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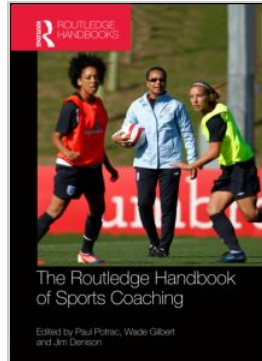
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Coaching and Professionalisation

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Abstract

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Coaching and Professionalisation Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the professionalisation of sports coaching. It seeks to meet three main objectives: (1) locating professionalisation as it relates to sports coaching and the sports coach in a historical and policy context; (2) reviewing existing and emerging research contributions that consider wider notions of professionalism, professionalisation and the professions; and (3) proposing a number of explicit research areas and questions which remain as yet unanswered, but are inherent in the continuing professionalisation of sports coaching and the coach. In conclusion, we argue that this process is neither benign nor innocent, and, as it gathers pace, will recast both those who acquire professional status into 'new agents of sport' as well as those who have been educated procedurally and thus bound by regulation and governance. In doing so, we suggest it may realign the existing

volunteer leaving them uncertain, marginalised and vulnerable to the increasing influence of state-defined policy.

The professionalisation of coaching in a historical and policy context

Like many academic considerations of coaching, the history of the activity has, until recently, been given scant regard (Day 2010; Phillips 2000). One exception to this lack of attention has been the special issue of the journal *Sport in History* (2010), which devoted its entire contents to the history of coaching cultures.

In the United Kingdom (UK), it was the emergence of the professional athlete in sports such as pedestrianism, pugilism and swimming which, in turn, helped establish and legitimise a systematic form of coaching engagement (Day 2010). Those individuals who were involved in the deliberate training and instruction of

others went under a variety of terms. The term 'professor' was commonly used by those who had once been professional and now trained for competition. The transfer of knowledge was often key to the oral tradition within the family and onto athletes in the immediate geographical location, who themselves became professional. This aspect that is evident from a large amount of research conducted

is that there was a growing sense of craft knowledge about these athlete/coach engagements in which there was little separation between 'the knowledge of' and 'the ability to do' coaching. Cataloguing of the methods, tactics, practices and

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philosophies employed were kept to a minimum, were isolated and received limited public scrutiny. This culture of knowledge is often referred to as tacit knowledge, where 'we can know more than we can tell' (Polanyi 2009: x).

It was with the emergence of the middle classes in the late nineteenth century that the regulation and codification of sporting activities and, by implication, modern coaching, began. Born from the public school system from which the new breed of sports administrators came, the philosophy of the virtuous amateur saw the slow demise of the professional coach. This change in occupational make-up was not uniform across all sports and, as Foucault (1972) argues, while individuals may be subject to a shared history, it is their relationships to the structures of power and subordination which determine their trajectories from any epoch or historical moment.

The status of coaching as an occupation has recently been the focus for a number of inquiries in different countries (e.g. UK: Lyle 2002; Taylor and Garratt 2007, 2008, 2010a, 2010b; Canada: CAC 2010; China: Li et al. 2007; He et al. 2009), reflecting the significant global growth in the vocation of coaching. Recently, the International Council for Coach Education (ICCE) has also considered this issue (Duffy et al. 2010), while national lead organisations have begun to consider how the term 'profession' relates to their coaching systems and coaches (Sports Coach UK 2008; South African Sport Confederation and Olympic Committee 2010).

Up until the late 1960s and early 1970s,

within the UK successive governments had what can be described as a 'distance approach' to sport, its National Governing Bodies (NGBs) and the coaching practices found therein (Houlihan 1997; Roche 1993). Individual NGBs and their coaches were seen as the 'experts in the field', and their autonomy and sovereignty was recognised and valued by both sides (Green and Houlihan 2005). The 1970s saw a number of government reports and policy documents which began to draw tighter links between sport and the state (e.g. Cobham Report 1973). Few of these documents made any explicit reference to the occupation of coaching; however, they had aspirations to alter the relationship between sport and government at a fundamental level. This structured an agenda to employ sport (and by implication its coaches) as a social and welfare tool thereby bringing it to the attention of a wider body of policy makers concerned with the welfare state (Brown and Butterfield 1992; Roche 1993). The following decade thus saw a more explicit focus on coaching. The Great Britain Sports Council strategy, Sport in the Community: The Next Ten Years (Sports Council 1982), provided grants to NGBs for elite coaching and its development. Both Coaching, Sports Science and Sports Medicine (Sports Council for Wales 1987) and A National Strategy for Coach Education and Coach Development (Scottish Sports Council 1988) followed suit and produced their own documents with the intention of enabling coaching to develop. Coaching Matters: A Review of Coaching and Coach Education (Sports Council 1991) and later, the UK Sports Council's The Development

