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Women's Experiences of Becoming Elite Track and Field Coaches in New Zealand

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Abstract

Elite coaching is predominantly a male vocation with many of New Zealand's most successful women's teams being coached by men, such as the national women's rugby and hockey teams. Research has identified a number of individual, organisational, and structural constraints to women's progression in coaching. The aim of this study was to examine women's experiences of becoming elite coaches within track and field in New Zealand. The focus was on professional development, and how this was managed; by the coach; the national organisation; or a combination of both. The study gained insight into the complexities associated with women becoming elite coaches; specifically, the complexities associated with professional development for women elite coaches within New Zealand's gendered coaching environment. The methods used in the study were face to face semi structured interviews with three participants who are elite coaches. Two themes around professional development emerged. Firstly, professionalism in coaching and secondly, Athletics New Zealand's professional development and support. The study showed there were several understandings by the participant coaches in regard to both professionalism and Athletics New Zealand's professional development and support. Within New Zealand's gendered track and field elite coaching community, men are privileged over women. This research found that within this community there is little sharing of knowledge or support from the professional coaches, with the participants preferring to gain their knowledge and support from their global networks.

Keywords: Communities of Practice (CoP); Coaching Communities of Practice (CCoP); Landscapes of Practice (LoP); Mentoring; Informal Knowledge Networks (IKN); Critical Feminism

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Presentations and Publications from this Study

Merrilees, J (2013). Coaching knowledges: Where do they come from? Presented (20th October, 2013), at *Sports Café, University of Otago and Sport Otago*, Dunedin, New Zealand.

Merrilees, J. (2014). Women becoming elite performance coaches in track and field in New Zealand. Presented (11th February, 2014), at *Association Internationale des Ecoles Supérieures d'Education Physique Conference*, Auckland, New Zealand.

Cassidy, T., Merrilees, J. & Shaw, S. (submitted). National governing bodies: Sport policy, practice and mentoring. In F. Chambers (Ed.), *Mentoring in physical education and sports coaching*. London: Routledge.

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Prologue

Standing in the outfield officiating in the Senior Men's' hammer throw at the 2012 Track and Field National Championships. Could I afford to glance at my watch? Is this event going to be finished before my sprinter lines up in the final of the 100m sprint? If I glance away is there a chance that the hammer will be thrown and I won't be watching? Maybe someone will try to walk across the sector and I won't be paying attention. Maybe the hammer will hit them? Currently I am an official and I need to focus on this role and put my athlete to the back of my mind. Recorder calls 'final throw', whew thank goodness, I may just be able to get to the bank above the track to watch the 100m. Five minutes later, I have completed my duties and I can make a dash to watch the 100m. I find myself a spot just as I see my athlete being marshalled to the start of the 100m. Great timing! As I settle to watch this race I become aware of someone talking to me; it is another coach and he is telling me he has heard that I am doing some study. I think to myself, can he not see that I am watching a race? Apparently not, so I agree with him and say yes I am doing some study. Apparently this was an invitation for him to then tell me in great detail about his study towards his PhD. Can he not see that I really want to watch a race at this point in time and my athlete is in the blocks? Bang! Sienna (pseudonym) got a pretty average start, being in the middle of the field at around 20 metres. I can see her accelerate and gain back some of the lost distance from the start of the race. I am aware that my peer is still telling me about his study and suddenly he is right in my face and I have missed the end of the 100 metres and will have to wait for the official results to see where Sienna placed, how frustrating! So he says I have only x number of papers to be published and maybe my supervisor would be of some help to you. Really; I don't believe he is even aware of what my study is about. I stand there listening to him for about another 5 minutes all the time wondering where Sienna placed or even if she did. Finally he says it been nice talking, email me and I will get my supervisor to contact you, "oh by the way, what are

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you studying?" I tell him I am looking at women becoming elite performance coaches. He looks at me, laughs and says "but women can't coach!"

Chapter 1

Introduction – New Zealand Women in Leadership and Elite Coaching

New Zealand has been recognised as a world leader in creating opportunities for women to cross the historical and traditional male boundaries. In 1877, Kate Edger became the first woman in New Zealand and indeed The British Empire to gain a Bachelor of Arts degree (Edger, Kate Milligan, 2014). In 1893 New Zealand led the world by awarding all women in New Zealand the right to vote in parliamentary elections. This same right was not awarded to British or American women until after the 1st World War, some 25 years later (New Zealand Women and the Vote, 2014). Since then increasing numbers of women in New Zealand have gone to university, climbed mountains and played sport. By the late 1980s the *Girls can do Anything* campaign was well established and the idea promoted in this campaign had become widely accepted within New Zealand (Women's Movement, Girls can do anything. 2014).

Currently, it appears that as a country we are still celebrating the success of women in leadership roles. In 2013, at the *Women on Boards New Zealand* inaugural awards night, Dr Alison Paterson was honoured as the first recipient of the Supreme Award in Governance. Dr Paterson was hailed as a trail blazer for women in governance and leadership. Her achievements are numerous.¹ Lesley Whyte, CEO of *Women on Boards NZ* described the awards night as extremely successful, however she warned that New Zealand is a long way off achieving gender diversity in the

¹ 1st woman to receive QBE's chairperson of the year award; 1st female president of a NZ Chamber of Commerce Branch; 1st woman appointed to a producer board; 1st woman appointed to a board of a NZ public company; 2010 awarded Companion of the NZ Order of Merit

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boardroom. She stated, “The research shows that we [NZ] are still languishing at the bottom of the table as a country when it comes to holding positions at board level” (Women on Boards, 2014). Is this the same for women in sport and coaching?

In 2014, more than 120 years since women were awarded the right to vote in New Zealand, comments are still made such as “*but girls can't coach*” that suggest there is still the proverbial ‘glass ceiling’ in coaching in New Zealand. This has led me to investigate the experiences of elite women sport coaches, specifically within track and field in New Zealand.

This thesis has explored women’s experiences of becoming elite coaches in track and field in New Zealand while navigating the gendered environment of coaching. Markula and Pringle (2006) have suggested that historically women have been marginalised in the realm of sport. This research investigated the women’s experiences of becoming elite coaches, and also highlighted the tensions that can be created through gender and power relations. Therefore throughout this thesis there is an underlying theme of looking at the relationships of power through a critical feminist lens.

Setting the Scene

I have been involved in coaching for over 30 years and have a deep passion for the practice of coaching. I began coaching netball in what was then a totally female sport. After approximately 10 years I changed to coaching track and field, primarily because my children decided track and field was the sport in which they wanted to be involved. As I became more involved in coaching track and field, I learned more about the principles of training. Discipline specific courses were available through the national sporting body and I consumed these hungrily, eventually undertaking studies at the degree level and more recently post graduate levels.

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I have worked for Athletics NZ several times over the past ten years, predominantly in a volunteer role, holding positions including: co- coordinator of the junior performance development programme; team manager to the World Youth Track and Field Championships; team manager to the Oceania Track and Field Championships and team coach to the Junior Commonwealth Games. Up until 2012, I was the national administrator for the Athletics New Zealand Coaches' Association. In addition, I am also a National Technical Official and as such have officiated at a World Championships for Para-athletes and regularly officiate both at the annual Oceania and New Zealand Track and Field Championships. As I have gained experience as a track and field coach I have become fascinated how social concerns play a major part in roles, expectations, promotions within the world of sport, specifically within coaching pathways. Further I have observed that these concerns appear to be prevalent across several sporting codes.

It is not easy for me to answer the question "why do I coach"? The reasons are complex. Coaching can use a lot of time and energy, not only in the actual coaching but also in the preparation and planning. On the other side, coaching has the ability to create a feeling of belonging, an opportunity to learn and grow, and a chance to work with athletes and empower them to have the belief in their own abilities. There is also the opportunity to have some fun with young people and watch them achieve in their events. It is an absolute privilege to become part of a young athlete's life and watch them develop and mature not only as an athlete but as a young adult.

As a researcher my ontological assumptions are based on my own life experiences. I am still travelling along my own coaching journey and I bring my own experiences to this research. I have become aware that sport is a place where many communities interweave and interact with each other, and consequently relationships of power are always changing (Denison, 2007; Wenger, 1998; Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015). As a coach the

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relationships with personnel change depending on which 'hat you are wearing'. For example, within Athletics NZ, if I discuss issues around young athletes there is a willingness on the part of the hierarchy to listen to what I have to say, but should I venture into the area of 'high performance' it becomes a 'closed shop'. One of the frustrations I have experienced in my coaching was when two young athletes I was coaching were selected to represent New Zealand. During a conversation with the Athletics NZ Director of Coaching he made the comment that I was not one of their (Athletics NZ's) 'identified' coaches. Why was the five years that I had spent coaching them not recognised? Was it because I was a 'mature female coach'? What criteria were being used to make a judgement regarding my status as a non-identified coach? In athletics coaching we often hear the call, particularly from the junior high performance programme manager "that you need to produce an athlete that can represent our country". Many coaches have assumed that this call means that if you can coach a junior athlete to gain selection to represent New Zealand, Athletics NZ would in turn help develop you as a coach to continue to support the athlete to perform on the world stage. Having such support structures in place may reflect a developmental pathway for coaches to progress from being a 'development' coach to becoming an 'elite' coach.

The second experience occurred in 2012 as described in the prologue. This time the experience strengthened my resolve to investigate the process of women becoming elite coaches. The experience occurred when speaking to a male peer who was involved in coaching track and field in New Zealand, but who is now pursuing his PhD. He asked me about the topic I was researching for my Master's degree. When I told him I was interested in women becoming elite coaches he promptly replied, "But girls can't coach" and then laughed. This view of women coaches is still alive and well and is particularly frustrating when two of New Zealand's top athletes in track and field, Stuart Farquhar and Valerie Adams, have been coached to the top by women. The success of these two athletes is evidence that 'girls' can

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indeed coach and what is more they can coach well. Personal experience of frustration in coaching progression and an interest in understanding how relations of power operate gave me a desire to investigate how women become elite coaches.

Sport, Coaching and Relationships of Power

In New Zealand, as in many other countries, sport is highly regarded and success in sport has a good deal of '*mana*²' attached to it (Fitzgerald, 2009). Therefore it would be fair to assume that many aspects of sport play a major role in shaping people's identities, across all sectors of society. One of these is coaching and it is this that is the focus of this study. Sport (and by association coaching) is not only a physical experience; there are important social aspects to be considered, such as friendships, special bonds and common goals. In 1999 Burstyn suggested "the rituals of sport engage more people in a shared experience than any other institution or cultural activity today" (in Coakley, Hallinan, Jackson & Mewett, 2009, p.12).

Yet many researchers agree that sport reflects a masculine discourse, associated with power, toughness, competitiveness and domination over others (Fredericks & Eccles, 2005; Krane, Choi, Baird, Aimar & Kauer, 2004; Kerr & Marshall, 2007; King & McDonald, 2007; Pringle, 2005). What is more Markula and Pringle (2006) suggest that in the sociological literature sport has "typically been positioned as a producer of problematic identities and inequitable gender relations" (p. 92). A consequence of sport reflecting a masculine discourse is that females often have to fight to have the right to play or compete and even when they have gained this right, their participation has been belittled. One such example has been in Australia in 2006 when the Australian Federal Parliament heard submissions from interested

² Mana is defined in English as authority, control, influence, prestige or power. It is also honour. (<http://www.maori.org.nz/tikanga/default.php?pid=sp98&parent>, retrieved 1 July 2014).

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individuals and groups arguing for mandated minimum sports coverage for Women's Sport. A journalist (Greg Baum) working for *The Age* (a newspaper that has a practice of gender privilege, whereby right or advantages are granted to men solely on the basis of their sex) would not support the submissions stating "If women insist on playing sport at all, it should be beach volleyball" (Coakley, Hallinan, Jackson & Mewett, 2009, p.251).

Aim of the Study

The aim of this study was to gain insight into the personal experiences of three women becoming elite performance coaches within the New Zealand track and field community. The women in this study are all recognised elite coaches and as a consequence of participating in the study have brought insights into how they have progressed along their own individual pathways in their journey to become an elite coach. While there are various typologies used to describe the practices of coaches, a common description of an elite coach is someone who has very high commitment levels, and intensive preparation for extremely structured competitions (e.g., Olympic Games and World Championships). This high level commitment is reciprocated by the athlete(s) the coach is working with and these coaches may well be paid full-time (Lyle, 2002; Trudel and Gilbert, 2006). The above description of an elite coach is also used when speaking about high performance coaches. Mallett (2010) states that high performance coaches work at the elite level in sport, thereby combining the concept of elite and high performance. There have been many attempts to define different categories or typologies of coaching with Mallett (2010) suggesting "even within the category of (elite or high-) performance coaching there is significant variation in what coaches do" (p. 120), illustrating the interchangeability of elite and/or high performance. The interchangeable use of elite with high performance is also reflected in the New Zealand track and field community and for this reason; elite and/or high performance will be interchangeable throughout this thesis.

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I was especially interested to hear how females become elite coaches, how they learn their trade, whether they consider their coaching to be work and whether they consider themselves to be professional. I was also interested to hear about the associated power and gender relationships often referred to in sport, and how each coach negotiated these power relationships while travelling their coaching journey to become an elite/high performance coach. Recently, there has been much research into how coaches learn their trade. This research has been viewed from multiple perspectives (e.g., Bloom, Durand-Bush, Schinke & Salmela, 1998; Cassidy & Rossi, 2006; Knowles, Tyler, Gilbourne, & Eubank, 2006; Nelson, & Cushion, 2006; Nelson, Cushion & Potrac, 2006). Understanding how coaches learn to become elite coaches is complex and for this study, multiple lenses will be utilised as explained in Chapter two.

Significance of this Study

Over the past 15 years professional sport has become more prominent in New Zealand. This changing environment from a predominantly volunteer base to some highly paid roles has provided an opportunity for some to pursue coaching as a vocational career. While there are now remunerated roles in coaching, women are under-represented in this field. This is illustrated in the Coach Accelerator Programme (CAP). In 2009 Sport and Recreation (SPARC), now known as High Performance Sport New Zealand (HPSNZ) developed the Coach Accelerator Programme (CAP). To become eligible to participate in the programme the administrators of a sport were required to identify coaches who had the potential to be world class. If chosen to become involved in CAP the coach was given a scholarship (three years, approximately \$70,000 p.a.) and was 'fast tracked' to become an elite coach. In 2012 there were 32 coaches on full CAP scholarships over a range of sports. At that time, 30 of these coaches were male and 2 female. Until 2013, Athletics NZ had not recommended any coaches for this programme. According to the Director of Coaching one of

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the reasons was Athletics NZ had not been able to fulfil the financial requirement of providing half of the funding for the scholarship, approximately \$35,000 p.a. Had Athletics NZ nominated any potential coaches for this programme, it would have created some financial stress for Athletics NZ (Sharapoff, 2012, personal communication). In the projected coaching plan for Athletics New Zealand there was a provision to nominate at least one coach to join the CAP, and in 2013 Joe Hunter has been accepted into the CAP. In 2014 another two male athletics coaches were accepted into the CAP, ensuring that in a supposedly gender balanced sport there are now three male coaches being fast tracked to world class status. Recently there has been a review of the CAP through a Community of Practice lens. Kidman and Penney (2014) found the concept of CoP very relevant to engage with. The research identified that although the CAP was an “externally initiated and resourced programme, the community of coaches and support staff have developed an internal dynamic that has been key to extending learning amongst the members (p. 28).

Another initiative to support the development of coaches within New Zealand is the Prime Ministers' Scholarships. The coaches who have the endorsement of their National sporting organisation can apply for and if successful be awarded a scholarship to an agreed amount as per their application. Athletics New Zealand coaches have been well supported in this initiative with seven coaches both male and female currently receiving scholarships. This study is significant because it investigates whether the environment of elite/high performance coaching within the New Zealand track and field community gives female coaches equal opportunities as males to become elite track and field coaches.

In most respects the format of this thesis conforms to a traditional approach to thesis writing. A coaching journey is not linear, it is a conglomeration of experiences that an individual coach utilises and learns from, in the process of becoming a knowledgeable, competent and elite coach. In this study the coaching journeys of three

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elite female coaches have been investigated. These journeys tell of experiences that interweave, and contradict to create new coaching knowledges. When developing the conceptual framework for this research project, I read extensively across many disciplines and the more I read, the more I understood just how complex it is to try and explain how someone becomes an elite coach. It is because of this complexity, I decided rather than have the traditional literature review separate from the data and analysis, it was more appropriate that the literature was able to be interwoven throughout the body of the thesis when required. The literature review is essentially included in chapter two which is the study's framework; however at times to explain a coaching experience, there is a need to draw on literature not contained within chapter two.

In this thesis the scholarly literature has been interwoven throughout the chapters because it is generally recognised that many views of power and ideology exist and these are reflected within sporting contexts (Coakley et al., 2009; Markula & Pringle, 2006). Consequently, when developing a framework to understand the experiences of the three elite female coaches in this study; social theory was used as an overarching framework (Denison, 2007; Wenger, 1998). Using social theory as a metatheoretical framework provided an opportunity to draw on the literature that focussed on intricate power relationships (Denison & Avner, 2011) and adopted a feminist perspective (Acker, 1990; Acosta & Carpenter, 2012; Ely, Foldy & Scully, 2003; Fletcher & Ely, 2003; Markula & Pringle, 2006; Weedon, 1997). Another body of literature that was integrated throughout the thesis was that which focussed on work (Else, 1996; Morgan, D., 1996; Provis, 2009). This literature was valuable because while coaching in the New Zealand track and field community is mainly a volunteer activity, Athletics NZ does employ some coaches and there is an expectation that all coaches act professionally. Professionalism within sport has led to coaching increasingly being viewed as

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a professional role (Taylor & Garratt, 2010). The sport literature discusses a number of discourses of professionalism such as; 'traditional' discourse (Taylor & Garratt, 2010), 'leisure sector' discourse (McNamee, Sheridan & Buswell, 2001), 'integrated theory and practice' discourse (Cassidy, Jones & Potrac, 2009; Thompson, 2000) and 'professional managerialism' discourse (Taylor & Garratt, 2010). References to these discourses have been discussed throughout the thesis.

