roles serve as "performance images" that, at the cognitive level, help to guide action. Such performance images are not consistent across social structures but reflect existing cultural beliefs about appropriate role behavior. In this respect, the prior socialization experiences of the coaching practitioner, the nature of coach education programs, and traditional societal beliefs about effective coaching behavior, could all influence the performance images of coaches and their resulting conduct. It could be argued, therefore, that while the generic role of the coach may transcend social structure,

the images that guide behavior within this role are subject to unique cultural influences (Callero, 1994). Thus, the role as resource perspective considers the actions of individuals to be governed both by their roles (as defined by structure) and the particular positions they adopt within the roles (agency), which are not generalizable across settings. Indeed, it is concerned with how established or accepted roles become a vehicle for agency (Callero, 1994); that is, how, in this specific context, do coaches use their role to best effect in their dealings with athletes and others. Rather than being viewed as constraining, therefore, roles are seen as enabling; they can make action possible. Consequently, the concepts of role playing and role making are, to an extent, extended into the dynamic notion of role using (Callero, 1994).

A further interesting field of investigation in relation to examining coach behavior within role theory is Goffman's (1969) theory of role distance. This refers to the individual distancing himself/herself from the seriousness of the role, for example through self-depreciating humor. By divorcing oneself from a role, the self is allowed to emerge, although invariably in a negative, mocking sense (Raffel, 1998). Goffman (1969) explains it as such: "Irony, joking and sarcasm may all allow one to show that something of oneself lies outside the constraints . . . of the role within whose jurisdiction the moment occurs" (p. 67). Given that humor is a feature of the coaching environment (Brewer & Jones, 2001), it could be argued that it is used to enable the personality and individuality of the coach to emerge. Indeed, this gap between role obligation and preferred role performance could mark the inventive practitioner from the mechanistic average. However, a question arises: Why would a coach, or anyone in such a position of authority, feel the need to act in such an informal way? Goffman (1969), in using an example of a surgeon, offers an explanation:

> In order to ensure that the members of his team keep their heads during the operation, the chief surgeon finds himself under pressure to modulate his (sic) own demands and his own expectations of what is due him. In short, the chief surgeon is likely to find himself with a situated role function of anxiety management and may find that he must draw on his own dignity, on what is owed his station, in order to fulfill this function. A kind of bargaining or bribery occurs, whereby the surgeon receives a guarantee of equability from his team in return for being a "nice guy"—someone who does not press his rightful claims too far. (p. 75)

Goffman (1959) described such a situation as the working consensus of a group. Such a consensus was considered critical because without it, both individual and collective goals could be undermined (Troyer & Younts, 1997). Furthermore, it is also vital that although individuals need not privately concur with the consensus, it has to be publicly enacted if collective goals are to be achieved. The behavior of coaches could, therefore, be analyzed in terms of what "bargains" they strike with which other in order to achieve a public working consensus and how they can be sure that they are understood as such. The how, when, and where of role distance as it is employed by a coach could provide further clues about the establishment of an effective coaching climate.

Finally, Raffel (1998) borrows from the work of Blum (1994) in discussing the notion of "self in role." Here, the role becomes something that is intrinsically worth doing for the individual and not something that is simply expected. Thus, the role comes to have personal significance for the individual who wants to further it, as opposed to merely comply with it. Consequently, Raffel (1998) concludes that in such instances, individuals are viewed as simultaneously fulfilling social and personal needs; that is, they are performing a role and realizing the self. Such individuals can be seen to transcend the limits of their role in such a way as to gain the affection and gratitude of their charges. They may engage the latter to excel by virtue of their personal qualities, thus displaying a degree of "charismatic leadership" (Shaw, 1981). Indeed, perhaps we would be justified in asking, in terms of such apparent role commitment, "Is this what good coaches actually do?" Such a theoretical peg provides further avenues for the analysis of coaching practice.

Coaching, Interaction, and the Presentation of Self

Another related social theory that could be used to examine coaching practice is Goffman's (1959) theory of interaction. Although this refers to events that occur whenever two or more people are in one another's presence (Williams, 1998), of particular relevance here is the concept of the presentation of the self in everyday life. Goffman's work provides a detailed description and analysis of process and meaning in everyday action. He used micro-sociological analysis to explore the details of individual identity, group relations, the impact of environment, and the movement and interactive meaning of information (Branhart, 1994). Thus, he embarked on a detailed and close analysis of what people do when they are in the company of others and how those doings are understood (Williams, 1998). His major contribution, therefore, was to portray the interdependence of self, social interaction, social inequality, and social order "by painting them into a complex portrait" (Branaman, 2000, p. xlv).