of Coaching in the United Kingdom: A Consultative Document (1991) formalised this call for a more integrated approach and focused direction. In *Coaching Matters: A Review of Coaching and Coach Education* it was suggested that:

the dogged manner in which a number of our governing bodies have hung onto outdated attitudes, some of which have their roots in the 19th century amateurism [and that] governing body administrators and the national coaches appear to work in parallel universes ... lip-service was paid to early coach education programmes.

([Sports Council 1991:14](#))

The criticisms gained little affection or tolerance within the realm of NGBs whose collective representative in the shape of the Central Council for Physical Recreation (CCPR) maintained the position of defence:

the increasing influence that Government manifestly sought to exert on sport and sport's governing bodies at local, regional, and international levels, for reasons which are sometimes unclear, necessitated constant vigilance if sport was to retain the uniquely British tradition of independent management.

([Sports Council 1991:10](#))

More recently, there has been a proliferation of debate concerning the professionalisation of coaching and the establishment of a framework for a coaching profession ([DCMS 2002](#); [Sports Council 1991](#); [Sports Coach UK 2009](#); [UK Sport 2001](#)). For example, in their *UK Vision for Coaching*, [UK Sport \(2001: 5\)](#) strongly recommended that the standards of

coaching be elevated to those of 'a profession acknowledged as central to the development of sport and the fulfilment of individual potential'. Following the publication of the Government's Plan for Sport (DCMS 2001), came the establishment of a Coaching Task Force set up to review the role of coaching and to tackle:

the shortage of coaches, both professional and voluntary, and recognise coaching as a profession, with accredited qualifications and a real career development structure.

(DCMS 2001:5)

This ambition was developed in response to earlier concerns regarding the lack of standards for coaching and strategies for training and employment, which have tended to evolve informally in concert with the many and diverse traditions of sports coaching UK-wide (Sports Council 1991).

The catalogue of public policy and state documentation relating to the professionalisation of coaching offers us a useful barometer of the shifting discourses and their associated language. It would be simply too crude to suggest that there has been a 'single moment' where government became interested in sport and, by implication, its coaches and the activity of coaching. However, from the Wolfenden Report: Sport and the Community of 1960 (CCPR 1960) to the UK Coaching Framework of 2008 (Sports Coach UK 2008), there has been a perceptive, yet fractured and discontinuous call for the organisation and regulation of coaches, coaching systems and coach education (Houlihan and Green 2009). Few, however, have gone as far as

offering details on the actual workings of the professionalisation process. This was so until the publication of the UK Coaching Framework. This framework fleshed out the details of the commitment to professionalise the act of sports coaching and also provided a six point strategic action plan.

Research contributions that consider notions of professionalism, professionalisation and the professions

For a number of authors (e.g. Freidson 2001; Lawson 2004), professionalisation and the professions were seen in a positive light. They suggested that this 'third logic of modernity' (Freidson 2001) protected both the public and acted as a buffer to the prevalence of over-zealous state intervention. It was also argued that it provided a legitimate occupational outlet for those individuals who with education, service ideals and particular skills wished to establish themselves in a professional setting that offered status and reward. Overall, while these treatments have been beneficial in as much as they outlined the characteristics of existing professions, established the key elements of a distinct knowledge base, and prolonged engagement with education and membership of a professional body, they have failed to treat the professionalisation process in a more critical manner. This critical dialogue with the discourses of professionalism is significant and necessary as the emergence of new professions becomes a key feature of modernity and its concomitant occupational developments (McEwan and Taylor 2010).