Since it is recognised that sport is a masculine domain and coaching is a social phenomenon it was considered important to integrate literature that acknowledged that sport and coaching occurs in a gendered environment (Coakley et al., 2009; Cockburn, Gray & Thomson, 2007; Kerr & Marshall, 2007; Lovett & Lawry, 1994; Norman 2010; Shaw, 2006a; Shaw, 2006b) and that learning to become a coach is complex (Cushion, Armour & Jones, 2003; Gilbert & Trudel, 1999; Lyle, 2002; Mallett, Trudel, Lyle & Rynne, 2009). Consequently Wenger's (1998) social theory of learning was used to frame up the discussions around the coaches learning reflecting aspects of Communities of Practice (Culver & Trudel, 2006), landscape of practice (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015), learning networks (Allee, 2000; Nichani & Hung, 2002; Occhino, Mallett & Rynne, 2013), and mentoring (Merriam, 1983; Bloom, 2013).

It was appropriate that the results and discussion of the data received should also be interwoven throughout the thesis. Therefore chapters four and five discuss the participants' experiences around coaching as work, professionalisation of coaching, the gendered environment of coaching, the learning experiences and opportunities for professional development of the participant coaches. Chapter six is the drawing together of the three coaches' experiences in becoming an elite track and field coach in New Zealand

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In Chapter two, I have discussed the merit of using social theories as a vehicle to illustrate and scrutinise social action, social sense and large scale social structures such as sporting organisations. Social theories are multiple and have many objectives. I wanted a framework to view how females become coaches, how they learn their trade, whether they view their coaching to be work, and whether they consider themselves to be professional. I also wanted to be able to investigate the associated power and gender relationships and how each coach negotiated these relationships on their journey to become an elite/high performance coach.

Chapter three sets the scene for this research and describes the how, when and where of the data gathering phase; who participated, the type of interviews conducted, and where they were conducted. I also describe the methodology and why this particular methodology was chosen. The national sporting organisation known as Athletics New Zealand (Athletics NZ) is introduced as are the three female elite coaches involved in this research. Chapter three also discusses how the data was analysed.

Chapter four introduces the notion of coaching as work and the common definitions of work in a western society and discusses the participants' perceptions of their coaching as work. This chapter also focuses on professionalism within sport and coaching. It investigates what professionalism within coaching means to the participants, and examines the strategies these coaches have employed to ensure they meet their own standards of professionalism within coaching. I also introduce Armour's (2010) notion of 'being a professional' and 'behaving as a professional' and discuss the tensions and conflicts that arise when various discourses of professionalism intersect. Chapter four also investigates the gendered environment of coaching.

Chapter five discusses learning experiences and opportunities for professional development drawing attention to the preferred means of development of the participant

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coaches. I acknowledge Mallett and colleague's (2009) comment that the debate between formal and informal coach education has little value. Chapter five discusses the participants learning experiences and opportunities. These learning experiences and opportunities include, Coaching Communities of Practice, Landscapes of Practice, and networking and mentoring. Chapter six summarises the important points, draws everything together, and reflects on the research process as well as looking forwards to future directions for further research.

Chapter 2

A Conceptual Framework

Introduction.

Sports coaching is not just about improving an athlete's performance; coaching is complex, covering bioscience principles such as anatomy and physiology, principles of training, biomechanics, nutrition and psychology just to name a few. While a coach needs to have knowledge of these scientific principles, coaching is also informed by social phenomena. For example, it's about building relationships, knowing your athlete, negotiating with others, and creating learning opportunities to improve your coaching practice. Coaching is intricate and crosses many boundaries; therefore research into becoming an elite coach must also be able to cross these boundaries. To enable this, research should be interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary and counterdisciplinary (Kincheloe & Maclaren, 2005) in nature, thus allowing the complexity of becoming an elite coach to be viewed from many perspectives. This is emphasised by Bush, Silk, Andrews and Lauder (2013) who suggested that in sports coaching research, "boundaries need to be crossed, taken for granted work routines questioned, new environments and outlets investigated" (p. 108). Therefore, in this study social theory is adopted as a "metatheoretical framework" which allows movement between the "theoretical and disciplinary silos" (Cassidy, 2010, p. 189). This will enable the complexities associated with women becoming elite coaches, to be explored from multiple disciplines, specifically: social theory of learning, relations of power and critical feminism.

Introduction to Social Theory

To date, developments in the philosophy of social sciences have sharpened our awareness to the fact that social science theories are incarnate in conceptual frameworks which correspond to ways of viewing the world and our subject matter. In 1989 Botha suggested conceptual frameworks are secured in sets of assumptions about the nature of the

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subject matter under discussion. Theories provide ways of thinking about, and looking at the world around us. To a certain degree, terms and concepts utilised in theories, are minute examination instruments. These instruments can help us co-ordinate our experiences, bring together our understanding of the world and the phenomena we claim to be dealing with in our specific discipline or area of interest (Botha, 1989).

Social theories have been described as “a somewhat ill-defined field of conceptual inquiry at the intersection of philosophy, the social sciences and the humanities” (Wenger, 1998, p. 12). Consistent with the view of Wenger is Denison’s (2007) view that the theoretical frameworks and perspectives that collectively come under the umbrella of social theory focus upon, “society itself and the social and cultural forces which shape and influence individual’s lives” (p. 370). Denison (2007) further explains that social theories try to describe and examine “social action, social meanings and large-scale social structures”, and how they are associated with “ideology and power” (p. 370). Sport, and by association coaching, involves these social actions, meanings and large-scale structures. Sport is also recognised as a major playground for ideologies and power plays (Blinde, Greendorfer & Shanker, 1991; Coles, 1993; Darnell, 2010; Denison, 2007; Messner, Duncan & Jensen, 1993; Pringle, 2005) and it is for these reasons that I have looked to social theories as a lens for this research.

Relationships of Power

Relationships of power are central to social theory (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998; Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2013, personal communication). Power is an all-pervading feature of social life, having an impact not only on the individual, but also on relationships with others (Purdy, Jones & Cassidy, 2009), and the social environment these individuals participate in (Cassidy et al, 2009; Denison, 2007). Power relations have been identified as a “complex web of interrelated constraints” (Prado, 1995, p. 71). There are

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many ways of thinking about power. One compelling way to understand power is through a Foucauldian lens. Denison and Avner (2011) indicate that in the Foucauldian sense, power is not set or structured from the top down. Power is never fixed and is ever changing through intricate power relationships. This view of power recognises that an individual is never entirely incapable, or completely dominated by another in any particular situation. This suggests a tension can exist between two interacting ideas or people (Potrac, Brewer, Jones, Armour & Hoff, 2000). This was reinforced by the suggestion made by Denison and Avner, (2011) that,

if coaches were to begin to ask how the knowledge they relied on to understand what constitutes a problem has been formed, produced, disseminated, and defended, and how they have come to apply this knowledge in the way they do, it would become evident to them that this knowledge is not some objective truth but rather the result of a number of discursive formations and power relations that privilege a particular and often limiting understanding of how to coach (p. 215).

Due to sports coaching being complicated, involving relationships, knowledge acquisition and dissemination, it is not a benign impartial process; consequently it can have “profound implications for power relations in sporting contexts” (Denison & Avner, 2011, p. 216).

Another view of power is from a feminist perspective.

Feminism is a politics “directed at changing existing power relations between women and men in society” (Weedon, 1997, p. 1). Feminism has taken the patriarchal structure of society as its starting point (Weedon, 1997). This structure supports sport being a male dominated, white, middle-class place, creating a tension for women wanting to become full participants in the realm of coaching (Coakley et al., 2009; Whisenant, 2008). Relations of power have been identified as being a core element in the gender relationships (Fletcher &

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Ely, 2003). There are links between feminism and Foucauldian theorising of power. Some feminists have utilised Foucault's theory of discourse and power to analyse patriarchal relations, enabling the growth of active strategies for change (Weedon, 1997, p. 13). The combination of feminism and Foucauldian theorising of power can be complementary with both locating "the body as the site of power" (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 19). This can be a tenuous link, given that Foucault's works focus almost totally on men. Notwithstanding more recently, Markula and Pringle (2006) suggested "it has been the Foucauldian influenced form of post-structuralism that has dominated sociological studies of sport and exercise" (p. 19).

Within working organisations, Fletcher and Ely (2003) have described gender relations as "the way the social world is built in part, by making distinctions between men and women, thus shaping differentially the material conditions of our lives" (p. 3). It is this set of gender relations that has contributed to the power relations between men and women in the professional realm. These gender relations are reflected in the sporting world (McKay, 1997). With the professionalisation of women's sport, the opportunities and salaries associated with it increased, as did the number of men becoming interested in, or coaching, female athletes. Not surprisingly, this has had the effect of limiting women's access to many coaching roles (Acker, 1990; Acosta & Carpenter, 2012; Walker & Bopp, 2011) which is similar to what happened in leadership positions in other industries (Greenhill, Auld, Cuskelly & Hooper, 2009; Herd, 2005). Ely, Foldy and Scully (2003) have stated that within the work environment, organisations have been "central to creating and maintaining our understanding of what is appropriate for women and what is appropriate for men" (preface).

When the history of New Zealand is viewed from a feminist perspective we see a colonial nation where women's roles were those of wives and mothers inside the private sphere with no power or work in the public face of society (Abu-Laban, 2008; Brown, 1995; Mackinnon, 1989; Pateman, 1988). While this is changing, some of the inherent beliefs,

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traditions, cultures and normalisations of specific actions of particular groups of society are still visible (Burton, Barr, Fink & Bruening, 2009; Shaw & Frisby, 2006).

Some of the entrenched views associated with women, management and sport result in the propagation of views that women do not need to be upskilled; rather the differences they bring, such as relationship building and caring are to be celebrated. However these qualities or differences are not valued, as such these qualities do not appear to be linked with leadership positions (Shaw & Frisby, 2006). Instead qualities associated with women are linked to the housekeeping roles of management, once again reinforcing the view that women's qualities are not suited to leadership roles (Ely & Meyerson, 2000). The make-up of the Athletics NZ High Performance Unit is an example of this. Leadership and scientific roles are held by men, with administrative support and caring roles occupied by women. These appointments and practices do not support equal opportunities in the coaching field for men and women within Athletics NZ.

Equal opportunities have been described as a complex issue "viewing gender inequities as problems that are due to individual deficits or binary gender differences" (Shaw & Frisby, 2006, p. 488). The focus in this complex issue is often on the organisation and the hierarchical structures that create 'glass ceilings' to women's entry and progression (Greenhill, Auld, Cuskelly & Hooper, 2009). It has been claimed that the gender inequities in organisations "are rooted in taken-for-granted assumptions, values and practices that systematically accord power and privilege to certain groups of men at the expense of women and other men" (Meyerson & Kolb, 2000, p. 554). Meyerson and Kolb (2000) identified gendering processes in organisations and suggest these gendering processes in organisations occur through "formal policies...routine work practices and interactions. Together they produce and legitimate gender...based inequities" (p. 566). Drawing on the literature around 'work' it is possible to see these gender based inequities.

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Work

In New Zealand many coaches are volunteers. Consequently a broad definition of work is needed to understand what it is that New Zealand coaches do. Morgan, D., (1996) suggested someone who spends lots of time, effort, and money to gain a particular outcome is 'working'. This definition encompasses the essence of what the majority of New Zealand coaches do and it is this understanding of work that I utilised when exploring coaching as work. A common assumption in many Western cultures is, many adults work, but not necessarily in paid work. However, when people talk of work, it is usually in the context of paid work (Provis, 2009). Else (1996) suggests that; "the whole structure of what 'work' means today has been built on one idea: work is what we leave home to do, not what we do at home" (p. 1).

Historically, work has been the domain of men. This idea stems from the traditional patriarchal ideology of male as breadwinner and head of the household. The female traditionally has been viewed as care giver to her husband and children within the home and private sphere (Brown, 1995; MacKinnon 1989). This patriarchal view undervalued the work that was done within the home. Herd (2005) suggested that "one of the complaints of feminists was that work which was not paid for never appeared in the statistics, and therefore was undervalued and taken for granted" (p. 33). Is this the case for many volunteer coaches in New Zealand?

Professionalism

It is important to define 'professionalism' and what this means in the world of elite coaching. There are different discourses of professionalism, with each discourse influencing what constitutes professional development. There is a problem in defining professionalism because of its very complex and changing meanings. Even if professionalism was defined for sports coaches, not all sports coaches are the same. Sports have varied histories and cultures,

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making it difficult for those associated with sport to embrace the same discourse of professionalism.

Armour, (2010) problematised the drive to tag the professional label on coaches in the United Kingdom when she said there is an obvious service ethic in coaching, however “standards of provisions to clients (athletes of all ages) are highly variable and disparate” (p. 154). Further, Armour (2010) suggested another issue that needed to be addressed is the apparent disconnection of development and grassroots coaches from elite coaches. Because there is an apparent gap in the coaching pathway, often the work that grassroots and development coaches do is undervalued. Armour (2010) projected that “there are critical issues to be addressed about professional autonomy and professional standards” (p. 155), and presented the idea that there is a distinction to be made “between being a professional and behaving as a professional” (p. 155). She defined being a professional as someone who,

has the training and qualifications necessary to enter a specific profession, being bound by professional standards and a code of ethics, and having a degree of professional autonomy, all of which leads to public respect and acknowledges status in society (p. 155).

Coaching within Athletics NZ can be viewed in many instances as a profession. To join the Athletics NZ Coaches' Association, a coach must sign the coach code of ethics. A coach in New Zealand has the professional autonomy to conduct their own coaching business however, while there are coach qualifications, track and field coaches are not bound by professional standards in New Zealand. Perhaps track and field coaching could be viewed as a semi-profession (Lara-Bercial & Duffy, 2013). Lara-Bercial and Duffy (2013) suggested that because coaches are occupied in their role in diverse ways from volunteers to part-time and full-time paid employees, “coaching should be

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considered a blended professional area where the roles of paid and unpaid coaches are recognized and interact with each other in different ways depending on the sport and organizational context” (p. 30). Armour (2010) noted behaving professionally on the other hand is a much wider notion. This notion has been embedded in “dedication and commitment” (p. 155) to a position or role, and in attaining some agreed standards or personal expectations when interacting with colleagues and athletes. This simple division between ‘being’ and ‘behaving’ has the potential to be fraught with tensions.

In the United Kingdom the desire to see coaching entrenched as a “professionally recognised activity” escalated “when the government’s policy on sport began to focus more on the role of the coaches, along with the coordinating structures that support their practice” (Taylor & Garratt, 2010, p. 100). With the increased attention on coaching there were questions raised as to the quality of the coaches and their practices. Historically, sports “set their own standards, performance levels and terms of references for coaches” (p. 100). Consequently, coach education was disparate across sports with inconsistent levels of instruction, “varying degrees of knowledge and educational understanding” (p. 100). There was an increasing ‘professionalisation’ of sports and athletes. Attention was focussed on the coaches of these professional athletes; coaches who historically had been volunteers in sport. Taylor and Garratt (2010) suggested that suddenly an assumed volunteer coaching knowledge base was to be upgraded to that of professional (Taylor & Garratt, 2010). This is problematic in itself in that there are many discourses of professionalism and which one fits which coaching community?

Discourses of Professionalism.

Recently there has been much discussion around professionalism within coaching (Cassidy, Jones & Potrac, 2009; Lyle, 2002; Taylor & Garrett, 2010) with a focus on two

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factors. First, the “accountability of coaches for their actions” (Cassidy et al., 2009, p. 161) in their sports and wider communities, and second, the desire by many coaches to be seen as ‘professional’. Gaining specialised knowledge about the area of coaching expertise and having the ability to share this knowledge has been recognised as an integral element of ‘professionalism’ (Taylor & Garrett, 2010).

Traditional discourse of professionalism.

The traditional discourse of professionalism assumes ownership of an area of expertise and knowledge. Professionalism assists in making claims for status, income and legitimacy. A ‘professional’ is seen as an ‘expert’, a member of a ‘professional body’ which has the power to provide solutions to any issues arising within the ‘professional practice’. There is an assumption that there would be a set of ethics or a code of practice to which members would subscribe (Taylor and Garrett, 2010).

Professionals are dedicated to meeting customers’ requirements, have a strong communal identity, and are collegial and sharing rather than controlling over practice and professional principles (Day, in Armour, 2010). While there are many aspects of the traditional discourse of professionalism incorporated in the view of coaches as professionals there are some missing elements. McNamee, Sheridan and Buswell (2001) propose that people involved in leisure, and I include coaches here, do not quite fit the traditional discourse of professional and ‘trusted’ expert and suggest a leisure discourse of professionalism.

Leisure sector discourse of professionalism.

McNamee, Sheridan and Buswell (2001) suggested that professional status in the leisure sector is “characterized as a set of relations necessarily involving moral authority and not merely technical expertise as is commonly supposed” (p. 173). The discourse that has appeared in the leisure sector has a ‘paternalistic’ aura suggesting that

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the service provider is exercising power over the client and telling the client what they need with little consultation. A coach will mostly have authority over their athlete and the athlete needs, thereby fitting into the above discourse of professionalism. McNamee et al. (2000) propose the leisure professional has superior knowledge skills and experience to know what is best for their client. This is more likely to be the case when the athlete is at a development stage rather than elite (Cassidy et al., 2009). McNamee et al. (2000) do advocate the need to “think through whether, if it is to be regarded as a profession, that public sector leisure provision [including coaching] must be underwritten by technical and moral authority” (p. 192). If coaching is to be viewed as a profession or even a blended profession, there should be some rules and guidelines in place to ensure the safety of the athletes. Coaches, like other professions may have to be qualified. Currently in New Zealand, there is no requirement for a track and field coach to be qualified.