Central to Goffman's argument is the notion that individuals are not entirely determined by society, because they are able to strategically manipulate social situations and other's impressions of themselves (Goffman, 1959). The self was seen as a social product. However, Goffman also emphasized that individuals are not able to freely choose the images of self that they would have others accept, "but rather are constrained to define themselves in congruence with the statuses, roles, and relationships that they are accorded by the social order" (Branaman, 2000, p. xlvii). In this respect, it echoes some of the tenets of the previously discussed resource perspective on role theory (Callero, 1994). In further considering the presentation of self, Goffman (1959) utilized a dramaturgical approach to not only examine the mode of presentation employed by the social actor, but also to explain its meaning in the broader social context (Branaman, 2000; Branhart, 1994). Thus, he makes us think about how people produce recognizable and convincing performances for others (Williams, 1998). In short, he viewed interaction "as a performance shaped by environment and audience, constructed to provide others with impressions that are consonant with the desired goals of the actor" (Branhart, 1994, p. 2).

Within a coaching context, such an analytical structure could help to analyze and explain coaches' actions and rhetoric as they seek to cajole, threaten, and tease

out their athletes' potentialities, often through semi-theatrical performances. Indeed, this process of establishing and maintaining a desirable coaching identity could be linked to Goffman's (1959) concept of front. Front refers to "that part of the individual's performance which regularly functions in a general and fixed fashion to define the social situation for those who observe performance" (Goffman, 1959, p. 22). Such a front serves as the mean of standardization that allows others to understand the individual on the basis of projected character traits that have normative meanings (Branhart, 1994). In constructing a front, information about the actor is provided by a variety of communicative sources, all of which must be controlled effectively to convince the audience of the appropriateness of behavior and its consonance with the role assumed (Branhart, 1994). Goffman's (1959) example of the behavior of a baseball umpire is illustrative of the point:

> If a baseball umpire is to give the impression that he is sure of his judgment, he must forgo the moment of thought which might make him sure of his judgment; he must give an instantaneous decision so that the audience will be sure that he is sure of his judgment. (p. 40)

The issue is thus concerned with the image or impression portrayed above all else. The front also establishes proper setting, appearance, and manner for the social role assumed by the actor. Setting in this context refers to the physical and other background layouts that provide the scenery and props for human action (Branaman, 2000; Branhart, 1994).

According to Goffman (1959), a setting tends to remain stationary, so that those who would use a particular setting as part of their performance cannot begin their act until they have arrived at the appropriate place while they must terminate their performance when they leave it. Thus, through the process of dramatic realization (Goffman, 1959), the actor, in order to present a compelling front, is forced to both fill the duties of the social role and communicate the activities and characteristics of the role to other people in a consistent manner (Branhart, 1994). A coach, therefore, appears obliged to behave consistently like a coach in the eyes of the athletes within the sporting environment (the setting), because to maintain established power relationships he/she must uphold the standards of conduct and appearance as expected (Goffman, 1959). In this respect, the coach must continuously play, make, or use a role in a way that he/she believes will get the best out of the athletes, while simultaneously perceiving it to be what the athletes expect and desire. Goffman (1959) described such demands accordingly:

> We know that in service organizations practitioners who may otherwise be sincere are sometimes forced to delude their customers because their customers show a heartfelt demand for it . . . these are cynical performances whose audiences will not allow them to be sincere. (p. 29)

Consistency must be maintained in this regard, as any sudden deviance away from the established front puts the credibility of the actor and performance at risk. This contrived self is thus dependent upon consistent performance in social situations (Branaman, 2000). Consequently, it could be said that the coach is involved in a form of impression management with the athletes, which consists of the use of numerous stratagems to advance his or her position (Sarbin, 1995). Scheibe (1979)

classified such interactional strategies as selective feedback, pretence, deception, and withholding information, with the social actor "inventing or modifying them in the course of interacting with others. [Thus] the actors monitor their oral and gestural conduct, shifting from one stratagem to another, increasing or decreasing amplitude, and are responsive to the feedback from discourse partners or antagonists" (Sarbin, 1995, p. 217). Although more positive tactics could also be added to this list, a dynamic picture endures of the coach simultaneously using and juggling a number of social strategies to achieve desired ends in the coaching process. Through such impression management and role playing, attempts are made to present an idealized version of the front or the self. Indeed, as Goffman (1959) eloquently stated,