In the latter half of the twentieth century, the archetypal professional groups came under increasing scrutiny and attack from a number of sources. Governments of Western Europe, North America and Australasia began to treat the professions with a degree of suspicion, aligned with a political shift to a regime of neo-liberal policy making and market economics. These professional groups (a) were seen as representing protected market advantage through membership status and restricted education; and (b) their influence in the public sector (health, education and social services) was seen as a hurdle in the re-evaluation of government funding for these sectors and related manner of their working practices. In concert with this, the public's trust in the professions began to wane. A number of high profile scandals ranging from the treatment of Rodney King in the United States (policing), the inappropriate behaviour of medical staff (Alder Hey Hospital in the UK) and the reluctance of the Catholic Church to take responsibility for the actions of some of their clergy (allegations of child abuse), all added to a breakdown in the social contract, cited at the heart of traditional practice and professionalism. Various governments took this as an opportunity to argue for re-regulation of existing professionals and their organisations. For those emerging groups who were seeking professionalisation, government subjected them to a series of managerially inspired conditions, which had their roots in the mechanisms of the audit culture and a raft of procedural constraints (McEwan and Taylor 2010).

Freidson (1973) suggests that the professionalisation pathway of any occupation is neither linear nor uniform. Nor is it without problems, for each occupation has its own nuanced history and educational culture, which serve to establish new professional relationships and boundaries. While we might draw some parallels with other groups and emerging occupations, when considering sports coaching we must be mindful of the historical and situational nuances of sport and its coaching activity. Indeed, one of the central criticisms we offer against the state's notion of professionalism as manifested in discourses articulated by the state and its central sports bodies (in the UK), is that it is totalising in effect. That is, it offers, and presumes to deal with, all sports and all coaches in a unified and somewhat prescriptive manner (Taylor and Garratt 2010a, 2010b). In doing so, it has mirrored, as best it can, the experiences of other 'new' professional occupations. This conceptual massification, while offering simplified solutions to a perceived common problem, has few sympathies with the fragmented nature and individual cultural histories that have moulded both the belief and culture of sport and practice of coaching.

Adopting a rationalistic and functionalist perspective, much of the literature has tried, with varying degrees of success, to benchmark where coaching as an occupation was within the professionalisation process, and has made further suggestions to enable the coaching community to move forward. Yet, at no time was any critical, conceptual

understanding shown of the cultural, historical and situational complexities engendered within the individual sports systems of different countries (Houlihan and Green 2008). Nor was any level of awareness demonstrated towards the individual and unique position of coaches in terms of their professional development. This dual preoccupation with 'policy borrowing' (where policy is imported from other countries on the assumption of a natural cultural 'fit') (Phillips and Ochs 2003) and benchmarking (particular grades of coaching in a predetermined march towards professional status), disregarded both the complexity and nuanced nature of NGBs, and the culturally rich heritage of British coaching as a whole. Ironically, in fact, these assumptions served to divert attention away from a form of organic development that would have allowed coaches and their sports the opportunity to move beyond limiting structures of volunteerism. In doing so, they could have moved towards something of an emerging profession, one that was mindful of its own history and location(s), yet which intended to bring the ambitions of practising coaches to the forefront in its own efforts to fashion professional definitions, understandings and occupational boundaries.

Lyle (2002) considers the professionalisation process in his book *Sports Coaching Concepts: A Framework for Coaches' Behaviour*. He suggests that achieved status for coaches could be gained by the acquisition of certified qualifications and its position could be enhanced by the 'increasing scientification

of practice and the value placed on sport itself' (Lyle 2002: 200). Within this, he alludes to the lack of theoretical analysis of sports coaching and the inclusion of the professional status of coaching by suggesting much of the critical commentary and empirical research has been 'issues focused'. Other authors, namely Nichols (2003, 2005, 2006; Nichols et al. 2004; Nichols et al. 2005) (working within a British and European context), have addressed the changing perspective of the role of NGBs under the guise of state-inspired moderation policies. These bodies have been central players in the development of new structures to support the education and promotion of coaches and coaching in the UK. Thus, to discuss the professionalisation of sports coaching and its individual practice without paying due attention to these organisations is, in fact, failing to give appropriate consideration to their importance in the future development of the professionalisation movement.