Discourse of theory based practice of professionalism

In the United Kingdom the journey towards professionalism in sport and coaching will be “neither unified nor integrated” (Taylor & Garrett, 2010, p. 101), consequently Taylor and Garrett (2010) advocated that it may be more useful to “conceptualise professionalism as a much broader concept and not an end point”. This concept could incorporate many discourses of professionalism. One of these discourses integrates theory and practice (Thompson, 2000, p.9). This discourse requires the practitioner to justify their actions as a significant element of professional credibility. Within this discourse there is an emphasis on the practitioners’ ability to clarify the basis of the intervention and the objectives set; explain what needs to be done to meet the outcome and why there needs to be an evaluation of the intervention (Cassidy et al., 2009). Coaches prescribe training schedules based on scientific research (Wilmore & Costill, 1994), and apply these training interventions, often after discussions with

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their athlete and other expert athlete support persons. After the implementation of these training interventions, the athlete may be tested to see if the training interventions have been successful. This testing may be a competition. Elite coaches are constantly negotiating with national sporting organisations as to how the agreed upon outcomes for the particular athlete will be met. It could be that during these negotiations the coach may well be introduced to another discourse of professionalism.

Discourse of professional managerialism.

The discourse of professional managerialism is highly bureaucratised with increasing practices, organisations and what counts as legitimate knowledge being “fashioned and controlled by the state” (Taylor & Garrett, 2010, p.99). Taylor and Garratt (2013) described professional managerialism as “the emergence of a new orthodoxy, technical discourse and definition of professional practice. With origins in the ‘new managerialism’ of neo-liberal government and politics, this privileged discourse contains, at its structural core, a notion of centralisation, regulations and uniformity” (p. 136). Professional managerialism has the potential to create tensions between the national sporting organisation and the individual coach. It is also possible that two organisations utilising professional managerialism may well create tensions, for example, between the government funding body such as High Performance Sport New Zealand (HPSNZ) and the national sporting organisation involved in funding negotiations. The diverse discourses of professionalism have the potential to create conflict within the coaching world.

Gendered Environment of Sport and Coaching Work

Another possible area of conflict is that of gender. As noted in the introductory chapter many researchers have reported that sport reflects a masculine discourse (Fredericks & Eccles, 2005; Krane, Choi, Baird, Aimar & Kauer, 2004; Kerr & Marshall, 2007; King &

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McDonald, 2007; Pringle, 2005), and women have had to fight to gain entry into leadership roles within sport (Coakley et al., 2009).

The New Zealand Census of Women's Participation, commissioned by The Human Rights Commission in 2010, showed that women are underrepresented in the area of sport. Within the context of high performance sport in New Zealand, most national teams, including most women's teams are coached by men (Cockburn, Gray & Thompson, 2007; Human Rights Commission, 2010). These statistics are not restricted to the New Zealand context. Norman (2010) maintained that three quarters of all coaches in the high performance context in the United Kingdom are male. According to Moran-Miller and Flores (2011) one possible reason for this is that women coaches have "lower self-efficacy, less intention, preference and motivation to coach and higher intention to leave the profession compared with men coaches" (p. 90). This is not dissimilar to what happens in other working contexts such as business and management. Leimon, Moscovici and Goodier, (2011) observed in the business world, women continually have to prove themselves, and their worth within a male dominated environment and this can lead to lower self-efficacy.

In 2007 *The Report to the New Zealand Olympic Committee on Gender Balance in New Zealand Olympic Sports*, noted that some barriers still appear to prevent women participating in senior roles. This report was conducted as a telephone survey with the Chief Executive or another senior representative of each of the "47 sporting organisations being surveyed (41 member organisations of the NZOC and the 6 associate sports). There were 32 male and 15 female respondents" (p. 13). The findings of the report highlighted the most prevalent barriers to participation of women, in order, were:

- Lack of women mentors (57%);
- Career breaks for domestic reasons (49%);
- Lack of women role models/peers (34%);

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- Confidence in own ability (34%);
- Lack of childcare (30%); and
- Unconscious discrimination from both males and females (23%)

(Cockburn, Gray, & Thompson, 2007. p. 33).

The *Report* also identified several issues around the roles women hold within the Olympic and associated sports. Of the 47 governing boards, 10 boards had no female representation. While this is not an ideal situation, it showed a 5% increase in women's representation since the previous report published in 1994. Also the *Report* found that only 4% of the surveyed organisations had written policies or strategies relating to gender balance, 6% had national development programmes for women, which was a decrease of 50% from the previous *Report* published in 1994. Other findings were: 9% of the governing boards had sub-committee or special interest groups that focus specifically on women's policies and two thirds of all staff working with women's teams were men, with men more likely to be paid to coach both men's and women's teams. Across all coaching categories women were found to be coaching 29% of women's team and 8% of men's teams. A quarter of the respondents perceived there to be barriers to women within the sporting leadership roles, with proportionally more men believing this to be the case. These findings suggest that within these sports in New Zealand, gender imbalance has not been addressed. Shaw (2006a) investigated the Regional Sports Trusts in New Zealand and found that in these organisations, gender suppression is also alive and well. She suggested gendered discourses are "influenced by, and influence, organisational practices and assumptions and the actions of individuals within organisations" (p. 556). These organisational practices and assumptions make it difficult to challenge and lead managers to attest that "their organisations as homogenous and gender free" (Shaw, 2006a, p. 557). Consequently, gendered social practices within sporting organisations such as informal networking often known as 'Old Boys Clubs' create fewer

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opportunities for women (Lovett & Lawry, 1994; Norman, 2010; Shaw, 2006b), while dress codes (blazer and tie) and the use of humour, can also marginalise women (Shaw, 2006b). Norman (2010) also found that within the coaching environment in the United Kingdom, there appeared to be a lack of support from the sport's governing body. She discovered that coach education did not appear to be customised towards the female coach's personal and/or professional development. Norman (2010) found there was a lack of opportunities for female coaches in the UK resulting in many female coaches being well qualified but unable to find employment as a coach. Many of these barriers were also reflected in the literature from the Canadian context (Marshall, 2001; Werthner, 2005).

Acosta and Carpenter (2012) have suggested that women are severely under-represented in the male dominated sports place. It has been suggested that some of the reasons for this are gender responsibility and gender position (Burton, Barr, Fink & Bruening, 2009), hiring biases explained by homologous reproduction, (Lovett & Lowry, 1994; Stangl & Kane, 1991) and 'old boys' networks' (Lovett & Lowry, 1994). Gender responsibility and position has been explained as gender stereotyping whereby masculine traits are seen as more desirable within the top management positions within sport (Burton, Barr, Fink & Bruening, 2009), while homologous reproduction is where those in authority vigilantly protect their control and privilege and hire or promote those who they see as like them (Kanter, 1977; Lovett & Lawry, 1994; Stangl & Kane, 1991). It has been claimed that as men progress through organisational structures, they generate layers of networks forming an 'all boys' environment that marginalises and controls women (Norman, 2010). These strategies all have the potential to marginalise women within the top roles in sport organisations.

This study investigated the relationships three female elite coaches in the NZ track and field community have with the national sporting organisation, Athletics NZ, and members within Athletics NZ.

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Learning Experiences

When someone starts coaching, they are not instantly competent in their coaching practice. A coach needs to learn how to be an elite coach. In the past 15 years there has been increased interest into how coaches 'learn' their trade (Cushion, Armour & Jones, 2003; Gilbert & Trudel, 1999; Lyle, 2002; Trudel & Gilbert, 2013). Much of this discussion has been centred on formal and informal learning opportunities (Cassidy & Rossi, 2006; Mallett, Trudel, Lyle & Rynne, 2009). It is necessary to consider both 'formal' and 'informal' opportunities for professional development, acknowledging that it is not an either or situation, and many learning opportunities may have both 'formal' and 'informal' components (Mallett et al., 2009).

There are many modes of professional development that can be and are, employed to enable the beginning coach to become more competent in their coaching practice (Werthner, 2005; Wright, Trudel, & Culver, (2007). It has been suggested that some of the more favoured methods of professional development, utilised in many fields e.g., health, business, teaching and coaching, are formal coach education, mentoring, networking, role modelling, peer observation, apprenticeship schemes and interactive workshops (Coles, 1996; DiMauro, 2000; Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001; Hismanoglu, 2010; Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002; Werthner, 2005). This is not an exhaustive list and there will be many other ways that coaches learn to become 'elite'. These professional development opportunities can be discussed as formal, nonformal and informal learning opportunities.

Formal coach education has been considered to be those coach education programmes which are delivered by educational institutions or the national sporting organisations. Around the world these programmes generally focus their attention on the expansion of professional awareness (Côté & Gilbert, 2009). Within formal coach

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education, at times practices such as formal mentoring have been promoted (Wright, Trudel & Culver, 2007). Athletics NZ has a formal coach mentoring programme that has a master coach (from outside the sport), a mentor coach, and a mentee coach. (Cassidy, Merrilees & Shaw, submitted). In formal learning situations, learners have little control over what information is being offered to them and assessment often drives the formal learning opportunity, rather than what the learner needs to know (Mallett et al., 2009). All of these professional development opportunities can also be described as learning opportunities. Mallett, Trudel, Lyle and Rynne (2009) have identified and described learning opportunities the following ways:

- (a) Formal: formal education, formal educational institutions, formal learning, formal coach learning programs, formal learning institutions
- (b) Nonformal: nonformal education, nonformal environmental educational programs, nonformal learning settings, nonformal learning situations
- (c) Informal: informal learning, informal learning activities, informal learning experiences (p. 326).

Nonformal opportunities include conferences, workshops and seminars or forums, however these nonformal opportunities still tend to be structured and relatively formal in presentation (Mallett et al., 2009).

Increasingly, in a range of fields, there has been acknowledgment of the importance daily experiences play in learning opportunities (Boud & Garrick, 1999; Gilbert & Trudel, 2001; Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2005; Mallett, Rossi & Tinning, 2008). According to Marsick and Watkins (2001) informal learning cannot be ignored because life experience creates many opportunities for learning experiences. Informal learning is not very structured but there is typically an intention to learn. Some examples of informal learning include mentoring, networking, and self-directed

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learning. Proficient or expert coaches typically direct their own learning by networking and exchanging information with other coaches (Trudel & Gilbert, 2013). Often their search for knowledge will lead them to look into literature outside of sport (Werthner & Trudel, 2009), creating an informal learning opportunity.

When discussing coaching it is not useful to discuss formal, nonformal and informal professional development opportunities in isolation because the journey and development is not of a linear process. As Mallett, Trudel, Lyle and Rynne (2009) noted “a debate between formal and informal education/learning really has little value” (p. 332), because coaches need to access many learning opportunities, both formal and informal, that support knowledge gain and the resultant coach growth and development. Cassidy (2009) suggested that “distinguishing between education, learning and development is an imperative for the progress of coach education and coach development” (p. 339). For example, if a coach attends a coach education course (formal education), it is up to that coach, to take what they have learned and put it into their coaching practice (applied learning). The coach needs to reflect on the learning in association with their own experiences, and change or modify if required what they do in coaching practice. Education and application together create opportunities for continuing development and learning for the coach.

Gilbert and Côté (2009) proposed an integrative definition of coaching effectiveness that focusses on coaches' knowledge, athlete's outcomes and the different contexts coaches typically work in. This definition was “the consistent application of integrated professional, interpersonal, and intrapersonal knowledge to improve athletes' competence, confidence, connection and character in specific coaching contexts” (p. 316). For this study, I have viewed becoming as a process of constantly learning, reflecting upon and modifying professional, interpersonal and intrapersonal knowledges (Côté & Gilbert, 2009), while travelling the coaching journey. Whether the coach learns in formal, nonformal or informal

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situations, most of these learning experiences will happen in social environments. Therefore it is appropriate to utilise Wenger (1998) as a lens to view becoming an elite coach.

Social Theory of Learning

Wenger (1998) posited that a social theory of learning has its own specific set of suppositions and applications. This theory considers a central aspect of learning to be that we (as individuals) are primarily social beings and we desire to belong and to 'become' somebody, in this case a coach. Wenger (1998) considers that to participate in the world in a meaningful way, participants must fully engage, "in the practices of social communities" (p. 4). He states, "participating in a playground clique or in a work team... is both a kind of action and a form of belonging" (p. 4). This means that as we belong to a community we gain new skills and knowledges and we come to 'know' the expectations and shared outcomes of that particular community. Such participation shapes not only what we do, but also who we are and how we interpret what we do. Wenger (1998) notes that "social participation as a process of learning and of knowing" (pp. 4-5) is an essential component of his social theory of learning. Becoming a coach can be viewed as a learning journey when the coach actively participates in a coaching community and through this participation learns and knows how to become a coach. To become a coach, one needs to be involved in coaching, that is doing it and not just reading about it. A social theory of learning is useful to help us understand the relationships coaches have with others as they negotiate the process of becoming an elite coach.

Communities of Practice.

Wenger's (1998) social theory of learning builds upon his earlier work with Lave that focussed on Communities of Practice (CoP) (Lave & Wenger, 1991). CoP became a theoretical lens to look at the relational quality of knowing and learning, the "negotiated character of meaning" and the engaged nature of learning for those involved (Lave & Wenger,

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1991, p. 33). Initially when joining a CoP a learner will be acknowledged as “a newcomer” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 29) and then after increased engagement, the learner becomes a knowledgeable member of that CoP and creates their own identity within the social setting of a particular CoP (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Communities of Practice have been defined as “groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis” (Wenger, McDermott & Synder, 2002, p. 4). Wenger et al (2002) propose the “*community* creates the social fabric of learning” (p. 28, emphasis in original). A robust community encourages and creates connections as well as relationships based on mutual trust and respect. Community plays a significant role in gaining knowledge because learning is about belonging and being ‘part of’ contributing to the social being and not just the intellectual being (Wenger et al, 2002).

Wenger (1998) has identified essential elements that must exist before the learning situation can be called a CoP. These elements are; “mutual engagement, joint enterprise and shared repertoire” (p. 73). The first element means practice cannot “exist in the abstract. It exists because people are engaged in actions whose meanings they negotiate with one another” (p. 73). The second element which keeps the community together is negotiation of shared practices and knowledge, however this does not mean there will not be tensions around these negotiations. This suggests it is not just a known or planned goal, but the negotiation of how this shared goal will be obtained, which creates among participants relations of shared responsibility that become an integral part of the practice (Wenger, 1998). A shared repertoire, the third element of a community, includes “routines, words, tools, ways of doing things, stories, gestures” (p. 83), which the community members have created or adopted and are part of the community’s accepted practices (Wenger, 1998). All of these elements could

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be found in some coaching communities which have subsequently been described as Coaching Communities of Practice (CCoP) (Culver & Trudel, 2006).

Coaching Communities of Practice and becoming a coach.

When coaches participate in what Culver and Trudel (2006) call Coaching Communities of Practice (CCoP), they learn with other members of that particular community. It has been acknowledged that coaches invariably engage in exchanges with other coaches (Cassidy et al., 2009), however this shared communication does not automatically mean a CCoP is formed (Culver & Trudel, 2006). Participation in a CCoP provides an opportunity for shared understandings and increased satisfaction, common knowledge about practices, and strategies to solve problems (Wenger, et al, 2002; Wenger, 1998). Wenger (1998) claimed that, “engagement in social practice is the fundamental process by which we learn and so become who we are” (preface). Dall’Alba (2009) noted that learning to become someone or something involves not only what we know and can do, but also who we are becoming. This perspective of learning has the broadness to incorporate coaching and also acknowledges that ‘becoming’ is a journey which is appropriate to view the coaching journey from beginning coach to elite coach.

When members of the CCoP interact on an ongoing basis, they work together closely to achieve a shared goal thereby suggesting that the relationships of power are minimised. However “engagement in practice is individual, and tensions and challenges are accepted as common elements of participation” (Culver & Trudel, 2006, p. 100). Also Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner (personal communication, 2013) point out that “relationships of power are central to the CoP [and CCoP] perspective on learning as CoP’s define a regime of competence, which allows some members to claim competence and others not so much”. This negotiation of relationships of power enables a coach to remain in the CCoP whilst

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developing their coaching identity and 'becoming' (Wenger, 1998) a coach, in ways that may be slightly different to the other members of their community.

Coaches may well be members of a range of CoP's and will become 'privy' to shared knowledges and practices of several communities. Some of these practices may not fit with another community, thereby creating some tensions for members who belong to more than one CoP or CCoP. It is not useful to assume just because you coach you are a member of a coaching CoP (Culver & Trudel, 2006). A CCoP requires the three elements of a CoP noted in the previous section, to be met. If the three required elements of a CoP are met, then CCoP's remain a potential collegial environment for coaches to learn and become more competent in their coaching practice. However Culver and Trudel (2008) noted it was crucial to have a facilitator to increase the opportunities for coach interaction. They identified if there was no facilitator, it was most likely that communication and collaboration went back to being organisational and less collegial.

One thing that sets CoP's and CCoP's aside from other learning situations such as networks is "the formation of relationships and the deeper sense of participation between its members" (Occhino, Mallet & Rynne, 2013, p .91). However, Wright, Trudel and Culver (2007) suggested that the competitive culture of sport does little to assist the sharing of knowledge and practices among coaches, especially when the coaches work within the same competitive arena. A lack of sharing can be seen where high performance head coaches are not sharing knowledge with assistant coaches in order to protect their own jobs (Rynne & Mallett, 2012). The lack of sharing could be seen as knowledge protection and/or gaining power over the competitor, both athlete and coach. Consequently, it is not surprising to find coaches prefer to develop networks outside of their own sporting code or country, as a source of knowledge (Wright, Trudel & Culver, 2007; Cassidy, Merrilees & Shaw, submitted).