> The self, then, as a performed character, is not an organic thing that has a specific location, whose fundamental fate is to be born, mature, and to die; it is a dramatic effect rising from a scene that is presented, and the characteristic issue, the crucial concern, is whether it will be credited or discredited. (pp. 252-253)

Such a perspective on human behavior could partly explain the various behaviors and pedagogical styles utilized by coaching practitioners as they attempt to construct and maintain an idealized image of themselves as coaches in the eyes of their audiences. The coaching self could thus be seen to arise from publicly validated performances, which actually "makes the person better from the outside in" (Branaman, 2000, p. lii). What matters is not how the individual, in this instance a coach, identifies himself or herself, but how he or she is viewed by others. The notion that coaches engineer their behavior to fit the requirements of their players and/or coaching environment is explored in more detail in the following discussion on power, but in concluding this section, it can certainly be argued that coaches must construct a front, or image, in the eyes of their respective athletes in order to achieve stated goals and that this process warrants further investigation.

Coaches' Power

Power has typically been viewed as the "ability to get others to do what you want them to do (Weber, 1978), or to get them to do something they otherwise would not do" (Hardy, 1995, p. xiii). In taking a broader view of its nature, however, Tomlinson (1998) described power as a "central dynamic of human societies" (p. 235), thus suggesting that it is an essential component of any social activity. Hargreaves' (1986) definition of power as "a relationship between agents, the outcome of which is determined by agents' access to relevant resources and their use of appropriate strategies in specific conditions of struggle with other agents" (p. 3) seems to further support the conceptualization of power as omnipresent in social life. Similarly, for Foucault, power was seen as diffuse, permeating every aspect of social life, in ways that could be productive as well as repressive (McDonald & Birrell, 1999). The need to accept such a definition of power is increasingly relevant if we are to go beyond a superficial examination of its workings to explore the hidden ways in which it operates and shapes the lives of those who exercise it and those who are subject to it (Hardy, 1995). Thus, any examination of power would be incomplete without recognition of the way it remains hidden and mobilized in apparently apolitical structures.

In further emphasizing its importance within the field of pedagogy among others, Locke (1985) has concluded that any improvement in practice must take account of the unique power structure of each situation, including the varying and constantly changing measures of compliance and collaboration by individuals within it (Jones, 2000). Power, therefore, is not merely imposed from above but also often involves the active consent of subordinate groups and the soothing of resistance through adaptation. This means that any examination of power would be incomplete without attention to resistance against it; indeed, resistance can be considered to be an expression of power, which adds to the complexity of understanding interactions between agents. It can also be argued that as long as a participant in a social encounter has a function and a value, then they are not entirely powerless (Dunning, 1986). Adding to this picture, Tauber (1985) argues that "power is something in the hands of the person on whom power is being wielded, not in the hands of the presumed power wielder" (p. 7), which, in a sports coaching context, is usually presumed to be the coach. Tauber further argues that "people [athletes in the context of this paper] must consent to power being used on them before such power can be effective" (p. 7), a concept that Nyberg (1981) has described as power over power. As is already clear, power is central and complex, and, as Jones (2000) points out, it is sometimes relative, being dependent upon strategic significance within a local situation at a specific time.

Lukes' (1993) description of power as "the capacity to produce, or contribute to, outcomes by significantly affecting another or others" (p. 504) can be usefully applied to coaching. Indeed, the coaching process of guiding athletes and teams to fulfill their respective potentialities necessitates the use of power by its very nature (Bell, 1989). This not only relates to the use of power to get athletes to carry out directed tasks but also to the increasing concern of empowering athletes to take responsibility for their own learning and performances. Within this context, Borrie (1996) has suggested that the level of power and control that the coach can exert over many aspects of the athletes' environment will affect the nature of coach/player interaction on the practice field. However, power in this context is still subject to resistance, and a coach must be sensitive to the various forms of power and resistance expressed within coach-athlete relationships if effective coaching is to be achieved. Such relations are in turn subject to the "ebb and flow of influences, illustrative of the reflexive and generative capacities of human actors to confirm, adapt, negotiate, and at times re-make their institutions and cultures" (Tomlinson, 1998, p. 238). Thus, in recognizing that the coaching process is characterized by complex power relations, it seems that a broad agenda for research is identified.