Gaps in the market

There is a notable scarcity of research and writings explicitly dealing with the professionalisation of sports coaching. In fact, rather than referring to gaps in the research literature, it might be more accurate to identify the limited nature of documented offerings to date. The available research has dealt with the professionalisation of sports coaching in a conceptual manner, placing the act as a political one that is best studied as an expression of the state's extension of neo-liberal managerialism into occupations that had once been the preserve of the

volunteer sector (Taylor and Garratt 2008, 2010a, 2010b). While we would like to argue this work had some merit in as much as it located the subject as one of concern, there is much that we do not understand and is necessary if we are to move the debate forward. Lyle (2002) and Lyle and Cushion (2010) have argued that achieving understanding and clarity about what the nature of coaching actually is can only be achieved when a clear demarcation exists between the acts of the sports leader (basic introductory role), the sports coach instructor (mainly developing skills), and the sports coach (working within competition focus). This boundary clarification process, if achieved, would certainly aid research into professionalisation, for then we can consider particular groups and stages of the process without the shortcomings of treating all activity and engagement relating to sports coaching as being one and the same. In treating sport and its organisational bodies as a single collective entity and presenting its struggles with the amateur/professional, volunteer/full-timer binaries as the sole foci of epistemological concern, we risk underplaying nuances, the various and subtle shifts in individual sport locations, spaces and emplotments. In addition, there are a number of contested and contradictory movements within coaching and sports administration that require further expression. One historical characteristic of a 'professional' is that they are often asked to make decisions that are located within a framework of implied autonomy. The trust between coach and athlete that allows coaches to act on their behalf, can only

work if central to coach education is the concept of self-governance. This is where decision making operates within a context of ethical engagement, and where there is appropriate resistance of central regulation that serves to inhibit professionalism through various prescribed forms of behaviour.

Professionalisation, professionalism and professional practice are not end points; their definitions and characteristics are under continuous tension while responding to levels of expectation from government, other professions and changes in public and sporting demand (Taylor and Garratt 2008, 2010a, 2010b). The developing profession of sports coaching will have to respond to athletes, participants, employers, international structures and shifting market demands. The catalogue of public policy and state documentation relating to the professionalisation of coaching have matured in status from general statements of intent to timetables of practice and policy implementation. The increasing centrality and governance articulated in such recent formal documents is both an example of, and central to the notion of new managerialism and the development of the new professions as envisaged by the politics of neo-liberalism.

A research agenda for professionalisation and the sports coach

In this section, we would like tentatively to set a proposed agenda for those who wish to conduct research in and around the professionalisation of sports coaching. In doing so we foreground four research

topics. These are ones which we believe are worthy of detailed consideration and are also areas where little or no research has been conducted. We do not present these as an exhaustive list, but more a representation of the questions we have asked ourselves in the process of our own work born from our enquiries and critical perspectives. We would also contend that not only do these topics have academic value, but they should also be a central concern to the wider sports' coaching community; those sporting bodies whose remit is the development of coaching policy; and those individuals who are charged with the development of coach education syllabi and research programmes.

The perspective of the traditional volunteer and the professionalisation

There is little doubt that a version of professionalisation, one that represents the aspirations of coaches themselves, could bring forth many advantages for a range of individuals and groups. This requires a model that has at its core the strong sense of community that many sports organisations, clubs and coaches espouse. Indeed, it is this sense of service and duty, similar in nature and ethos to that found in existing established professions that must be built upon. This is crucial if, in time, coaching is to re-evaluate itself as having the same status as other professional groups found elsewhere in the service and commercial sectors. There are few, if any, professions that have seen this degree of transformation, especially given the distinct

historical influences of sports coaching's volunteer and 'mutual aid' foundations. Although there may have been some calls from within coaching communities for coaching to develop its own professional practices and to raise its own status, it has never been politically or occupationally strong enough to enact such change. With a state-imposed professionalisation agenda, any mechanisms of change must take account of the fragmented nature of coaching in the UK and thus be sympathetic to the insecurities this transformation is likely to engender.