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Networks can provide many learning situations that coaches may tap into to gain more knowledge to increase their coaching skills (Occhino et al, 2013).

Learning networks.

Networks are similar to CoP's in that coaches gain and/or create or negotiate knowledge by being a member of a specific network; however learning networks do not appear to have the same requirements for participation as CoP's. Culver and Trudel (2006) suggest that coaches often establish relationships and share ideas with others outside of their sporting codes, perhaps because of the tensions created working with coaches of competing teams/athletes. These relationships have been described as informal knowledge networks (IKN), networks of practice (NoP) and dynamic social networks (DSN) (Allee, 2000; Nichani & Hung, 2002; Occhino et al, 2013).

An IKN is where people know each other and share information, however "these discussions are loose and informal because there is no joint enterprise" (Culver & Trudel, 2006, p. 101). What is more, because of the 'looseness' of the relationship there is also no 'shared repertoire' (Allee, 2000). A NoP is also a social network, however people in a NoP may not be known to each other. An example of a NoP is where coaches may use internet forums or blogs to discuss coaching points of interest and exchange knowledge (Culver & Trudel, 2006). In this situation perhaps the members do have a 'shared repertoire', i.e. they understand the language and the stories that are being shared but there is no joint enterprise.

Drawing on the framework of Mallett and colleagues (2008), Occhino et al, (2013) found that Australian Football League (AFL) coaches sought information from a variety of sources with the main source being other people/coaches outside of their own sporting code. Occhino et al, (2013) suggested that the AFL "coaches preferred a dynamic and evolving informal coaching network" (p. 93), which Mallett and colleagues called a "dynamic social network (DSN)" (in Occhino et al, 2013, p. 93). Members of coaches' DSN's tended to be

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people with whom the coaches already had an existing trusting relationship (Occhino et al, 2013). An outcome of these relationships tended to be “changes to coaching practice due to the highly applied nature of the discussion and knowledge generated” (Occhino et al, 2013, p. 93). Another example of a trusting relationship in which coaches learn is that of the mentoring situation.

Mentoring

The process of joining a community or coaching community allows learning to take place, thus allowing processes, interactions and experiences that make up a person's sense of belonging, to support the subsequent learning. When coaches join and actively engage in a community, the assumption is that they develop as a practitioner and are “initiated into the traditions, habits, rules, cultures and practices of the community they join” (Merriam, 1983, p.37). They do this by watching and participating with others inside their community. This can be explained as a mentoring relationship. Mentoring within coaching has been described as a valuable learning experience that enables coaches to become more competent within their own coaching practice (e.g. Bloom et al, 1998; Gould, Gianinni, Krane, & Hodge, 1990). Mentoring can be seen as informal where the learning partnership is initiated by the less experienced coach who has usually already established a relationship based on trust and respect (Bloom, 2013). This is often referred to as an informal mentoring relationship and an example could be where an athlete becomes a coach and turns to their own previous coach for guidance and support.

Another example of a mentoring association is a more formal one. An example of this could be a mentoring programme that is overseen by the national sporting organisation. Athletics NZ has recently implemented a Coach Mentor scheme. The Coach Development Manager selected a mentor coach from outside the sport; however this person was a recognised ‘expert’ coach. The mentee coach also had a master coach with whom the mentee coach already had

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an existing relationship, i.e. someone the mentee coach trusted and respected (Cassidy, Merrilees & Shaw, submitted). Cushion (2006) suggested that currently mentoring is happening very informally and that by harnessing and influencing these learning experiences, it may provide an opportunity to “affect the acquisition and development of coach’s knowledge” (p. 144).

Landscapes of Practice.

Individually, Communities of Practice, Coaching Communities of Practice, Learning Networks and Mentoring do not describe how coaches learn to become elite. However, if all these learning opportunities could be viewed together then a more complete picture of coaches’ learning may emerge. While a CoP and a CCoP, IKN’s and mentoring can be helpful frameworks to view how coaches learn, they can also be quite restricting and often miss the intricacy of the majority of coaches’ bodies of knowledge, and does not encompass the global learning that many of our coaches do (Mallett et al, 2008; Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015). Wenger (1998) suggested that as Communities of Practice distinguish themselves and interconnect with each other, they make up an intricate collective setting of pooled practices, peripheries, limitations, overlaps, associations and encounters”. He called this complex set of social relationships a Landscape of Practice (LoP). Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner (2015) have extended Wenger’s notion of “Landscapes of Practice” (Wenger, 1998, p. 118). It has been suggested a LoP consists “of a complex system of Communities of Practice and the boundaries between them” (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015, p. 13). Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner (2015) proposed people build relationships in “a multiplicity of practices across the landscape”, and have called this “knowledgeability”. Knowledgeability here differs from competence which has been described as “the dimension of knowing negotiated and defined within a single community of practice” (p. 13). Knowledgeability and competence are two types of relationships within a

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landscape and as such are not mutually exclusive. This building of complex relationships across a LoP is not dissimilar to networking as noted earlier.

Professions, blended professions and many non-professional activities are constituted by a complex landscape of different CoP's. According to Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner (2015), professions,

have their own histories, domains and regimes of competence. The composition of such a landscape is dynamic as communities arise and disappear, evolve, merge, split, compete with or complement each other, ignore or engage the other. Landscapes of Practice are coming into focus as globalization, travel and new technologies expand our horizons (p. 15).

They suggested by accepting the idea that the body of knowledge of a profession is a Landscape of Practice (LoP), provides us with an opportunity to view people's experiences of learning as a journey through the landscape (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015). An example could be from a coach to an elite coach.

Another area where learning may be viewed as occurring via a LoP is at the boundaries of the different CoP's. Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner (2015) suggested for boundaries to be a learning place, the learner must make "boundaries a learning focus" (p. 6) rather than presuming the transfer of knowledge will be smooth and will automatically apply to all CoP's within the individual's landscape. Boundaries are areas that are "never unproblematic, in the sense that they [boundaries] always involve the negotiation of how the competence of a CoP becomes relevant (or not) to that of another" (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015, p. 6). Because negotiation is a critical component, relationships of power will always be present in these negotiations. Boundaries of practice will always exist as "crossing boundaries, boundary encounters and boundary partnerships" (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015, p. 6). They are a must as people grow their own communities and

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integrate these into a landscape of practice. Boundary crossing and boundary encounters are crucial aspects of living in a LoP.

Bringing it all Together

Social theories form the basis for my research because coaching is a social enterprise. A coach needs to interact, relate to and negotiate with, other coaches, athletes, sports scientists, medical personnel and national sporting organisations to name just a few. Various researchers have acknowledged that relationships of power are central to social theories (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998; Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2013, personal communication). Consequently, alongside these social theories, I also utilise critical feminism when looking at the relations of power which pervade the realm of sport and coaching. There are many ways of looking at power relations, and in this thesis I use a Foucauldian lens and/or a critical feminist lens.

When looking at which social theory to utilise, Wenger's (1998) social theory of learning was one theory that utilised social experiences to show how people learn from belonging to and participating in a Community of Practice (CoP). Wenger (1998) suggested that to participate in the world and I include the world of coaching here, participants (coaches) must fully engage "in the practices of social [coaching] communities" (p. 4). As suggested earlier, CoP's did not appear to encompass the global learning phenomenon that happens in today's world, however Landscapes of Practice (Wenger, 1998; Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015) did allow for global learning.

Wenger (1998) acknowledged that as, "Communities of Practice differentiate themselves and also interlock with each other, they constitute a complex social landscape of shared practices, boundaries, peripheries, overlaps, connections and encounters" (p. 118). One of the areas of potential conflict and relationships of power is the crossing of boundaries. Wenger (1998) referred to boundaries as "discontinuities, to lines of distinction between

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inside and outside, membership and non-membership and inclusion and exclusion” (p. 120). Relationships of power are also a core element in gender relationships (Fletcher & Ely, 2003), however the concept of ‘Landscapes of Practice’ does not specifically include gendered relationships of power in any context. In 2013, Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner were not aware of studies that look at CoP formed around gender hegemony (personal communication). This is a limitation for this study because sport and by association elite coaching has been acknowledged as a predominantly male place (Acosta & Carpenter, 2012; Coakley et al, 2009), and the study is about women’s experiences of becoming elite coaches. This study has investigated crossing boundaries as a potential area for power relations and one of these boundaries may well be a boundary of gender in the world of elite coaching.

Chapter Three

Methodology

In the previous chapter I described how social theory when viewed as a metatheoretical framework, can enable and value the movement between what is often viewed as disciplinary and theoretical silos (Cassidy, 2010). This has the propensity to enable the complexities related with women becoming elite coaches to be explored from numerous perspectives, and one methodology will not reflect a metatheoretical framework.

Becoming an elite coach is a complex process and there are many variables that need to be navigated, such as, coaching and national sporting environments, personal beliefs, learning styles, coaching opportunities, and talented athletes just to name a few. Bush and colleagues (2013) have noted that research into sport coaching is complex and if research can cross ontological, epistemological and methodological boundaries, then this will “allow for an ever-revolving criticality in the sports coaching research that is devoid of discrete schools of analysis” (p. 109). Lincoln and Denzin (2011) further suggested that one theory does not tell the whole picture stating “there is no one way to do interpretive, qualitative inquiry. We are all interpretive *bricoleurs* stuck in the present, working against the past, as we move into a politically charged and challenging future” (p. xiii).

Physical pedagogical bricolage (PPB) has been proposed as a “reconceptualised field of study” and suitable for investigating “sports coaching” (Bush et al, 2013, p. 98). The impact of ascribing PPB to the field is that it opens up the reconceptualised ‘field’ to areas that may have been unused or not considered by researchers under the ‘sports coaching’ umbrella (Bush et al, 2013). This type of approach is embedded in engaging the social order as a tangible, traditionally produced, splintered entirety made up of diverse types of social relations, practices and experiences (Bush et al, 2013).

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Kincheloe, McLaren and Steinberg, (2011) state their “understanding of critical theory” (p. 167) and their “commitment to critical social research and critical pedagogy” (p. 167) has led them to “identify the bricolage as an emancipator research construct” (p.167). It has been suggested that “bricolage can be described as the process of getting down to the nuts and bolts of multidisciplinary research” and “exists out of respect for the complexity of the lived world and the complications of power [relations]” (Kincheloe et al., 2011, p. 168). The bricoleur has been described as multicompetent, skilled at using interviews, observation and personal documents (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

These assumptions reflect those of a researcher who is informed by critical theorists who themselves view all practices as mediated by power relations that are socially and traditionally constituted. The critical researcher views particular groups in society as being privileged at the expense of others (Kincheloe, McLaren & Steinberg, 2011).

Bricolage is consistent with Fay’s (1987) metatheoretical analysis of critical social science which he views as a “theory of how to understand the social world” (p.1). Fay suggests in broad terms that critical social science is an effort to comprehend the domineering characteristics of a society. He goes on to say that it is apparent that “any social scientific theory which tries to be scientific, critical, practical and non- idealistic all at once must consist of a *complex of theories*” (p.31), which are methodically interrelated. Lincoln and Denzin (2011) stated, “a critical social science seeks its external grounding not in science, in any of its revisionist postpositivist forms, but rather in a commitment to critical pedagogy and communitarian feminism with hope but not guarantees” (p. x). The assumptions and purposes of a socially critical inspired research include an obligation to social justice, parity, inclusivity and social change (Macdonald, 2002; Tinning & Fitzpatrick, 2012; Wink, 2000). Some of the fundamental assumptions of socially critical research include; some groups in society are powerful, while others have much less or a different power. For example, controlling groups

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have a vested interest in maintaining power and may use homologous reproduction as a means of maintaining this power. Homologous reproduction can be described as an environment whereby the dominant hierarchy replicates itself based on physical and /or social characteristics (Stangl & Kane, 1991). The rationale behind this type of research is to dispute the status quo, give a voice to those who are being marginalised (Thomas, 1993) and impart social change. This social change can be brought about by “initially altering both individual and group or organisational awareness (Sparkes, 1992).

All critically inspired research requires regular intellectual or personal connection with participants. In order to ensure what is being presented to the reader, the researcher must engage in reflection. Reflection is a process of repeated thinking about the project you are engaged in and becoming “aware of the process and consequences of knowledge production by bringing the original act of knowledge back into consciousness” (Thomas, 1993, p. 46). Because of my long involvement in the New Zealand track and field community, I do have pre-existing social and cultural connections. I also have my own perspective of the national governing body of athletics in New Zealand known as Athletics NZ. Adopting the stance of a critical ethnographer, I seek to question some of the political, social, ethical and natural constructions of knowledge within a range of interpretative research strategies.

Setting the Context - Athletics New Zealand

Athletics NZ is the national sporting organisation (NSO) that is responsible for overseeing track and field in New Zealand. As well as track and field, Athletics NZ is also the governing body responsible for out of stadia events, such as road, cross country, mountain running and ultra distance championships. Selection of athletes and team management to represent New Zealand at international competitions is another responsibility of Athletics NZ. In 2012 Athletics New Zealand's website stated:

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Athletics New Zealand's role as the National sporting organisation for athletics is to help New Zealanders to enjoy athletic activities whether this involves regular competitive involvement, casual participation or occasional exercise. (Vision Statement, 2012)³

Athletics New Zealand has recently undergone a substantial organisational review. The board now comprises seven members, two females and five males with one of the females holding the position of chair. The organisational review has resulted in the head office being moved from Wellington and the establishment of two operational offices in Auckland and Christchurch. In a communication sent out to members it was stated:

For the first time, the office will feature staff members with specific responsibilities in club development and officials' development, with time being spent directly with clubs on increasing the quality of their service and overall capability. Potentially, it is the first step to creating a sustainable regional development model. (Athletics NZ Communication, 2013).

Athletics NZ has a Community Sport Unit and a High Performance Unit. The High Performance Unit in Athletics NZ has a Director of High Performance and a High Performance Development Manager. These two roles are filled by men and are supported by two women who hold administrative roles. This unit also has three full-time paid coaches (one woman and two men) and three part-time paid coaches (one woman and two men). These coaches are known as High Performance Programme Coaches. Within this unit there are also two selectors, both male. Alongside the High Performance Unit there is a High

³ This has been lost since the launch of an updated website. Now there are no vision statements to be found anywhere on the Athletics NZ website www.athletics.org.nz

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Performance Athlete Support Unit consisting of athlete care positions such as a medical doctor (male), two physiotherapists (female), a nutritionist (female) and a life advisor, (female). The sport scientist roles within this support unit include; biomechanist, physiologist and performance planner. All of these roles are held by males. The structure of the Athletics NZ's High Performance Unit appears to reflect the view that men are leaders in all facets of sport as reasonable and normal and defers the roles of support and caring to females (Shaw & Frisby, 2006; Walker & Bopp, 2011). It is in the above context that the three participant female coaches negotiate the processes associated with becoming elite coaches.

Typology of an Elite Coach

There are many variations and points of view as to what constitutes an elite coach (Lyle, 2002; Lynch & Mallett, 2006; Mallett, 2010), however elite coaching does appear to be characterised by a number of common features. Lyle (2002) suggested that a high performance [read elite] coach must satisfy certain criteria. These criteria include “an increasing commitment [to coaching]; stable [athlete/coach] relationship; specific competition objectives and a commitment to preparation” (p. 49). As well as these the coach needs to develop their professional practice through widespread coaching practice (Lynch & Mallett, 2006). Mallett (2010) also suggested that the coaching practice of an elite coach includes responsibility connected to performance outcomes of the athlete. Coach responsibility for the control of variables (e.g. lifestyle) planning progressions and monitoring of the athlete, all help to maximise the performance outcome. Mallett (2010) went on to suggest a high performance coach must “assume leadership and management of the coaching process” (p. 121). While these are accepted characteristics of an elite coach, the application of this typology appears problematic within the New Zealand track and field community. In the New Zealand track and field context elite coaches appear to be considered ‘elite’ based on the performance of their athlete. If the athlete fails to perform, the coach/athlete relationship

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breaks down or the athlete is dropped from an elite programme, the coach is no longer regarded as elite.

Meet the Coaches

Three elite female coaches within the New Zealand track and field community were interviewed. These coaches have previously competed as track and field athletes and now have a combined 60 years plus of coaching experience. All have been development coaches at some point, and all are currently coaching both elite and development athletes. All three of these coaches have been recipients of Prime Minister's Scholarships, and have attended many world competitions such as Olympic and Commonwealth Games, Paralympic Games and World Track and Field and Paralympic Championships. One coach has also coached athletes who attended the Olympic Games representing a country other than New Zealand. The roles these three coaches have held at global competitions have been varied, and include, individual coaches, team coaches, team managers and assistant managers. The three coaches are all considered elite by the athletics community in New Zealand. All three of these coaches are over 40, are married and two are mothers. All three have a tertiary qualification and were active athletes prior to becoming coaches. One of these coaches represented New Zealand as an athlete, at the highest level (Olympic Games). The track and field community in New Zealand is very small and two of these elite coaches wish to remain anonymous while the other is not bothered at the possibility of being recognised. I have used pseudonyms for all three coaches.

Sam, Anna and Janey are the pseudonyms given to the elite coaches. They had different pathways into coaching, with Sam coaching herself, Anna started with coaching children, and Janey coaching an athlete who represented New Zealand within two years of her beginning her coaching career. All three women have created their own opportunities along the way and have a passion or love for coaching.

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Who is Sam?

Sam has been coaching for 24 years and considers herself to have been an elite coach for 10 of those years. Despite this experience she still believes she is constantly learning. Until recently Sam was working with elite New Zealand track and field athletes without a contract; she was not paid by Athletics NZ. Up until the last Olympic Games (2012) Sam was contracted (paid) to coach elite athletes from a country other than New Zealand. When residing in New Zealand Sam also works fulltime outside of coaching. Sam said she has a “hunger” and a “desire to want to learn as much as I could”. She describes herself as,

...very self driven, because in becoming a better coach, it meant I learnt more, I had more knowledge and it's quite powerful, it's kind of addictive in a way, in that the more knowledge you learn the easier your craft is.