Looking at the concept of a coach's power a little more in depth, French and Raven's (1959) classic typology is insightful. The typology classifies power into five types: legitimate, expert, reward, coercive, and referent. Like all typologies, it must be treated with caution—the types are rarely as easily divided in reality as they are in theory, but it does have the virtue of highlighting some of the different dimensions of a complex, multi-layered, multi-faceted concept. For example, it can be speculated that although the occupation of the social role of the coach affords the incumbent a degree of legitimate power (French & Raven, 1959), this source of power in itself is insufficient for a coach to gain the full confidence of athletes (Potrac, 2001; Potrac, Jones, Armour, & Brewer, 2000). Legitimate power is defined as the power that derives solely from a person's position within a particular social structure or organization and not because of any other special qualities a

person may possess (Slack, 1997). In short, most coaches possess this initial form of power as they enter the coaching environment, and it is their future actions that dictate whether such power is enhanced or eroded. However, there are other factors to be considered.

Previous research on the maintenance and enhancement of a coach's power (Potrac, 2001; Potrac et al., 2000) suggests that the acquisition and demonstration of expert power is essential to gain and hold the respect of athletes. Slack (1997) defined expert power as that which "accrues to a person because of the special knowledge or skill she [sic] possesses" (p. 181). Significantly, however, Tauber (1985) has suggested that the expert power of a teacher (or coach in this case) is based not solely upon his or her knowledge, but upon the perceptions of the students (or athletes) regarding that knowledge. In short, the greater the student or athlete perception, the greater the expert power that is afforded (Tauber, 1985). The issue, then, within coaching, becomes that of athlete perception and the image portrayed by the coach in creating that perception. As Bell (1989) reminds us, "[As a coach,] the greater your perceived knowledge and competence, the greater your power" (p. 16). The expert power of a coach, therefore, is dependent upon his/her expertise demonstrated on the training ground, and the athletes' perception of it. Such a concept is consistent with Shetty's (1978) argument that types of power are not discrete and may overlap, thus the possession of one form of power can affect the degree and effectiveness of other forms. Hence, coaches are continuously involved in trying to maintain or enhance their legitimate power through the use and further development of expert power. Through such a framework, a coach's use of demonstrations, questioning, and instructional behaviors, for example, could be analyzed. However, we need to go beyond description and appropriation of individual notions of power to what Crozier (1973) has defined as a "strategic analysis that will enable us to assess the opposing forces, and to uncover the laws governing their interaction and reconciliation" (p. 215). Whether such laws exist at all in social encounters is, of course, a contested issue within sociology.

Although expert power can be used to reinforce the legitimate power that coaches have as a consequence of their social role, expert power used in isolation can be a very limited power base (Benfari, Wilkinson, & Orth, 1986). Indeed, Benfari et al. have suggested that its continued or overuse could result in barriers arising between a coach and others, including athletes and administrators, that may be difficult to remove. In this respect, they note that the method and style of the transmission of knowledge is critical in forming perceptions about the coach. Specifically, they concluded that advice given in an authoritarian manner is rarely taken constructively (Benfari et al., 1986), thus emphasizing the importance of understanding some of the nuances of social processes. This highlights the potential value of examining the social competence and what might be described as the personal repertoire of the coach in imparting knowledge if athletes are to make best use of the advice on offer.

A further consideration in this context is the use of reward power (French & Raven, 1959), which has been defined as "the power that comes from one person's control over another's rewards" (Slack, 1997, p. 181). As with other aspects of power, the effective use of reward power is dependent upon the meanings recipients attach to it (Benfari et al., 1986). Thus, "the key to effective use of 'reward power' is to be able to tell how much of which reward, delivered how frequently and for how long a time is best for each student" (Tauber, 1985, p. 5). Such an

analysis of coaching delivery could be insightful when trying to understand how and why coaches create climates of incentives, what impact they have on coach-athlete relationships, and why they are sometimes successful.