Once at the heart of sports coaching, the traditional volunteer is now perceived to be recast, debarred and excluded from the very activity that previously defined their existence. Thus, not only has there been a change in the relationship between what is and what is not valued, but the multiple and diverse relationships that once served to support coaching emplotments are now also subject to radical redefinition. At one time, the key relationship of the sports coach was defined in conjunction with the athlete(s) and clubs; at the level of community volunteer, it was the athlete and sports community who operated as the main arbiters of value and currency. Clearly, in some cases, these important relationships will continue to define practice and success within contexts of performance and engagement. The present movements towards certification and qualifications, we argue, have fundamentally changed the relationship between coach and athlete, and coach and club. Once the arbiters of local currency, this role has now been adopted by the

state through their requirements to gain certification in a culture of performativity and credentialism. What remains is to ask what model of professionalism do the majority of coaches aspire to? Can we really talk of a professionalisation of practice while it remains fundamentally voluntary in nature? Is there room for professionalism without a coaching profession? Is the professionalisation of the volunteers' practice enough to satisfy these calls? If a university degree education is seen as a prerequisite before claiming the status of professional coach, where does that leave the willing parent and/or ex-player?

The commodification of knowledge

We now offer our perspective on the commodification of experience, knowledge and practice. One central facet of the growth of a new managerialism approach to the professionalisation of coaching is the manner in which it has altered the way knowledge is valued through the commodification of experience. This notion of professionalisation is concurrently aligned with the importance awarded to gaining new knowledge(s) and undertaking ongoing professional development. The premise is that modern professionals should be informed, accountable for their own knowledge base, and regulated in their achievement. Experience is often required to be documented, detailed, recorded and offered externally for comment, examination and evaluation. Applying a Foucauldian lens to the issue (Foucault 1994), it can be seen as a mechanism of the 'conduct of one's conduct', where the virtuous self, the

newly professionalised coach, judges the value of practice by reference to the ascription of internalized criteria rather than by their own authentic value systems. The subject is now held accountable for their own currency, the responsibility for experience and documentation is theirs alone, but the value given to that experience is not. The self-disciplined coach self-regulates their own ongoing training through the appeasement of prescribed formulae answering to the calls to be current and up to date. [Foucault \(1991\)](#) goes on to state:

The power of normalisation imposes homogeneity; but it is individualized by making it possible to measure gaps, to determine levels, to fix specialities and to render the difference useful by fitting them against one another ... the norm introduces, as a useful imperative and as a result of measurement, all the shading of individual differences.

[\(Foucault 1991:184\)](#)

Therefore, the normalisation of knowledge becomes a disciplining act in itself, with some individuals requiring more discipline than others ([Foucault 1982, 1991](#)). Those coaches who are no longer current, who have yet to convert from old systems (pre-professionalised) to the new (professionalised), and those who need to update in order to maintain their 'right' to practice, are systematically identified by degrees of compliance.

Not only has the act of acquiring of knowledge become subject to standardisation, but so has knowledge itself. Knowledge is now valued by its

instrumental efficiency, for its usefulness and utility. Experience is to be consumed as an isolated, siloed exercise, as a weekend or two-day module where knowledge and practice is sanitised, episodically packaged and sold as a regime of corrective technical training (see [Jones et al. 2004](#) for an interesting account of elite rugby coach Ian McGeechan). Rarely is the training located in the sporting space of the individual's practice, where contextualisation is more readily available and local conditions mediate the learning. Evidence from education research strongly indicates that this type of de-contextualised Continuing Professional Development (CPD) often fails to render long-term improvements in practice ([Askew et al. 1997](#); [Bennett et al. 2010](#); [Cordingley et al. 2003](#)).

This form of orthodoxy, where experience is automatically conflated with knowledge acquisition, removes the role of subjective learning and reflection from the individual and, in turn, embeds the process, albeit falsely, within the content of the programme itself. The syllabus is often aligned directly to so-called practice competences, ones that can be copied, repeated, measured and recorded. The conclusion of this bringing together of experience with the consumption of knowledge as a purely instrumental endeavour, devalues reflective consideration and nullifies the potency for experience to be part of a developmental and practice-based notion of learning. Reflection on, with, and for learning is no longer required as the learning objectives of these blocks of experience are clearly

stated and benchmarked against external criteria. This criticism is not to relegate the notion of further coach education and training to be valueless, but rather to argue that the removal of the individual's power to determine their own educational needs resonates with the move toward a technocratic model of knowledge consumption, its application and usage. Where knowledge acquisition, development and application becomes an instrumental experience, the emergence of counter and novel ways of practice become problematic, if not actively discouraged by the agents of legitimisation. Organic practice that is born from habitus (Bourdieu 1990), inspired experience is relegated and forgotten because it is seen as local, restricted, individualised and pertinent only to particular sporting spaces and demands.