Initially Sam started coaching herself when she was an athlete because she felt that her coach had taught her all he knew and she needed to gain more knowledge. She stated, “I got to the stage where my knowledge had started to outgrow my coach's and he became more of a mentor”. This realisation coincided with a time in which Sam was experiencing family concerns, specifically the separation of her parents. Consequently, her coach's role changed from being concerned with sport specific knowledge to that of a “confidant and a sounding board”. It was during this time that Sam developed a desire to learn more about her event, but also to become more independent and responsible for herself. She wasn't looking to find another coach. Sam explained,

I wanted to learn more...what I could do and how far I could go. I guess the desire to learn not just from an athlete's perspective but also from being able to guide myself. I guess ultimately too, there wasn't anybody in my opinion able to fill the space my coach had left.

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Sam coached herself for several years before she and her husband decided it was time to start a family. She described how the decision to start a family coincided with the decision to take a break from competing, explaining, *“I was starting to lose that passion and that’s why we decided we would try for a family”*. Sam said she had always planned to go back to competing; however after the birth of her child she had a few injuries. While the injuries got repaired, she never got back to 100 per cent competitiveness and her focus changed. That is when Sam became a coach.

It was because simply my priorities changed, you know suddenly you’ve got this little bundle and its like do I go train? My focus changed and I battled with that for a little while and then I made the decision to stop [competing] and that’s when I very quickly found myself in the coaching.

Looking back on this time in her life Sam said, *“I think I’m a better coach than I was an athlete so, it was a good change”*.

Who is Anna?

Anna has been coaching for more than 20 years and considers that she has been an elite coach for seven years. Anna works fulltime outside of coaching and is a volunteer coach. When Anna started coaching she was still competing as an athlete. Upon reflection Anna said that at the time there was, *“a little bit of a conflict of an interest and that is what actually made me make up my mind to retire from competing, because I was getting more enjoyment out of coaching than what I was out of competing”*.

Anna started coaching when she was in her early 20’s and has not taken any time out from coaching since then. She stated at times this has been *“hard, but it has worked, I have made it work, it has just been that I have made it work”*. Anna also talked about the learning opportunities available to her as a coach and what she has done to maximise these

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opportunities by saying that she aimed *“to learn as much as I can and take every opportunity to attend courses or link in with information”*. When Anna was asked why she explained,

At the end of the day, I find that no matter how stressed I am in my paid employment, when I get onto the track and I start coaching, I am a completely different person. I start relaxing and I just enjoy it, I enjoy it so much...and that's what makes it all worthwhile.

Anna has a passion for coaching and has no plans to stop.

Who is Janey?

Janey has been coaching for more than 25 years and considers she has been an elite coach for the past 12 years. She has been married for more than 30 years, and works part time outside of coaching and considers her coaching to be the other half of her work even though the coaching work is not paid employment. In Olympic years she has the flexibility in her non-coaching work to negotiate her hours to suit her coaching commitments. *“In an Olympic year I reduce my paid employment from 0.5 to 0.3 because of my commitments with my athlete to the Olympic Games”*.

Janey started coaching because a young athlete asked her to start coaching him. She was still competing at the time, and she stated that she really didn't know a lot about the discipline he wanted her to coach but they set out to learn as much as they could and very quickly achieved some good results. For example, *“within two years he represented New Zealand in the Commonwealth Games where he finished really well”*.

Janey has continued with coaching because she enjoys the challenge and feels that she is good at coaching. Not only that, she said, *“There were good people to work with, and at the time my husband was very busy working, which was pretty time consuming, and I felt as though I needed something to do.”* Janey also appeared to be very self driven which was

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evident when she stated that coaches need to create their own opportunities and “*You’ve got to go out there and find them [the opportunities] yourself*”.

In the subsequent chapters I will describe and illustrate the experiences of Sam, Anna and Janey in their individual coaching journeys. This provides insight into how they navigated the gendered environment of high performance coaching in New Zealand to become elite track and field coaches.

Method

This research primarily used interviews with three elite female coaches from the track and field community in New Zealand as the method to gather data. Before gathering data from the selected coaches ethics approval was obtained from the Ethics Committee of University of Otago (D12/224). Once this approval was granted I then sent out Participant Information and Consent Forms (see Appendix A) to the coaches who had previously responded positively to my request asking if they would like to be involved in this research project. Each of the participants was selected because they were acknowledged by the New Zealand track and field community as being ‘elite’. Personally, I have known each of these coaches for approximately 15 years and one of them closer to 25 years. The initial interviews held were face to face in various settings around New Zealand such as in a coach’s home or in a café and lasted between 60 – 90 minutes. The initial interviews were the only formal type interviews; however there were several other interactions between myself and the participants. These were informal chats at track and field meetings as well as many emails to clarify points from the data. The format for the interview was semi-structured, because this format provides the interviewer with a guide to gather the information that will answer the research question as well as allowing for flexibility to enable the interviewee to shift the conversation so it is relevant to their situation. Semi-structured interviews are one of

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the most widely used methods of data collection in qualitative research (Willig, 2009) and in sport (Culver, Gilbert & Trudel, 2003; Culver, Gilbert & Sparkes, 2012).

However it is important that there is a balance between control and freedom to say anything (Willig, 2009).

The objective of a qualitative interview is to gain an insight into the interpretations, the perceptions and feelings, and the motives underlying an individual's actions (Corbetta, 2003). In a short time the interviewer needs to create an environment and relationship that allows the conversation to get beyond merely a polite 'chat' or exchange of ideas. The interviewer must also establish an environment where the participant feels safe enough to talk freely of their experiences and feelings, which involve a subtle balance between gaining knowledge and the ethical aspects of emotional human interaction (Kvale, 1996).

Furthermore, Kvale (1996) notes that the interviewer needs to have an empathic access to the participant's world because the participant's lived meanings may be communicated not only by language, but by expressions, tone of voice, and gestures in the normal course of a conversation. As long as the researcher does not abuse the empathy and make assumptions, or try to control, or direct the participant, there is the potential to hear a very personal story from the interviewees. Because I knew these participants' personally this appeared to afford me "insider status" (Taylor, 2001, p. 321), which had the potential to give me a different perspective when analysing the data. The fact that I am also a female track and field coach in New Zealand appeared to lead to some assumptions from the participants that I 'knew' what they were talking about. It is possible that this 'insider status' gave me greater access to hearing the stories from these three coaches. Before conducting the interviews I reflected on how I could ensure the power was situated with the participants and it was their stories, not my interpretations that were portrayed. While the researcher needs empathy, the conversation in a research interview is not the shared interaction of two equal partners and there is always a

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propensity to abuse this unevenness of power. This is because the interviewer sets the scene, introduces the topics of the discussion, and through additional questions steers the course of the interview (Kvale, 1996). Corbetta (2003) agrees, noting that an interview is not a regular discussion between two equally matched people; rather it is a guided exchange in which the interviewer establishes the subject matter and ensures that the interview is conducted according to the aims set. It is in this situation that 'insider status' has the potential to "obscure the power differences between academic researcher and voluntary participants by implying they are equals" (Taylor, 2001, p. 321).

When designing the interview schedule (see Appendix B), I identified themes from the literature, for example, coaching as work (Nash & Sproule, 2009; Rynne & Mallett, 2012), how coaches learn (Cassidy et al., 2009; Cushion, Armour & Jones, 2003) and professionalism and professional development (Taylor & Garratt, 2010; Nash & Sproule, 2009) and subsequently formulated questions that would focus the participant towards these specific areas.

These questions were not fixed; they were open-ended enough to allow flexibility for the participant to express their feelings, thoughts and experiences without this being manipulated by my views (Gratton & Jones, 2004). This approach is consistent with epistemological assumptions of interpretive researchers, namely acknowledgment of numerous realities, uniqueness and an inductive approach to research (Amis, 2005). The interviews were followed up with emails, which enabled clarification to be gained around some points.

Each interview was recorded using a portable digital recorder after receiving permission from the coach. Also detailed field notes were taken immediately after the interview, noting settings, contexts and body language cues. These notes helped to provide a deeper understanding of the context of the interview, and also to help expose concealed

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meanings and certain emphasis; e.g. laughter and rolling the eyes (Amis, 2005). The interviews were transcribed verbatim and were forwarded to the relevant coach for feedback and also right of refusal for any of the information to be used. All coaches gave me permission to use the data I had gathered.

Limitations of the Study

Some may consider that a limitation of the study is that there were only three coaches involved. However this number represents more than 70% of NZ female elite track and field coaches ensuring there is a comprehensive coverage. A possible limitation of the write up of the study is that there was not a full description of the coaches. However this was done for a reason because providing more detail would have made the participants easily identifiable.

Analysis

Analysis has been described as “making some sense of it all. This includes sorting, summarizing, translating, and eventually turning a mass of data into a coherent argument” (O’Reilly, 2012, p.186). Critical social scientists do not have to aspire to detachment; however they should be able to expand on the necessary principles of their practice or research with some measure of reliability and generality (Fay, 1987). My long standing entrenchment in the New Zealand track and field community, does not allow me to detach myself and view this community from a completely objective standpoint.

The analytical approach I have used is twofold: deductive and inductive. Deductive research is one where an idea or hypothesis is derived from existing theory and the empirical world is explored and data is collected to examine the truth or not of the idea or hypothesis. Deductive analysis is frequently used in situations where the researcher wants to retest existing data in a new perspective (Elo & Kyngäs (2008). My deductive analysis will be linked to the framework as explained in the preceding chapter, and will permit me to investigate women’s experience of becoming elite coaches in track and field in New Zealand

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while navigating the gendered environment of elite or high performance coaching. O'Reilly (2012) suggests a key issue with deductivism is that new theories challenging existing ones cannot surface. By incorporating inductive analysis with deductive analysis, it opens up the possibility of themes emerging from the data. When conducting inductive analysis, it is desirable for the researcher to have an open mind about their preconceptions, proceed in a well-informed approach but be open to surprises arising from the data (O'Reilly, 2012).

It was apparent during the interviews that the participants accepted me as one of them (a female coach in New Zealand) with many of them telling me something but not quite finishing it and saying "*you know*". I have tried to ensure that I have asked them (the participants) to clarify what they meant and that I am not telling the story through shared assumptions. Because I wanted to hear what these women have to say about their journey on becoming an elite coach, it was imperative that I took an inductive approach to the analysis. However, I also wanted to link these women's stories into the existing literature that has sought to understand women's experiences of becoming an elite coach, hence the need to also engage with a deductive analysis.

Once the data had been collected, transcribed, sent to the participants for any feedback, I then began the process of familiarizing myself with the data. I read the transcription in conjunction with my field notes noting many things such as language used, commonalities and differences between the participants. Because I had read extensively in preparation for this research there were themes that I thought would appear from the data, such as; coaching as work; professionalism; the gendered environment of sport and coaching. Initially these were the themes I focussed on. I constructed a table and identified data from each of these themes. I then went back to the data and identified other significant themes, returning once again to the literature to research these other themes such as learning

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experiences. As noted by Edwards and Skinner (2009), this “framework approach is a comprehensive, systematic and replicable modes of analysis process” (p. 133).

Chapter 4:

A Journey – Working as a Coach and Being Professional

Introduction

Coaches' working with elite or high-performance athletes spends many hours preparing their athlete to compete on the world stage. In New Zealand some coaches are paid to be coaches, while many others work in a volunteer capacity. In New Zealand track and field, Athletics NZ employs 6 coaches in either a full or part time capacity. You often hear these employed coaches being called 'professional'. This chapter will investigate whether the participant coaches consider their coaching to be work and also whether or not each of the coaches considers themselves to be 'professional'.

The stories of the participant coaches will be analysed with the literature associated with the concept of work and professionalism. Much sport is viewed as 'professional' and all three coaches, while not in paid high performance coaching roles; do see themselves as being professional in their coaching practices. Therefore it was important to find out what being professional in their coaching practice means to each coach. The data was discussed and analysed utilising the meta-theoretical framework. Drawing on Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner's (2015) notion that 'knowledgeability' is a Landscape of Practice (LoP); we can view experiences that have happened to coaches as they journey from coach to elite coach.

Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner (2015) explained, to understand how a 'landscape of practice' constitutes this intricate social body of knowledge or knowledgeability, there are some key features that need to be considered. One of these is that "the landscape is political" (p. 4) and they noted that assorted practices have differential capabilities to manipulate the landscape through the authority of their discourse, the legal implementation of their views or their power over the resources including human resources. Practices in a landscape enlighten and sway each other and there will be power differences in

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these practices. This does not mean one practice incorporates the other (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015) however it does suggest the coaches' journey has the potential to be fraught with tensions and challenges and it is the strategies each coach employs to allow them to overcome these that make for interesting reading and provide us with insight into 'becoming' an elite coach.

Athletics New Zealand High Performance Coaching Roles

In New Zealand historically, track and field coaches have been volunteers. While today the majority of coaches are still volunteers, Athletics NZ currently employs six high performance coaches, thus creating a pathway for some coaches. When the participant coaches were asked if they had considered applying for any of the paid high performance coaching roles advertised by Athletics New Zealand's High performance programme, Sam laughed, saying no because it was her understanding, "*it's fairly common knowledge that they [Athletics NZ] had already appointed the people before [the positions were advertised]*". Perhaps Sam was alluding to the hierarchical structure within Athletics NZ and who has access to prior knowledge. An explanation for the power dynamics that are considered to exist among the hierarchical structure of Athletics NZ, was illustrated when Sam suggested that people had already been appointed before the roles were advertised, could be an effective 'old boys' network' often seen in sporting organisations (Lovett & Lowry, 1994; Shaw, 2006).

Wenger-Trayner and Wenger Trayner (2015) advocated that there are power dynamics of practice, such as "competing voices and competing claims to knowledge, including voices that are silenced by the claim to knowledge of others, creating knowledge hierarchies among practices" (p. 16). This may possibly be seen as a situation where "men can continue to coach and advance in leadership positions...while the authority of women remains marginalized" (Walker & Bopp, 2011, p. 50). This suggestion promotes the idea that it is only natural that

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men are overrepresented in positions of control such as Athletics NZ's paid performance coaches and therefore perhaps receive jobs because of homologous reproduction (Stangl & Kane, 1991).

Sam believed there is a need to have professional coaches. She believed there needed to be accountability for the advancement of coaching and the development of elite athletes.

I think it's hugely important for a national sports organisation to have employed people because, well for me the number one reason is that, there needs to be accountability for what it is that they're trying to achieve and unless you put a money figure next to somebody they're not gonna be accountable, you know, it doesn't necessarily mean that they're gonna do a better job.

Sam's belief reflected a dominant neo-liberal view that privileges notions of individual responsibility, personal esteem and success, and a range of social policies favourable to business (Brown, 2003; Darnell, 2010). For example, professional coaches need to be accountable to Athletics NZ in attaining the required key performance indicators (KPI) for high performance coaching.

Athletics NZ receives funding from High Performance Sport New Zealand (HPSNZ) for the Athletics NZ high performance programme. To receive this funding, and the continued support of HPSNZ, there are certain KPI's that need to be attained and Sam saw that it was the role of professional coaches to 'do their part' to ensure that Athletics NZ met the KPI's. When pressed for more clarification around why Sam had not applied for one of the coaching roles she admitted that it would depend on exactly what the role would entail and acknowledged "*there are other issues that probably limit my ability to do that sort of job now, just with current athletes and support people that are involved*". Sam advocated that she would not be supported in her role and therefore would be unable "*to have the freedom to do a really good job*". Sam's body language, rolling her eyes and sighing suggested she was

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very aware of relations of power and existing networks within Athletics NZ. She noted “*there are more men in this sport at the higher level; I’m talking administrative [positions].*”

Utilising a feminist perspective of power relationships to understand Sam’s view highlights how when sport is viewed as a male dominated place, creates a deterrent for Sam to become a full participant in the realm of elite coaching within Athletics NZ. The ‘old boys’ network’ has been identified as a structural deterrent that prevents women from entering coaching (Knoppers, 1989, Lovett & Lowry, 1994). For example Lovett and Lawry (1988) presented data that exposed an overwhelming male authority in athletics director’s positions; suggesting these individuals are responsible for making employment decisions and these decisions keep alive the ‘good old boys clubs’.

Janey did not consider applying for one of Athletics NZ’s high performance coaching roles when advertised because she considered the advertised roles to be more of a co-ordinator or facilitator. She believed the use of the word coach in the advertisement,

is wrong to start with... They don’t have to coach everybody; they should be facilitating the development of the coach and athletes. That is their role, and if these guys or coaches don’t have a strong development background themselves, I don’t know how on earth they can do it! Some of their personalities are not appropriate. They don’t know where it’s at, they haven’t been out there and had a damn good look and see what’s going on and why.

Janey believed that the roles advertised were for the development of coaches working with elite athletes and not a ‘hands on’ coaching role. She had difficulty in understanding why people appointed were not experts in the area of development. For Janey the purpose of these roles was to get alongside coaches, help coaches develop to become elite coaches. Janey did not apply because she was already fully committed to coaching her own elite athlete and did not have the time to put into a full time paid coaching role. She pointed out, “*my passion is*

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with coaching at the moment. I have a commitment to my athlete; to World Champs next year, and then Commonwealth Games..." At this particular time Janey's commitment was to her own coaching practice and continuing to develop the relationship between herself and her athlete and in ensuring her athlete had the best preparation for the next important competition.

Anna's first response when asked what she thought about the paid high performance coaching roles and whether or not she had considered applying was, "*I don't know that I really want to answer that*". While there was no pressure for her to expand on her answer this question, she gathered her thoughts and explained,

I chose not to apply for any of the roles because you know, to me it is really hard when we [New Zealand] have got athletes spread right through New Zealand and good athletes not just one or two but good athletes in every centre.