In addition to reward power, coaching behavior can, at times, be explained in terms of coercive power (French & Raven, 1959), which derives from the ability of one person to punish another (Slack, 1997). Although the use of coercion is generally regarded as dysfunctional because it alienates and offends people while breeding resentment (Slack, 1997), it nevertheless remains at the disposal of the coach. Indeed, the combined use of reward power and coercive power could affect the extent and efficiency of other types of power (Shetty, 1978). Specifically, "the judicious use of reward power and coercive power can increase the effectiveness of legitimate power; inappropriate use, however, will decrease legitimate power" (Shetty, 1978, p. 177). Again, the emphasis appears to be on the delivery, or the athletes' perception of delivery, rather than on the message alone.

The fifth element of French and Raven's (1959) typology is that of referent power, which is based on the "student's identification with the teacher and his/her desire to be like him/her" (Tauber, 1985, p. 4). Consequently, unlike legitimate power, which is based on position, referent power is personal, with the person, not the position, being respected. Such power wielders are seen to possess desirable personal characteristics, with many willing to accept their power in order to become more like them (Tauber, 1985). Such power is often referred to in everyday parlance as charisma, an elusive quality that only the lucky few are allegedly born with. However, similar to the earlier discussed concept of self in role, this could provide a very fruitful area of inquiry into how coaches inspire athletes to transcend previously considered limitations, that is, how referent power is established and developed.

A final and interesting concept to be brought into this framework is that of nutrient power (May, 1972). In this context, a coach could request athletes to challenge the agreed playing style or game plan in the interest of improving it and their knowledge of the sport in general. Such power is defined as that "for (to help) another person" (Kleiber, 1980, p. 35) and seems to approximate to the goal of empowering athletes. A philosophy of empowerment aims to make athletes increasingly responsible for their own performances by giving them a degree of ownership over them. In this way, athletes can, theoretically, become knowledgeable about the options available to them and take greater control over their own development (Arai, 1997). Such a situation does not, of course, signify the elimination of power, rather it is a "rational acceptance of all de facto powers" (Crozier, 1973, p. 224). Within sports coaching, such an approach could lead to increased commitment from athletes because they are making a greater investment of self in the process. However, questions about the potential of athlete empowerment remain underdeveloped, both in theory and in practice. A principal issue raised in this respect concerns the depth and impact of athlete input following consultation; that is, what are the constraints on "full and free" participation in the sporting decision making process? (Hardy, 1995). In response, early work by Bachrach and Baratz (1963, 1970) developed the concept of a second phase of power— "a process whereby issues are excluded from decision making, confining the agenda to 'safe' questions [as it] allows the more powerful actors to determine outcomes from behind the scenes" (Hardy, 1995, p. xvi). Perhaps, therefore, coaches only

allow their athletes to have an illusion of empowerment as they continue to control the agenda items. Similarly, Lukes (1974) has argued that power can be used to prevent conflict if it is employed to shape "perceptions, cognitions and preferences in such a way" that those subject to it can imagine no alternative and thus just "accept their role in the existing order of things" (p. 24). In this respect, athletes, or anyone subject to power, may be "duped, hoodwinked, coerced, cajoled, or manipulated into political inactivity" (Saunders, 1980, p. 22) if they perceive their lot to be a satisfactory one. In this way, a coach's legitimacy is created and, here again, it could be argued that the perceptions held by athletes, and the ways they are created by coaches, remain at the heart of the issue.

Conclusion

Although the three concepts of role, interaction, and power have, for the most part, been presented individually here, it is in their intersection that the key areas of investigation for coaching lie. Furthermore, through a social inquiry into the everyday actions and strategies of coaches, we might gain a better understanding of the complexity that is the coaching environment, on how coaches attempt to manipulate it, and how they cope with the multitude of variations that exist within it. Additionally, through the use of a framework as presented, the possibility exists to address these questions: What sort of power relations do different coaches establish with athletes? What faces or fronts do they present in different circumstances and why? In what sort of interactions do they engage with various participants within the coaching process? Additionally, if a principal locus of the coach's power lies in athletes' perceptions, how long can they expect the latter to buy into their fronts, impressions, and power bases, or do they need to be constantly developed and amended, lest they lose their impact? In this way, a more critical understanding of the complexity of the coaching process could be achieved.

Finally, by underpinning empirical research with the concepts discussed in this paper, sociological analysis "provides a reminder that the 'taken for granted' world does not have to be taken for granted; that we may be able to do something about it if we have a mind to" (Shaw, 1981, p. 71). In turn, such understanding and awareness can result in a "certain openness to new ideas, to alternatives, to improvement" (Hellison & Templin, 1991, p. 9), and that must be a worthy goal for coaching practice.