What remains is to ask what model of professional education can be utilised in order to allow a more holistic notion of knowledge-based practice? How can professional currency be valued and ascertained through a value placed on organic delivery and practice? To what degree will coaches be allowed to value and consider their own non-mediated learning opportunities? And can these sit alongside more formulaic notions of professional education?

Working outside of convention

The identification and regulation of a knowledge base has commonly been cited as a precursor to the legitimisation of any group gaining professional status. Unfortunately, by definition, this movement to claim ownership to the educational

processes by which knowledge is acquired and defined will include and exclude certain ways of knowing and exhibiting knowledge. We would argue that this process is both a political act inasmuch as vested interests and discourses will be served, and sets to define not just what is valued, but also who is valued. Any coach who is seen as a practitioner of 'alternative delivery' could be viewed as nonconformist and cast aside as 'non-professional', lying outside agreed convention.

The maverick, often valued and accommodated in the past for bringing forth novel and radical practices of coaching, is effectively ostracised, remaining non-valued in both an ideological and certificated sense.

Advancements in coaching and sporting practices have often been found outside the conventions of so-called perceived wisdom. Those whose education, influences and environments sit apart from the constraining forces of institutional and institutionalised processes may, in fact, be in the best place to find alternative and novel ways of delivery and thinking about the practices of coaching. Without access to the various avenues of legitimation by which such novel thinkers can gain an audience and tolerance for their 'heresy', are we in danger of strangling innovation through the sanitisation of the process of recognising, reproducing and certificating those who are deemed professional? If, in the scramble to ring-fence what is and is not professional knowledge, do we exclude novel, contradictory and counter-hegemonic thoughts and prevent such notions from contesting the status quo?

Moreover, do we risk the chance of stagnating the knowledge base, as vested interests serve to protect and preserve existing bodies of thought?

What we wish to consider is where does tacit, innovative or marginalised knowledge feature in the new model of the professionalised coach? For tacit knowledge, where 'we know more of than we can speak', is embedded in the craft-based histories and non-mediated learning that characterise much coaching practice. If, by the nature of it being only exhibited within practice, where does tacit knowledge fit in the professionalisation process? Its resistance to be regulated and measured casts it outside the domain of traditional knowledge accumulation, a procedure espoused by many professions ([Nettleton et al. 2008](#)). For some, being the 'knowledgeable other', the knowing professional, requires a display of knowledge that is underpinned by evidence-based practice, research and higher forms of training. Without the ability to support and justify practice, to create opportunities for tacit knowledge to be made more genetically explicit, is the tacit dimension then to be cast aside and demoted? If this form of knowledge and 'knowing' can be displayed and witnessed only by the actions of the coach, then it may be lost to more traditional forms of professional education as it is based on instinctive practice and not necessarily cognitive understanding. This model of a coach who is encouraged to see knowledge as something to be displayed, observed and recorded, and not something intuitively personalised, organic

and directly related to the individual's sporting disposition, devalues much of the craft-based knowledge which historically coaches have possessed. By building up the professional status of those who seek to privilege particular forms of propositional knowledge, behaviour and practice, will we retard the organic development of difference, diversity and individuality?

The new professional landscape

Sport and, by implication, the majority of coaches are required to be part of the health and welfare intervention movement. These new roles, implicit in wider health discourses, have yet to be articulated in the fields and domains of coaching where they remain unspoken, but nevertheless powerful in as much as they fashion the future. This multiplicity of roles and identities widens the remit of coaching but, at the same time, brings additional issues of confusion and tension, with critics suggesting that coaches of the new profession have been reduced to mere technicians through a loss of autonomy and increasing accountability (Hursh 2005).