Anna appeared to have some philosophical concerns around the expectations or job descriptions of these roles. She was unsure if the job descriptions were appropriate for the New Zealand context, where there is very little funding, and questioned "*how can you have a discipline coach when you don't have a centralised programme*"? These paid coaches have been known to ask athletes to move from their home base, to be coached by another coach. Anna did not consider this to be the best model for New Zealand, and thought 'Kiwi athletes' like to stay in their own surroundings. Anna stated,

In New Zealand we have 4.3 million people with 1.3 million of them sitting in Auckland but there [are] still 3 million people in the rest of New Zealand and a large percentage of our athletes are rural based athletes. They are not city athletes, they cannot handle going into a city, and they just do not survive.

Anna believed you should not impose criteria on athletes as to where they must live and who will train them. Because of this philosophical difference and also the fact that these roles were based in two urban centres (not where Anna lived), and she already had a full time job

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(outside of coaching), Anna did not apply for an Athletics NZ paid high performance coaching role. This is another example of the boundaries of practices being fraught with tensions (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015). The boundaries in Anna's situation could be considered between individual and sporting organisation philosophies. There is a common philosophy, wanting athletes on the world stage podium, however the tensions and conflicts arise around the how this should be achieved and who has control over the decisions as to how the objectives will be met. While Sam, Janey and Anna were not employed to coach by Athletics NZ, it was important to investigate whether or not they considered their coaching as work.

Working as a Coach

When working as a coach was discussed with the participant coaches, it was apparent that these coaches held differing views on what constituted work. Janey had always considered her coaching as work because it was her "*passion*" and she spent considerable time effort and money, reflecting a broad understanding of this work (Morgan, D., 1996). Her perception of working as a coach changed once she was actually being "*paid by Athletics NZ*". For Janey prior to being paid there was a tension between calling what she did as a coach, work, even though she had always believed her coaching was "*a job*". Janey said "*it's become work because Athletics New Zealand actually supplemented my income this year*". She went further to say she took leave without pay from her '*other work*' because of Olympic commitments and because Athletics NZ paid her, which made her coaching feel "*more like a job, but I've always had the attitude that it is my job anyway because it's more of a job than my [other] job*".

The conflict expressed by Janey demonstrates how tensions can exist between the boundaries of 'paid' and 'volunteer' coaches. This conflict reflects the observation made by Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner (2015) that the boundaries between practices, are never

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trouble-free, with these boundaries constantly engaging the arbitration of how the capability or knowledge of a practice becomes pertinent (or not) to that of another. While Janey became more comfortable calling her coaching 'work' once "*Athletics NZ began supplementing her income*" it is apparent there is still a boundary of tension or conflict between the broader definition of work (Morgan, D., 1996) and Western society's common understanding of work as something people get paid to do (Else, 1996).

In contrast to Janey, Anna did not view coaching as work, which she considered to be a good thing. She explained,

That is why I am still coaching. I think if I regard [coaching] as work, I wouldn't be there, as simple as that. I don't regard it as work but I regard how I behave and how I approach it as professional like work.

Anna viewed her coaching as something she can do to relax and it takes away the tensions created by her full time work. She explained that her paid employment can become very stressful, however coaching relaxed her and gave her enjoyment.

It appeared that for Anna, her paid work is stressful and she did not want to equate stress with coaching. Anna saw her role as a 'worker' quite separate from being a coach. Anna's view of work was similar to the dominant idea within Western society, that work is what you leave home to do and for which you get paid (Else, 1996). Anna demonstrated that within her 'landscape of practice' she did have practices which have boundaries that are not crossed, (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015) specifically between 'worker' and 'coach'.

Sam, like Anna, appeared to view her coaching as something she just did because she "*loves it*". Sam was passionate about coaching and was prepared to be a volunteer coach despite coaching an elite athlete in New Zealand for eleven and a half years. However after the breakdown of a coach/athlete relationship and her moving offshore to continue her

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coaching and becoming a contracted coach, Sam was forced to view her coaching as a business. However a significant incident had recently happened in Sam's coaching life that had changed how she perceived her coaching work. This was the breakdown of a coach/athlete relationship that was very public and changed the trajectory of Sam's coaching journey. Sam had this to say about coaching and work,

I never used to [think of coaching as work], but I had to change. When I was with [my ex-athlete] I never considered it a job, it was just what I did and that was purely because it was my choice to do it. I mean we had good days and bad days obviously but it was never a hard task to go and do what we're doing. But when things changed and it became a business. It became a business for me when I started working with [another country] but I still am really really lucky that I was getting paid to do something that I just love.

Unexpectedly Sam found herself in unexplored territory or in other words, she had crossed, or was at least on a boundary between practices, that of the volunteer and that of the professional (paid) coach. "Boundaries hold potential for unexpected learning" (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015, p. 17) and this is the situation Sam found herself in. Suddenly her focus changed from that of volunteer to running a business and learning new skills associated with crossing this boundary. Within the New Zealand track and field community there appear to be many instances where tensions and conflicts are apparent. One of these appeared to be equal opportunities for women coaches.

Treading softly (or not) in a (man's) world (of sport).

Providing equal opportunities is a complex process. Stangl (2013) has suggested that some men consider some women to be deficient and not having the required qualities to be a leader. Another view is that hierarchical structures often present in organisations create a 'glass ceiling' to women's entry and progression (Greenhill, Auld, Cuskelly & Hooper, 2009).

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Anna's early coaching experiences reflected that she felt she was not given equal opportunities and are evident in her statement, "*when I first started out coaching, females were not given opportunities, they were not treated equally and it was like, it was almost an imposition on the coaching arena*". She explained that if a group of female coaches had not stuck together and "*pushed their own barrows*" then she did not think they would have become elite coaches. This 'sticking together' can be viewed as reflecting a coaching Community of Practice (CoP) where the three women coaches had a pooled concern, a passion and deepened their knowledge and capability by interacting on a continual footing (Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002). However 'sticking together' does not explain why these three female coaches would be looking out for each other and working together to become competent coaches. Perhaps another reason why the three coaches would form a liaison is to somehow buffer the ideology that sport is a patriarchal establishment that promotes male supremacy, hierarchy and the devaluation of women (Knoppers, 1989). Coaching has been deemed to be a male environment (Coakley et al, 2009), which can be viewed as creating gender boundaries; it is these boundaries which often/can create conflicts and tensions, which require negotiation and navigation of power relations. The three coaches used a CoP to assuage the power relations associated with coaching and gender.

Sam on the other hand, did not believe being female in the arena of high performance coaching was a problem for her. Sam explained that she has always been confident and always knew she was "*going to go through this process where I was still continually going to be learning and I was comfortable with this*". This did not mean that at times it was not hard. Sam told a story of walking into a room and feeling uncomfortable. She said "*I know full well that they've looked at me and gone phew...oh woman*". Sam acknowledged it became more difficult for the male coaches to ignore her. She stated, "*I'm pleased to say that it was a little bit more difficult to ignore me later as [my coaching] progressed*". While Sam accepted

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there is a 'them' (males) and 'us' (females), she did not allow herself to be 'glossed over' and took control of the situation showing that power is never fixed, it is ever changing and is continually reproduced through intricate power relationships (Denison & Avner, 2011).

When Sam discussed whether being female constructed any barriers for her, she stated that as far as becoming an elite coach, "*I don't think that it [being female] restricts you in that you can't become the best coach that you want to be*". She considered to become the best coach that you can is up to you because, "*you can control your attitudes, your desires, and those sorts of things, there are absolutely no restrictions at all*". This view reflected a liberal feminist perspective whereby there are equal rights for women in day to day life (Morgan, B. 1996). Sam did qualify this statement a little when she said "*perhaps a conversation [I] had with a female coach may be different to a conversation [I] had with a male coach*". Sam referred to men being in positions of authority within Athletics NZ and therefore negotiations were different depending on who you were speaking to and the position of this person in the organisation. Sam noted,

There are more men in this sport at the higher level. I think a lot of it comes down to a personality thing, who you are dealing with at the time and who is in the position of authority at the time.

Similarly to Sam, Janey was quite adamant that being female was not a factor or a barrier to her becoming an elite coach. She was quite emphatic when she said, "*I can't see what issues I could have really had. Just because I'm a woman doesn't mean to say my issues are any different from those of a man*". Janey was not keen to further discuss how being a female impacted upon or influenced her coaching.

In the British context, West, Green, Brackenridge, and Woodward, (2001) interviewed 20 women coaches who identified "exclusionary and discriminatory mechanisms operated to limit women's access to coaching roles" (p. 85). West et al., (2001) suggested patriarchal

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ideologies about women and coaching, combined with experiences female coaches have in accessing casual networks, restricted women's involvement in sports coaching. Their participants felt that they missed out on top coaching roles because those in authority (males) suggested "women were not mentally or physically strong enough to coach elite athletes" (West et al., 2001, p. 87). This resulted in these female coaches tending to work either with children or women, which the authors suggest do not appear to threaten the domain of male coaches. Arguably, this research reflected the barriers identified in the report to the NZOC that unconscious discrimination restricts the participation of women in senior roles in the sporting world (Cockburn et al, 2007). Despite their perception (or not) of the explicit or implicit discrimination, Sam, Anna and Janey appear to have developed their own individual strategies and have negotiated any perceived barriers in the journey to become recognised elite coaches.

Coaching Work and Working as a Professional

All three participant coaches, while not employed by Athletics NZ in high performance coaching roles, did see themselves as being professional in their own coaching practice. In Athletics NZ there are some paid high performance coaches who are not coaching all of New Zealand's most successful elite athletes and some volunteer coaches who are coaching some of New Zealand's most successful athletes. This situation suggests that this coaching environment is infused with competing ideas and power relations. Janey spoke of a time when one of the paid high performance coaches asked the opinion of the volunteer coaches of elite athletes on what coach to bring out to New Zealand for a professional development opportunity. Despite the coaches providing the paid high performance coach with the name of the desired coach the Athletics NZ employee said, categorically no, and that there would be no negotiation because he wanted some other coach. Here we see tensions at

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crossing the 'boundaries of practice', between volunteer and paid coaches and also between individual ideals of professionalism and bureaucratic professionalism.

The traditional discourse of professionalism has a strong collective identity and has a sharing and collegial environment (Day, in Armour 2010). This discourse was demonstrated when Janey presented to a coaches' forum on Prime Minister's Scholarships. Janey was very keen to tell other coaches how easy it was to access Prime Minister's Scholarships. She explained, "*I just really put it out there because it might have given other people ideas and to show coaches how easy it is to go off [and apply for a Prime Minister's Scholarship]*". Janey stated how disappointed and annoyed she was when "*the professional coaches didn't even pay me the grace to sit and listen to that presentation; they walked out as soon as I stood up to start [my presentation]*". Boundaries between practices are places of possible conflict. In this situation there appeared to be a conflict between the behaviour of the paid professional coaches where it would arguably be expected that they would attend a presentation by one of New Zealand's most successful elite coaches. This conflict appears to be around the boundaries of the different discourses of professionalism, in this instance the traditional discourse and the bureaucratic managerial discourse of professionalism. There appears to be tensions between what Janey considers professional, and what Athletics NZ recognises as satisfactory behaviour by the high performance coaches. Professional managerialism discourse is highly bureaucratised with increasing practices, organisations and what counts as legitimate knowledge being "fashioned and controlled by the state" (Taylor & Garrett, 2010, p. 99). Arguably the boundaries between Communities of Practice are places of tensions and challenges, as well as opportunities for learning. The conflict in this example appeared to be across the boundary between paid coaches and volunteer coaches within a complex landscape of practice (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015). Four male paid professional coaches made the decision to leave and not listen to a presentation by a female elite coach. The paid

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coaches could have used this as an opportunity to learn something and together with Janey, moved the body of knowledge forward. Viewed from another perspective this walking out of the presentation by the paid high performance coaches could be explained by relationships of power whereby power is seen as an all pervading feature of social life, impacting on an individual and their relationships with others (Purdy, Jones & Cassidy, 2009). In this instance Janey felt devalued because the high performance coaches walked out 'en masse'. Janey had prepared a very informative presentation around Prime Minister's Scholarships These paid high performance coaches could have disseminated this information to other coaches had they stayed to listen. This action could also be viewed through a critical feminist lens, whereby men (in this case the group of paid high performance coaches) continue to dominate the world of sport and to trivialise and marginalise women in sport (Coakley et. al, 2009).

Another discourse of professionalism is that of the "integration of theory and practice" (Thompson, 2000, p. 9), with the integration being noted as being a significant element of professional credibility. This discourse of professionalism places value on the practitioner being able to justify their actions and having the ability to clarify the basis of the intervention and the objectives set; explain what needs to be done to meet the outcome and why there needs to be an evaluation of the intervention (Cassidy et al., 2009). The 'integration of theory and practice' discourse of professionalism is demonstrated by many coaches in their day to day practices. Sam's quote on her view of professionalism and how she integrates this professionalism into her coaching practice can be seen as an example of a discourse of professionalism that acknowledges the 'integration of theory and practice'. When Sam was asked about being professional in her work as a coach, she explains that it is her role to empower her athletes. Sam stated;

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Coaching is not as simple as just telling people [athletes] what to do. You've got to get your head around what it is that makes the athlete take it all on. You [have to be] able to find the right way of achieving what it is that you need to achieve with that person.

Sam explained that for her, “*professionalism is placing value on what people do, on the service that they provide, the results' that are achieved, that to me is professionalism*”.

Sam integrated theory and practice in her attempt to adopt a ‘professional coaching practice’.

For example,

Science has a massive role to play in sport in general because there's so much that we can learn about either how the body operates, how the mind operates, how we can tweak things here and there, together, you know and use science to our advantage. You're dealing with human beings and that is most important. It's taking that knowledge, the science, the physiology, all of that, the psychology and then applying it to the athlete. A good coach will teach them [athlete] how to use these things so that you [as a coach] are not needed...

It was apparent when speaking to Sam that she expects the same professional respect from people she deals with, such as other coaches, sports professionals and the national sporting body, Athletics NZ.

However when speaking of others and professionalism, it appears Sam also uses a traditional discourse of professionalism, which assumes ownership of an area of expertise and knowledge. This view of professionalism assists in making claims for status, income and legitimacy (Taylor & Garrett, 2010). That she also draws on this discourse of professionalism was illustrated when she had been asked to present at an Athletics New Zealand's coaches forum.

That was an eye opener for me, because I spent a lot of time making this presentation...the old PowerPoint and videos and all that sort of stuff. The other two

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[presenters] *just stood up and talked. That really cemented to me, I'm actually really professional at what I do and I take pride in what I do. I wanted to get a really good message across to the people that were there.*

When adopting a traditional discourse of professionalism Sam thought that the presenters who had not put a lot of effort into their presentations had not adopted a very professional attitude. The two above examples illustrate the complexities involved when negotiating the different discourses of professionalism. In her coaching practice, Sam utilised a professional discourse whereby theory is incorporated with practice, however when it came to educating other coaches Sam acknowledged the traditional discourse of professionalism where the professionals are seen as experts. In the case in point, Sam did not feel the other experts measured up to her standards of professionalism and were not very competent. Competence is not only a personal or individual characteristic; it is also “recognizable as competence by members of a community of practice” (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2014, p.14). While the three presenters were charged with educating other coaches it was obvious in this instance there was no CoP. There was mutual engagement, all three were presenting to the same audience, i.e., same place, same time. There was probably even a shared repertoire as all these presenters coached in the elite or high performance realm and used similar language and practices. However there was definitely no negotiation of shared practices and knowledge or agreement on what the best practice was to present expert knowledge to the coaching audience. This once again is an example of the tensions and challenges around negotiating the boundaries of a ‘landscape of practice’ which consists “of a complex system of Communities of Practice and the boundaries between them” (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015, p. 13). In this particular instance the issue is around Sam’s perspective of competence and who has the power to define competence. Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-

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Trayner (2014) have noted that these boundaries are places of learning and also that “learning as a social process always involves issues of power” (p. 15).

Anna’s view of professionalism in her coaching practice reflects Armour’s (2010) notion of behaving professionally. While she does not view her coaching as work, she definitely sets herself professional standards that need to be met for coaching. In the area of coaching practice, Anna could be viewed as behaving professionally, attaining some personal expectations when interacting with athletes and colleagues (Armour, 2010).

All three coaches have their individual view of professionalism and consider themselves to be professional in their coaching practices whereby they expect the people and organisations they deal with to also be professional in their practices. Both Janey and Sam have demonstrated some of the tensions and conflicts that arise when different discourses of professionalisation are used in a particular situation. It appears some of these conflicts occur in the New Zealand track and field community when different discourses collide. These discourses can be individual discourses or organisational discourses of professionalism. Sam demonstrates these conflicts in the next story.

A professional experience.

Sam is a very successful coach having coached an athlete to both Olympic and World Championship gold medal level and other athletes to Olympic final level. Sam developed an athlete from a young novice right through to gold medal performances at the World’s most prestigious track and field championship meetings. Sam stated “*I’m one of a few coaches that took an athlete through every age group. She’s got world youth, world junior, world open, world indoor, Olympic Games, Commonwealth Games*”. Sam was with this particular athlete for 11 ½ years, yet it took 11 years before Athletics NZ offered Sam a formal coaching contract. In fact negotiations around this formal coaching contract were ongoing when the coach/athlete relationship broke down. At the breakup of the coach/athlete relationship there

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was a statement made by Athletics NZ assuring Sam that they did not want to lose her. Sam had this to say, *when my athlete and I first parted company, nobody actually said it to my face but there was a statement that came out from Athletics New Zealand, that [said], we do not want to lose you.* However as it was subsequently played out, Sam said that she was *absolutely dropped like a hot potato [by Athletics NZ]. That was without anybody other than [ex-athlete] and I really knowing the details of what happened.*

Sam observed that once the coach/athlete relationship broke down, contract negotiations stopped, and it became obvious there was no place for her within Athletics NZ as a high performance coach, because she no longer had a high performance athlete. Sam was asked if she thought being a female had anything to do with the way she was treated.