References

Abraham, A., & Collins, D. (1998). Examining and extending research in coach development. *Quest*, **50**, 59-79.

Arai, S.M. (1997). Empowerment: From the theoretical to the personal. *Journal of Leisurability*, **23**(1), 3-11.

Armour, K.M., & Fernandez-Balboa, J.M. (2000). *Connections, pedagogy and professional learning.* Paper presented at CEDAR 8th International Conference, University of Warwick, England, 20-22 March.

Armour, K.M., & Jones, R.L. (2000). The practical heart within: The value of the sociology of sport. In R.L. Jones, & K.M. Armour (Eds.), *Sociology of sport: Theory and practice* (pp.1-10). London: Addison Wesley Longman.

Bachrach, P., & Baratz, M.S. (1970). *Power and poverty*. London: Oxford University Press.

Bachrach, P., & Baratz, M.S. (1963). Decisions and nondecisions: An analytical frame-work. *American Political Science Review*, **57**, 641-651.

Bell, K. (1989). *Coaching excellence*. Austin, TX: Keel

Benfari, R.C., Wilkinson, H.E., & Orth, C.D. (1986). The effective use of power. *Business Horizons*, **29**, 12-16.

Blum, L. (1994). *Moral judgment and particularity*. Cambridge: University press.

Borrie, A. (1996). Coaching science. In T. Reilly (Ed.), *Science and soccer* (pp. 243-258). London: E & FN Spon.

Branaman, A. (2000). Goffman's social theory. In C. Lemert, & A. Branaman, (Eds.), *The Goffman reader* (pp. xlv-lxxxii). Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Branhart, A. (1994). *Erving Goffman: The presentation of the self in everyday life*. [On Line] Available: http://www.cfmc.com/adamb/writings/goffman.htm.

Brewer, C.J., & Jones, R.L. (2001). *A five-stage process for establishing contextually valid systematic observation systems*. Manuscript submitted for publication.

Callero, P. (1994). From role-playing to role using: Understanding role as a resource. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, **57**(3), 228-243.

Coakley, J.J. (1994). *Sport and society: Issues and controversies* (5th. ed.). St. Louis, MO: C.V. Mosby.

Cote, J., Salmela, J.H., Trudel, P., Baria, A., & Russell, S. (1995). The coaching model: A grounded assessment of expert gymnastic coaches' knowledge. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, **17**(1), 1-17.

Cross, N., & Lyle, J. (1999). Preface. In N. Cross & J. Lyle (Eds.), *The coaching process: Principles and practice for sport* (pp. vii-x). Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Crozier, M. (1973). *The problem of power*. Aldershot, England: Dartmouth Publishing.

Cushion, C., Armour, K.M., & Jones, R.L. (2000). *Critically mapping coaching research: Understanding socially dynamic practice*. Manuscript submitted for publication.

Dunning, E. (1986). The sociology of sport in Europe and the United States: Critical obser-vations from an 'Eliasian' perspective. In R. Rees & A. Miracle (Eds.), *Sport and social theory* (pp.29-56). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics

French, J.R.P., Jr., & Raven, B. (1959). The bases of social power. In D. Cartwright (Ed.), *Studies in social power* (pp. 150-167). Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Goffman, E. (1969). *Where the action is*. London: Penguin Press

Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

Hardy, C. (1995). Introduction. In C. Hardy (Ed.), *Power and politics in organizations* (pp. xiii-xxv). Aldershot: Dartmouth.

Hargreaves, J. (1986). *Sport, power and culture*. Polity Press: Cambridge.

Heise, D.R. (1977). Social action as the control of affect. *Behavioral Science*, **22**, 163-167.

Heise, D.R. (1979). *Understanding events: Affect and the construction of social action*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Hellison, D., & Templin, T. (1991). *A reflective approach to teaching physical education*. Champaign, IL.: Human Kinetics.

Jones, R.L., Armour, K.M., & Potrac, P.A. (in press). *The cultures of coaching*. London: Addison Wesley Longman.

Jones, R.L. (2001). Applying empowerment in coaching: Some considerations. In L. Kidman (Ed.), *Developing decision makers: An empowerment approach to coaching* (pp. 83-94). Christchurch: Innovative Communications.