Alongside notions of elite performance, sports coaching can also be regarded as a vehicle through which issues of community involvement and corporate social responsibility may be addressed (Harris 1998; Jarvie 2003). The role of 'sports leaders' and coaches have, thus, been conflated to involve developing the quality of guidance on habitual 'life health practices' and physical activity levels (Lawlor et al. 1999; Parsons et al. 1999). Rhetorically at least, the new 'professional coach' can be seen to encapsulate both an

'official identity' (an embodiment of the new professional orthodoxy through the implementation of a UK-wide system of certification) and a moral identity, in which core moral purposes are combined with objectives towards widening participation, ambitions to promote social inclusion and the development of social capital. This redefinition of the coach as an agent of the welfare state brings an accompanying demand for coaching to enter into new fields and professional relationships. Not only is there pressure to redefine existing modes of practice, but also an identified need to develop new alliances with other professional groups, whose imposed inclusion may or may not be welcomed as part of a wider social agenda.

Introductions of multi-professional and trans-professional ways of working have led to the formation of new identities that force the acquisition of new forms of professional knowledge. Potentially, these bring positive and negative outcomes (Headrick et al. 1998; Kvarnström 2008). On the one hand, new practices may serve to secure the activity of sports coaching within the supportive frame of the welfare state, whereas on the other, coaches are ostensibly subjected to a new and onerous regime of challenging responsibilities; that is, a regime that complicates existing practices while simultaneously conflating professional roles and identities.

Accordingly, the contemporary coach needs to be 'professional' in terms of the acquisition of new forms of knowledge and training, 'capable' in terms of forging new professional networks and relationships, and morally 'compliant' with the imperative

towards community responsibility bestowed by the state. These novel vistas and newly conceived roles for coaches demand new relationships, new forms of accountability and, consequently, new credentialised coaches. The danger is that the newly cast coach will remain unprepared and uneducated for the emerging and implicit roles that will be asked of him/her, in two important senses. In one sense, tentative in terms of habitus and how new fields are likely to emerge. In another, in terms of where and how ontological security can be found within newly imposed identities, identities that are likely to remain in a state of flux for some time to come. For some, these changes will represent new opportunities and an ability to earn a living from their coaching. They have been welcomed by those who feel that the emergence of the market and economic capital will cast forth new relationships within coaching that will benefit their own practice and personal security. In addition, the growth of the market within coaching will allow the participant to select opportunities on price and value (where knowledge exists) and to withdraw patronage where practice remains unsatisfactory. While coaching craft knowledge will continue to find relevant expression within the confines of the coach-athlete relationship, its extant value (capital) is likely to become a form of devalued symbolic capital, as newly defined forms of economic and cultural capital come to the fore and coaching becomes increasingly institutionalised in the name of 'professionalisation'.

Conclusion and ways forward

The process of the professionalisation of coaching and the coach is not innocent. We have argued that the promoted model of professionalism and the professionalising process has, at its core, a new managerial commitment; one that echoes with the primacy of market economics, certification and individual accountability. This is a model where traditional notions of professional autonomy have been replaced by systems, collective 'best practice' and compliance, and which resonates with the audit culture and its various manifestations and proposed solutions ([Beck and Young 2005](#)). Whether this movement serves both the aspirations of the state as well the desire of sporting communities is yet to be decided. Our intention in this chapter has been to move 'beyond the taken for granted' treatment which has been previously applied to questions of professionalisation, and offer a more thoughtful and problematic consideration of a movement that will fundamentally shape the nature of the act of coaching and practice of the coach for years to come.

These research questions will necessitate methodologies and sympathetic approaches that have at their heart an ability to understand more discernibly the nature of the volunteer and professional sports coach, the particular nuances of practice, and shifting demands from athletes, participants, employers and deployers within the field. If these approaches are adopted it is likely that ethnographic and interactionist methodologies would provide the most effective manner by which to examine the

feelings, needs and wishes of these groups. Just as one of the many shortcomings of the models of professionalism is the treatment of coaching as a homogenous practice, we would similarly suggest that research approaches need to be sympathetic and germane to context. Not all sports have the same occupational make-up, history of professional coaches or level of engagement with the market place. Provision and expectation varies between each country, and indeed within countries. Research approaches need to be judged not only on their ability to seek answers to key questions, but also to be mindful of difference and diversity in provision across multiple sporting boundaries.

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