I don't know, it's hard to say really, perhaps if I'd been a male coach, there wouldn't have been so much emotion around that time frame...I don't know because it was very, very emotional...and my relationship with Athletics New Zealand was not good because we had been going through contract negotiations for 6 months... and they had just dragged on and dragged on and it had just become you know, a really horrible icky process...so I don't know if I'd been a man, (makes sound "phew") God I'd like to say no, I mean I'd like to think that they would've been treated just as poorly but...

Here is one of New Zealand's most successful track and field coaches being treated as a person of little or no value. As mentioned earlier, Sam considered herself to be a professional however she said her treatment by Athletics NZ, was completely unprofessional because of *"the lack of value that they placed on what I did, the time and so mmm..."* In leaving this thought unfinished, I got the feeling that Sam was unable to express her innermost thoughts on the way she had been treated by Athletics NZ. When I asked her if she thought Athletics NZ would have learned from the experience she had with them, she was quite philosophical.

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I think that we still struggle with the idea of professionalism in athletics in New Zealand because we've had such a long history of it being run by volunteers and amateurs. I think there are people that are involved with our sport that struggle with the idea or the concept. There is still this perception, well shit, I didn't get paid... so why should 'you' get paid, God I did twice as much work as you... [and didn't get paid].

Sam acknowledged the historical and cultural roots of track and field in New Zealand and understood the tensions and challenges professionalism has created for New Zealand's track and field community. Over time there have been people who have put hundreds and hundreds of volunteer hours into the sport to make it what it is today. She posited,

without those people we'd be nothing but, we are in a different time now and you have to be professional and you've got to place value on you know, if you wanna go forward, you've gotta put people in the situation where they're gonna be accountable for their results... and they have to produce results so that the rest of the sport is gonna produce results. So, personalities I think are definitely still an issue within our sport, every sport in this country.

This chapter has investigated the views held by three elite coaches on coaching as work, the development of high performance coaching roles recently instigated by Athletics New Zealand, being professional and being a female in the realm of elite coaching in the New Zealand track and field community. Their experiences and the stories they told about coaching as work and Athletics NZ's high performance coaching roles have demonstrated a complex dynamic landscape of practice whereby strategies are employed that "arise and disappear, evolve, merge, split, compete with or

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complement each other, ignore or engage the other” (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015, p. 15). All of which is dependent on each specific situation.

As noted earlier, sport and by association coaching, has been described as a male dominated, white, middle-class place, creating a tension for women being full participants in the realm of coaching (Coakley, Hallinan, Jackson & Mewett, 2009; Whisenant, 2008). Utilising a critical feminist lens enables the reader to view these conflicts caused by men being the dominant group and working together (albeit unconsciously) to marginalise the female coaches. Different discourses of professionalism exist and at times various discourses are utilised by coaches and administrators. When coaches and administrators draw upon competing discourses, tensions and conflict can occur. The conflicts and tensions that arise appear to be around crossing the boundaries of the different discourses of professionalism within the different communities. While ‘Landscapes of Practice’ is one perspective to view these conflicts, it does not encapsulate all of the complexities that are involved in the realm of high performance coaching within the NZ track and field community. Although it could be suggested that the high performance coaches and the volunteer elite coaches were all working together to meet the desired outcome of having NZ athletes on the podium on the world stage, it did not appear that there were mutual coaching communities of practice. The three participant coaches have demonstrated that there are tensions, challenges and conflicts associated with being professional within the NZ track and field community and while there may be a mutual engagement and a shared repertoire, often there is no negotiation of shared practices and knowledge.

When discussing being female in the realm of elite/high performance coaching and whether there were barriers to be overcome, both Janey and Sam advocated that being female did not create barriers. Sam did however admit that she would negotiate

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differently with those males in authority in her sport. This suggested that Sam was well aware of the 'old boys' power network that appears to be prevalent within Athletics NZ.

There are many anecdotal accounts of how coaches 'learn to coach' and become elite. The learning experiences and opportunities the participant coaches have utilised to become elite coaches will be discussed further in the next chapter.

Chapter 5

Becoming an Elite Coach – Utilising Learning Experiences and Opportunities

Introduction.

This chapter reports on the opportunities and experiences Sam, Anna and Janey have had to help them develop professionally on their journey to become elite coaches. There are numerous learning opportunities that can be, and are, employed to enable a coach to become more competent in their coaching practice and become an elite coach. Historically coach education has been of the formal kind, delivered by educational institutions or the national sporting organisations (Côté & Gilbert, 2009). However, increasingly it is becoming recognised that learning to become a coach is a more complex process. For example, a coach at a formal coach education session may strike up a conversation at dinner with a more experienced coach and discuss some coaching issues creating an informal learning opportunity. Despite this change in understanding of how coaches learn, when the participant coaches began their coaching journeys, formal coach education was the dominant institutionalised form of coach development.

Athletics New Zealand and Coach Education

Currently Athletics NZ has a formal coach education framework which is based on *The Coaching Framework* (SPARC, 2006⁴). This framework provides coaches with an opportunity to move *along* the framework, e.g. moving from a beginner community coach to an expert community coach; or *up* the framework; moving from a community coach to a development or performance coach. To some extent this enables the coach to individualise their professional development. However when Sam, Anna and Janey were beginning their coaching journey, a different system of coach education existed.

⁴ Now known as Sport New Zealand

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The previous coach education system adopted by Athletics NZ was a one to three level coaching structure, with level one aimed at beginning coaches and level three being for coaches of elite or high performance athletes. Normally to achieve a level three certificate, an international high performance coach came and worked with the New Zealand coaches for a week long workshop, which was followed by a number of modules which had to be completed within one year. At the end of the year a comprehensive portfolio of all the required assessments was to be submitted to Athletics NZ to be forwarded to the international coach for assessment. Participating in the level three programme required considerable commitment from the participating coaches. The reward for successfully completing the course was that the coach was awarded the highest track and field coaching qualification a New Zealand track and field coach could gain. Sam recalled the experience she had when she submitted her level three portfolio after completing various modules over the year.

I can recall doing my level three coaching [event specific] qualification, sending everything down to Athletics New Zealand for them, and they lost it! It's just like this was a year of my life that I'd spent doing this qualification and yeah, they lost it. The next time I went and enrolled in a level three, they just said to me look you're too far advanced to even bother with it.

As a consequence of her experience with formalised coach education initiatives, Sam has learnt not to rely on the support of Athletics NZ and just get on and develop her own knowledge to the best of her ability. She pointed out,

I'd have to say that sports specific wise, there was very little on offer. By the time I'd actually got to the stage where they [Athletics NZ] started to ask the question, what can we do? How can we help you? I'd almost got myself to that level.

Pondering on the support or lack of it from Athletics NZ, Sam noted;

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I couldn't honestly say that it hasn't helped, that it didn't add value, because everything does. Every little bit of whatever help you can get is awesome, but did it make me [the coach I am today]? No I don't think so.

Largely due to her experiences of formalised coach education programmes, Sam explains that she tends to take control of her learning. She explained that she learns, “*through my own devices and extracting knowledge from lots of people*”.

The other two participant coaches also had little formal coach education from Athletics NZ. Despite probing Janey made no mention of formal coach education courses which could be interpreted as perhaps she put no importance on this mode of professional development in her journey. However this does not appear to be the case because Janey has participated in formal International Amateur Athletics Federation (IAAF) coach education and is a qualified lecturer in that coach education scheme. When asked what advice she would give to a young woman wanting to develop as a coach, Janey said her advice would be, “[to] *do your coach education, [and then] get out there and work hard*”. It appeared that Janey placed importance on formal coach education for the beginning coach, illustrating that during coaching practice development a coach may engage in formal, nonformal and informal learning opportunities as required (Mallet et al, 2009)..

Anna viewed her professional development to be her own responsibility. She said that each year she had a goal to have “*a learning experience*”. This came in various forms such as “*a formal qualification...or just go to certain lectures*”. Apart from having a goal that these “*learning experiences*” would occur annually, Anna stated she never “*strategically planned until probably the last five or six years*”. Anna did speak about some of her formal professional development opportunities when she first began coaching, and also the support and guidance she received from her “*old coach,*

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the New Zealand Coaching Director at the time, and also a couple of mentor coaches, national coaches in Athletics New Zealand". She went on to elaborate that she did formal coach education papers as soon as she started coaching and that she was "*lucky enough to be identified within the national system and fast tracked through*". Anna believed she just happened to be in the right place at the right time when beginning her coaching journey. However, she did suggest that there was a gap in the professional development support from Athletics NZ until she moved into the elite category, where the carding system afforded her more professional development opportunities.

High performance sport New Zealand carding programme.

In New Zealand HPSNZ administers a coaches carding programme on behalf of sport. The Carded Coach Programme assists coaches in the programme to develop coaching capability and leadership; access High Performance Sport NZ resources – people, technology, and equipment and access personal support to deal with the pressures that accompany high performance coaching. There are 2 levels of carding for coaches.

- 1) Performance + (P+) coaches: needs-based priority access to HPSNZ resources with individualised support from the High Performance Coaching Team.
- 2) Performance (P) coaches: needs-based access to HPSNZ resources contingent on availability, with limited individualised support from the High Performance Coaching Team.

The Carded Coach Programme assists National Sport Organisations (NSOs) to develop their high performance/elite coaches. Both the coach and the NSO have responsibilities to HPSNZ in order to remain in the programme. The responsibilities of the coach include: developing, implementing and monitoring a Performance and Development Plan; seeking regular feedback on their performance; prioritising learning; have a plan for their athletes

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(Carded Coach Programme, 2014).

All three of the coaches involved in this study are currently or have been, in the Carded Coach Programme. Anna has this to say of the programme.

It has provided opportunities of being able to network with other coaches from other sports and I think that has been huge. It has also provided the opportunities of bigger picture learning. I wouldn't have had those opportunities if I hadn't been a carded coach.

Anna credited the programme with giving her knowledge and understanding of things she previously considered unimportant in her coaching practice. She explained these were things such as “*learning preferences, general well-being, coaching behaviour and coaching characteristics*”. Anna also noted that the Carded Coach Programme gave her opportunity to network with other coaches, giving her ‘informal’ learning opportunities.

Sam reinforced Anna’s claim that once the Carded Coach Programme came into being more opportunities became available, saying that “*doors started to open a little bit more about going to courses and stuff...*”. However Sam was not convinced of the value of all of these opportunities for her coaching. She explained that,

there was always a level of complication around it, whether it be that I would have to take time off from my job, unpaid or whatever. Or the course that they were offering really had no benefit to me whatsoever, but it was something that they felt that I could do. Or they would offer you something but just the logistics of being able to actually do it far exceeded the desire to do it.

It appeared that those in authority, perhaps the High Performance Coaching Team from HPSNZ would be the one making the decision on what was best for Sam, without asking her what she needed for her professional development. At times this caused tensions between HPSNZ, Athletics NZ and Sam. Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner (2015) emphasise that

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a 'landscape of practice' is political. They state "a landscape consists of competing voices and competing claims to knowledge, including voices that are silenced by the claim to knowledge of others" (p. 4). This politicism "creates knowledge hierarchies among practices" (p. 4). In the above example, HPSNZ is on the top rung, they fund the programme and they have a High Performance Coaching Team. Athletics NZ also have a High Performance Unit, however this unit relies on funding from HPSNZ and may well acquiesce to HPSNZ's plans for Sam. However, Sam took the lead in these situations and decided whether or not she would go, demonstrating a situation of power relations where the hierarchy is being resisted and the coach has the power.

Janey also thought the Carded Coach Programme opened doors for her as well as creating opportunities for her and her athlete to develop together as a team. She explained that when she became carded,

I had access to scholarships...which was really really helpful. I could get these scholarships and head off for professional development, and take my athlete with me, because I think that's really important; the coach and athlete develop together as a team.

This "heading off for professional development" referred to going overseas to gain more knowledge from her global network of world class coaches. One such experience was when Janey and her athlete were invited to attend a training camp in another country. Janey noted this experience was 'massive' and she said "we just took everything, pretended we knew nothing, and re-learnt everything, reset our goals, reset our path, where we wanted to go, how we were gonna do it and just did it". By the end of the training camp Janey had not only built upon an existing relationship with an international coach, but had intensified the relationship. This relationship between Janey and the international coach is discussed further on the next page. The Carded Coach Programme could be seen to be a formal situation for

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coaches to access professional development however as demonstrated by the three elite coaches this Carded Coach Programme also affords them informal opportunities to learn, utilising networks, mentoring and Coaching Communities of Practice.

Collaborative Opportunities for Learning Experiences

Other ways of understanding the learning experiences of the participant coaches is to view these experiences/opportunities as reflecting components of mentoring, networking and Coaching Communities of Practice (CCoP). The significance of considering mentoring, networking or Communities of Practice (CoP) is that it acknowledges them as learning activities which when examined from a socio-cultural perspective show “learning occurs through social interactions within a particular cultural setting” (Griffiths & Armour, 2012, p. 153). While Griffiths and Armour primarily focus on mentoring, their discussion is also pertinent for learning via networking and CoP's. Communities and networks are “two aspects of the social fabric of learning rather than separate structures” (Wenger, Trayner & de Laat, 2011, p. 2).

Networking.

It is possible that networks develop because a group of people have an increase in “a sense of community and a desire to learn about a shared concern often motivat[ing] people to seek connections” (Wenger, Trayner & de Laat, 2011, p.12). Janey used her global network to assist her development. She was surprised when an international coach invited her to participate in a training camp outside New Zealand. Janey said she was not used to the level of sharing she received from this coach because there was little sharing between top track and field coaches in New Zealand. Janey stated, “*from our part of the world, coaches are very secretive*”. Janey was fascinated to know why this coach was prepared to share what he knew when both athletes compete against each other. She was surprised when the overseas coach did not see this as a one way learning opportunity telling her “*don't think it's one way traffic,*

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'cause we're actually learning from you too'. The overseas coach said his main objective of inviting Janey and her athlete to train with him and his athlete was to develop both coaches and athletes regardless of where they resided in order to create better world competitions. Over the years Janey had developed a relationship with this coach as a consequence of meeting him at many global competitions. However after attending the joint training camp this relationship evolved and developed into a much more collaborative and dynamic relationship and could be described as reflecting an aspect of a 'landscape of practice' encompassing complex networks and many CoP's that potentially interconnect, come up against, merge with, break apart. The composition of these landscapes has been described as dynamic (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015). The relationship that Janey had with the overseas coach could also be explained as the outcome of a dynamic social network, which Mallett and colleagues (2008), described as "a dynamic and evolving informal coaching network" (Mallett, Rossi & Tinning in Mallett, Trudel, Lyle & Rynne, 2009, p. 93). These relationships sometimes take years to evolve and the relationships require trust and respect. Janey's example showed the interconnectedness of 'networks', 'Coaching Communities of Practice' and 'Landscapes of Practice'. The relationship between Janey and the overseas coach can also be viewed as illustrating a CCoP where both coaches wanted to improve the performance of their athletes and the coaches and athletes worked collaboratively to achieve this outcome. This CCoP depicts a group of people, who share a problem; how to increase the expertise of the athletes and coaches involved at world level. They had a passion to increase their knowledge and expertise and make world competition stronger by interacting and working together. The relationship started off as a networking relationship and has evolved to become a CCoP, illustrating the different aspects of the social fabric of learning between networks and communities (Wenger et al, 2002; Wenger et al, 2011).

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Sam also spoke about linking into the global network of international coaches. She explained how she gained the confidence to contact international coaches after her experiences when first beginning to coach. Sam remembered as a young coach “*sitting in the stands, next to 80 or 90 year old guys*” being a little hesitant to approach these coaches. However she explained that “*actually it was just a matter of introducing [yourself]* and once she had begun to gain coaching credibility it became more of a two way conversation. Sam elaborated further that these coaches began to ask her questions and she still has coaches from around the world emailing her to discuss coaching issues. Sam noted that “*there is camaraderie within the [global] coaching fraternity and...people are quite happy to share ideas*”, and this is a part of the coaching that she particularly enjoys.

It's very cool when I walk into a major event and stuff, it's really nice because I've got a really big group of people that I know. Sometimes we don't see each other for maybe a year or so because, we don't cross paths and you only see each other at major events and stuff. Yet it's like you pick up where you left and nothing's changed, it's like meeting your best buddy after 5 years, nothing changes and you just go bang, straight back into it...

Like the other participant coaches, Anna also found networking to be a great way to access knowledge especially as she became a more competent and recognised coach. She noted “*as you grow you have the ability to spread the net and seek wider information and feedback*”. Anna has excellent relationships with several overseas coaches and also explained she has some great relationships with people outside of her sport. When discussing networking as a means of gaining knowledge Anna suggested that an effective coaches' association could be a vehicle to promote networking opportunities for New Zealand coaches because it could “*provide professional development opportunities, networking opportunities, which [the Athletics NZ Coaches Association] did in its first year and the sharing of*

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resources". However Anna felt since that first year the Athletics NZ Coaches Association has failed to do what it had set out to do. This could arguably be a consequence of a lack of sharing or collegiality among the New Zealand coaches, something that both Janey and Sam have noted. Sharing and collegiality is an integral part of mentoring which is discussed in the following section.

Mentoring.

Despite various perspectives of mentoring, whether it be 'formal', 'informal' or a combination, there does appear to be a common denominator in a mentoring relationship, namely a mentor and someone who wants to learn, often referred to as a 'mentee (Merriam, 1983). Other researchers have noted that people can, and often do, seek out more than one mentor when they desire to develop several skills (Scandura & Pellegrini, 2008). Consequently, other mentoring like opportunities, such as networking or Communities of Practice present themselves, thereby creating a learning opportunity for someone to develop a desired skill set.