Jones, R.L. (2000). Toward a sociology of coaching. In R.L. Jones & K.M. Armour (Eds.), *The sociology of sport: Theory and practice* (pp.33-43). London: Addison Wesley Longman.

Kleiber, D.A. (1980). The meaning of power in sport. *International Journal of Sport Psychology*, **11**, 34-41.

Lemert, C. (1997). *Social things: An introduction to the sociological life*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.

Locke, L.F. (1985). Research and the improvement of teaching: The professor as the problem. In G. Barrette, R. Feingold, R. Rees, & M. Pieron (Eds.), *Myths, models and methods in sport pedagogy* (pp. 1-26). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Lukes, S. (1993). Three distinctive views of power compared. In M. Hill (Ed.), *The policy process: A reader* (pp. 50-58). London: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Lukes, S. (1974). *Power: A radical view*. London: Macmillan.

Lyle, J. (1999a). Coaching philosophy and coaching behavior. In N. Cross & J. Lyle (Eds.), *The coaching process: Principles and practice for sport* (pp.25-46). Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Lyle, J. (1999b). The coaching process: An overview. In N. Cross & J. Lyle (Eds.), *The coaching process: Principles and practice for sport* (pp. 3-24). Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.

May, R. (1972). *Power and innocence*. New York: W.W. Norton.

McDonald, M.G., & Birrell, S. (1999). Reading sport critically: A methodology for interrogating power. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, **16**, 283-300.

Nyberg, D. (1981). *Power over power*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press

Potrac, P. (2001). *A comparative study of elite football coaches in England and Norway*. Unpublished PhD dissertation, Brunel University, UK.

Potrac, P., Brewer, C., Jones, R.L., Armour, K.M.., & Hoff, J. (2000). Toward an holistic understanding of the coaching process. *Quest*, **52**, 186-199.

Raffel, S. (1998). Revisiting role theory: Roles and the problem of the self. *Sociological Research Online*, **4**(2). Available: http://www.socresonline.org.uk/4/2/raffel.html

Sage, G. (1989). Becoming a high school coach: From playing sport to coaching. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, **60**(1), 81-92.

Sarbin, T.R. (1995). Emotional life, rhetoric and roles. *Journal of Narrative and Life History*, **5**(3), 213-220.

Saunders, P. (1980). *Urban politics: A sociological interpretation*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Scheibe, K.E. (1979). *Mirrors, masks, lies and secrets*. New York: Praeger

Schwalbe, M.L. (1987). Mead among the cognitivists: Roles as performance imagery. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior*, **17**, 113-133.

Shaw, B. (1981). *Educational practice and sociology: An introduction*. Oxford: University Press.

Shetty, Y.K. (1978). Managerial power and organizational effectiveness: A contingency analysis. *Journal of Management Studies*, **15**, 176-186.

Slack, T. (1997). *Understanding sport organizations: The application of organization theory*. Champaign IL: Human Kinetics.

Squires, G. (1999). *Teaching as a professional discipline*. London: Falmer Press

Strean, W. (1998). Possibilities for qualitative research in sport psychology. *The Sport Psychologist*, **12**, 333-345.

Tauber, R. T. (1985). *French and Raven's power bases: An appropriate focus for educational researchers and practitioners*. Paper presented at the Educational Research Association Craft Knowledge seminar, 12th April, Stirling, Scotland.

Tomlinson, A. (1998). Power: Domination, negotiation and resistance in sports cultures. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, **22**(3), 235-240.

Troyer, L., & Younts, C.W. (1997). Whose expectations matter? The relative power of first- and second-order expectations in determining social influence. *American Journal of Sociology*, **103**(3), 692-732.

Usher, R. (1998). The story of the self: Education, experience and autobiography. In M. Erben (Ed.), *Biography and education: A reader* (pp.18-31). London: Falmer Press.

Weber, M. (1978). *The protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism*. London: Allen & Unwin.

Welbourne, T.M., Johnson, D.E., & Elez, A. (1998). The role-based performance scale: Validity analysis of a theory-based measure. *Academy of Management Journal*, **41**(5), 540-555.

Williams, R. (1998). Erving Goffman. In R. Stones (Ed.), *Key sociological thinkers* (pp.151-162). Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Woodman, L. (1993). Coaching: A science, an art, an emerging profession. *Sport Science Review*, **2**(2), 1-13.

Authors' Note