Griffiths and Armour, (2012) suggested "learning is very much an embodied and social practice" (p. 153), with Rynne and colleagues (2010) identifying learning as a revealing progression of knowledge building. When Sam first started coaching, she gained knowledge from many people and then adapted it for her own use. She remembered trying to "*get as much information from as many people as I could and then bastardise the whole thing...and made it my own*". Sam networked and collaborated with many people to build her coaching knowledge utilising a mentoring type relationship for a specific period of time.

Mentoring is also a recognised professional development tool. As noted previously, Athletics NZ has a formal coach mentoring programme where the mentee coach has both a master coach and a mentor coach (Cassidy, Merrilees & Shaw, submitted). This is a recent initiative by Athletics NZ and was not available when the participant coaches first started

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their coaching journeys. When discussing mentoring and the mentoring opportunities they had experienced during their coaching journeys, it was obvious that each of the coaches had a different interpretation of mentoring. Janey explained that she had,

been mentored by some very good friends throughout my coaching career...Initially mentors were within New Zealand but as my athletes advanced to performing at higher levels, I used global networks, especially in Europe as this is where athletes [in my discipline] are world class (personal communication, 2013).

Janey did qualify this comment with another stating that “*the actual qualification of the term ‘mentor’ is important to me as it could be formal or informal ‘support’ or guidance*” (personal communication, 2013). While Janey stated she had been mentored during her coaching career, she actually viewed these mentoring relationships as informal learning experiences and opportunities for collaborative learning. She entered into these relationships when she felt the need to increase her knowledge around coaching practice or to solve a coaching problem. Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner, (2015) explained that “the notion of a single Community of Practice misses the complexity of most bodies of knowledge” (p. 15). They suggested that to explain the intricate relationships people build across their own landscape of practice, the concept of knowledgeability can be generative. Knowledgeability is evident in a person’s relationships to a complex landscape of different CoP’s and networks. Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner (2015) explained “knowledgeability manifests in a person’s relations to a multiplicity of practice across the landscape” (p. 1) as opposed to competence which is used to “describe the dimension of knowing negotiated and defined within a single Community of Practice” (p. 1).

Sam’s experiences were similar to Janey’s however she did not identify these learning opportunities as mentoring experiences. She explained, “I definitely used other coaches as a means of up-skilling and gaining knowledge, but not sure if I could identify any of these folks

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as mentors” (personal communication, 2013). Sam saw her involvement in networking as more of an opportunity for collaborative learning and viewed mentoring as a relationship that was based on respect and trust. Sam had a mentor that she trusted implicitly. “Ben (pseudonym) was [a] personal mentor/father figure for me and certainly his influence on me personally was/is reflected in how I coach” (personal communication, 2013). The fact that Sam identified Ben as a ‘father figure’ implied that Ben had a special place in Sam’s life outside coaching as well and was a completely trusted confidante and sounding board. Sam noted that “as I progressed as a coach, while I still sought knowledge from other coaches, the mentoring side of things was more to do with coaching practice rather than theory...work on the EQ [emotional quotient] side of coaching” (personal communication, 2013), which is where Sam still drew on Ben for guidance. This elaborated the fact that Ben was an extremely trusted mentor, even though Sam had earlier identified that as an athlete she had outgrown Ben’s technical knowledge, she still implicitly trusted her mentor’s judgement on her coaching practice.

Anna had a similar relationship with her former coach. She said that she was still using Tim (pseudonym) as a mentor.

He now just asks me ‘what do you want?’ Overall from the biggest picture he is the person that has the most impact on my role as a coach – from a science, art and behavioural point of view in coaching and life!

For Anna, Tim was the foundation rock in her coaching. She went to him for advice in both the technical and craft side of her coaching practice, but perhaps more importantly Anna noted she also asked his advice on life. This once again identified that this relationship is one that is based on mutual trust and respect as identified by Bloom (2013). This relationship however is not exclusive in that it prevented her from gathering knowledge from other sources. For example, Anna explained that when she started coaching there were two other

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coaches who supported her and helped her to get “*going from a national perspective*” and also the National Director of Coaching who “*took a punt on me when I was young and allowed me to attend several international coaching forums*”. Anna also acknowledged that she went outside of her sport to gather knowledge, “*not just athletics though – Stan and Ron [pseudonyms] have been great mentors for the wider coaching (art and science)*”.

While coaching is often an individual pursuit, coaches tend to form a sub- culture of interconnecting groups (Cushion, 2006), which Sam, Janey and Anna have demonstrated. This sub-culture or network enables the expression of comparable attitudes, value orientations and common objectives (Coakley, 1986) thereby creating collaborative learning experiences which could be identified as CoP's. Researchers have identified that a collaborative culture within coaching exists (Cushion, 2006; Gould et al., 1990) whereby coaches learn by watching experienced coaches at trainings, speaking to these coaches informally and actively seeking advice from more experienced coaches. It is through these experiences and others that “collective understandings begin to develop” (Cushion, 2006, p.130). A Coaching Community of Practice (Culver & Trudel, 2006) is an example of a collaborative learning experience.

Coaching Communities of Practice.

Participation in a CCoP provides an opportunity for shared understandings, increased satisfaction, common knowledge about practices and lines of attack for solving problems (Wenger, et al, 2002; Wenger, 1998). Wenger (1998) noted, “engagement in social practice is the fundamental process by which we learn and so become who we are” (preface). When members of the CCoP interact on an ongoing basis, they work together closely to achieve a shared goal thereby suggesting that the relationships of power are minimised. Anna described a collaborative learning opportunity. She noted,

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There were originally three female coaches in our discipline and we are pretty close. We bounce a lot of ideas off each other; we don't see anybody as a threat. We share ideas, we share knowledge, and we will get on the phone and ask a question and ask for reassurance and things like that. We still do that now. If it hadn't been for the three of us sticking together like glue ...and actually just pushing our own barrows almost for our discipline and our sport. I don't believe that we would be where we are today.

Anna indicated that as females they had to work much harder to be recognised as elite coaches. She noted that only two female elite coaches in the New Zealand track and field community have been recognised as elite in the past four years, however both of them have been coaching for over 20 years. Anna suggested, as a female coach “*You need to prove that you can coach. [you are not judged] by technical improvement or by personal performance gain, it is actually by elite results and [only] then are you taken seriously as a coach*”. Anna went on to say that as a coach you need to make your own opportunities, and she found that working together as in the above example was one strategy that enabled her and other female coaches to collectively create a voice for themselves as female track and field coaches.

New Zealand is a small country and track and field a complex sport with many disciplines. Wenger (1998) noted that being close geographically can help with a community whereby members must be engaged. However he also stated that being close geographically is not sufficient to develop or form a Community of Practice. There are many global coaches of elite athletes other than New Zealand and it appears that the three participant coaches look outside of New Zealand to gain up to date knowledge of coaching practices. As coaches move to the global level, coaches use their imagination as to how they will become conversant with the new knowledges, and reflect upon how these new knowledges and practices can be sufficiently aligned with their own coaching practice inside New Zealand

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(Culver & Trudel, 2006). In the global sense a coach may have their own local coaching community of practice, perhaps consisting of the coach and athlete (in track and field), however Galipeau and Trudel, (2006) suggested that the 'culture of practice' is different between coaches and athletes particularly in the team environment. Is this 'culture of practice' different for individual sport athletes and coaches? Locally, a coach may have a small group of coaches or other experts and a global arm that may well consist of an overseas coach or coaches that coaches the same discipline. Sam illustrated this when she said "*the plan was to learn as much as I could to improve my coaching practice*". She went on to say that she has a group of coaches who she is in email contact with and they learn from each other. She explained, "*I still have coaches from around the world who email me and say what are your ideas on this, or they will send me videos*". Sam demonstrated that she actively sought out more knowledge to become better at her coaching practice. Trudel and Gilbert, (2013), stated expert coaches actively seek out or create learning situations to gain more knowledge to become better coaches. They noted "expert coaches will not hesitate to step outside of their comfort zone to explore alternative ways of thinking about their coaching practice and the coaching culture in which it is embedded" (p. 19). Sam explained there is camaraderie in global coaching with everyone wanting to learn as much as they can, "*there is a sharing...and it's just a matter of [firstly] making contact and then keeping in contact*". Sam also spoke about the coaching expertise within New Zealand. She explained that most coaches "*want information*" and they "*want access to information*". Sam also thought that New Zealand has some coaches who have "*done really well internationally*", however this has not been recognised or utilised to help develop coaching within New Zealand. Sam spoke about camaraderie and companionship and explained,

I would struggle to come up with a time where I sat down at a table with any or all of them and shared really good ideas. When you [have the opportunity] to put yourself

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into that sort of environment, you will be surprised at what solutions will come out of it.

Sam acknowledged that there is not a lot of collegiality within the New Zealand track and field community. She posited,

Everyone knows what it is they want and what they want to achieve [within their own coaching practice] but collectively, if we worked together more, we would come up with ideas of actually how we can do that, accept the things we need to accept and move on.

It appeared that Sam was suggesting the culture and practice within the New Zealand track and field community is not conducive to establishing CCoP's to enhance New Zealand coaches learning opportunities. This is not dissimilar to Culver's findings in (Culver & Trudel, 2006) where she found once a CCoP had been established and directed with the help of a facilitator, when that facilitator stepped out of that role, the CCoP did not work as efficiently and the coaches tended to go back to a less sharing environment.

This chapter has investigated different learning experiences for professional development that Sam, Anna and Janey have utilised to gain more knowledge and become more competent in their coaching. It has been identified that for these three female elite track and field coaches there are many preferences for their individual professional development. All three participant coaches have said they have used mentoring as a learning opportunity to develop their coaching practice. Sam and Anna both used their former coaches as their mentors with each of these relationships based on mutual trust and respect (Bloom, 2013). Alternatively Janey used trusted friends as her mentors when she felt she had a need. Her perspective on mentoring however was different to that of Sam and Anna. Janey described her experiences of mentoring as "*informal support and guidance*".

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Networking appeared to be the mode of professional development most utilised by these coaches. Each coach has created their own specific network and all three coaches at various times noted the importance of maintaining and growing their networks. All three coaches enjoy the camaraderie and collaboration they have found in the global track and field coaching community, possibly because at times there is not the collegial sharing culture in the New Zealand track and field community. At times their global networks become CCoP's to achieve a common goal or outcome that the participants require and once that is achieved, the relationship may well return into an informal network with contact being maintained. Networks, mentoring and communities are not mutually exclusive (Wenger et al., 2011) and with the participant coaches utilising these learning opportunities as a means of professional development and gaining knowledgeability about their own coaching practice, it is obvious that each of these three coaches has an extensive 'landscape of practice' (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015).

Chapter 6

The end of a Journey; or just the Beginning?

This chapter draws together the findings from the present research to answer the research question and recommends ideas for future research.

Conclusions: Every Journey is Individual and Specific

The purpose of this study was to investigate women's experiences of becoming elite high performance coaches in track and field in New Zealand while navigating the gendered environment of elite or professional coaching. First, it was important to discuss whether the environment of elite or professional coaching is gendered. As noted earlier there are many researchers who have proposed that sport reflects a masculine discourse (e.g. Fredericks & Eccles, 2005; Krane, et al., 2004; Kerr & Marshall, 2007; King & McDonald, 2007; Pringle, 2005). These researchers suggest that this masculinity is associated with power, toughness, competitiveness and domination over others. It has been noted that within the sociological literature, sport has classically been situated as a product of complicated identities and discriminatory gender relations (Markula & Pringle, 2006).

The idea that sport is a masculine place needs to be extended to the domain of coaching. There is a large amount of literature that suggests coaching has a masculine identity and as such creates barriers for women to become recognised as successful coaches of elite athletes. Some of the reasons suggested for this are: women's perceptions of the success of 'old boy networks' (Lovett & Lowry, 1994; Shaw, 2006b), and lack of support systems for females as well as a failure of the 'old girls network' (Acosta & Carpenter, 2012; Norman, 2010). Two reports in New Zealand, *The New Zealand Census of Women's Participation*, commissioned by The Human Rights Commission in 2010 and *The Report to the New Zealand Olympic Committee on Gender Balance in New Zealand Olympic Sports* in 2007 identified barriers that appear to prevent women participating in senior roles within sport.

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These barriers included lack of women mentors, career breaks for domestic purposes, lack of women role models, women's lack of confidence in own abilities, lack of childcare and unconscious discrimination by both men and women. Sam, Anna and Janey at various times did acknowledge that there is an 'old boys' club or network' that exists with the New Zealand track and field community. Anna acknowledged a lack of support when she suggested that in New Zealand female coaches are judged by their athletes' results alone and not by any technical or performance gains their athlete makes. She clarified this and noted that it was only elite results that gained a female coach any support from Athletics NZ.

In the United Kingdom context, research conducted by Norman (2010) discovered three common themes identified by elite female coaches. These themes were reported as fewer opportunities for women, lack of support from the sport's governing body, and coach education that is not customised towards the female coach's personal and/or professional development. These three themes have been supported by the evidence and comments made by the three elite coaches in this study. Professional sport has become more prominent in New Zealand over the past fifteen years and has provided more opportunities to pursue coaching as a vocational pathway, however none of the participant coaches applied for Athletics New Zealand's professional coaching roles. The discourses of professionalism have been discussed and the boundaries around these competing discourses can be fraught with conflict and tensions. One programme that creates opportunities for paid roles within New Zealand is the Coach Accelerator Programme (CAP). Athletics is considered a sport that is co-ed, yet in 2014 there are three male track and field coaches on this programme and no female coaches. Athletics NZ also employs paid high performance coaches, 4 full-time and 3 part-time. Within this group of paid coaches, there is one female full-time and one female part-time coach. Viewing elite or professional coaching through a critical feminist lens, these two examples would suggest that elite or performance coaching within the track and field

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community in New Zealand can be considered a gendered environment advantaging some men over some women.

Second in the study, it was crucial to investigate the experiences of these coaches 'becoming' elite. This was based on the assumption that 'becoming' is a learning process and a journey. All three of the coaches created and utilised extensive networks to gain knowledge about the many aspects of coaching. As previously noted coaching is an extremely social and dynamic practice that is always evolving. Utilising networks as a means of professional development and learning to become an elite coach appeared to be the preferred method for the participant coaches. Many of these networks are global with two of the coaches acknowledging that there is little collegiality within the elite coaching fraternity in New Zealand. Sam and Janey identified that within the New Zealand track and field community there appears to be a lack of sharing and collegiality whereas the camaraderie among coaching in the global community is much more visible. Anna noted that after the first year the Coaches Association was established, it did not meet the aim of being an association that promoted networking, sharing and collegiality.

Mentoring is yet another example of a collaborative learning opportunity. All three coaches identified that mentoring was an opportunity in which they had engaged. For Janey, whilst she called the relationships mentoring relationships, she did qualify these "as *support and guidance* rather than *formal mentoring*". Both Sam and Anna called on their own former coaches as their mentors. For Sam and Anna these people were extremely trusted and respected with Sam calling her mentor a "*confidante and a sounding board*". Anna called her mentor the "*person that has the most impact on my role as a coach – from a science, art and behavioural point of view in coaching and life*". All three coaches utilised mentoring in an informal sense, based on trust and respect.

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Communities of Practice and Coaching Communities of Practice are also a collaborative way of learning about becoming an elite coach. It is evident from the data that all three coaches belong to many communities, with Anna describing one particular community whereby three female coaches formed a tight knit community ostensibly to create a support network to navigate the gendered landscape of coaching. Anna explained that this was earlier on in her coaching career and is a strategy that enabled them to become elite coaches. In fact Anna said [women coaches] “*were almost an imposition on the coaching arena*” and if they had not formed a female Coaching Community of Practice then she “*didn't believe that she would be where she is today*”. Arguably a Coaching Community of Practice can be a strategy to navigate relations of power relating to gender.

While networks, mentoring relationships, CoP's and CCoP's were discussed as different modes of professional development, it must be noted they are not mutually exclusive to one another. Coaches develop networks and relationships as a learning need arises, these networks and relationships may become a CoP or a CCoP to achieve a specific outcome and then morph back into a network. Debatably, an informal mentoring relationship such as Anna and Sam have with their former coaches could be viewed as a CoP. As noted by Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner (2015) a ‘regime of competence is not static’ (p. 14) and “learning in a Community of Practice is a claim to competence” (p. 3). Elite coaches are not just competent; they are experienced and can claim ownership of a huge body of knowledge around all aspects of coaching. Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner (2015) used the term knowledgeability “to refer to the complex relationships people establish with respect to a Landscape of Practice, which make [the members] recognizable as reliable sources of information or legitimate providers of services” (p. 11). Becoming an elite coach is about developing a meaningful identity of both capability and knowledgeability in a dynamic and diverse landscape of pertinent practices (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015). I

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suggest that a 'landscape of practice' encapsulates the intricate spider's web of relationships that these coaches used to ensure their own professional development was appropriate for their individual learning on their own journey to become an elite coach.

Finally looking at the strategies, each coach employs to become elite while navigating the gendered environment of elite coaching. Of significance, when it comes to professional development, each coach appeared to take responsibility for their own learning and did not rely on help from the national governing body, Athletics NZ. I believe this is a strategy that each coach employed to take control of their own professional development. In New Zealand, this emphasised that coach education is not customised towards the female coach's personal and professional development. There appears to be less opportunity for women to become employed coaches with track and field in New Zealand; however it must be noted that none of the participant coaches applied for any of the paid coaching roles as advertised by Athletics NZ. Perhaps this could be viewed as a defensive strategy where the female coaches did not want to challenge the hierarchy within Athletics NZ? Sport and coaching has been identified as a gendered environment and one strategy could be, to not put yourself in a situation where you need to negotiate the workings of the male hierarchy within Athletics NZ. Gender relations are always arenas of tensions and if the existing male hierarchical power is threatened, then the preservation of power is likely to be the belittling or marginalising of other groups such as female coaches, by for example the utilisation of the 'old boys' network'.

Another strategy that was employed by at least two of the coaches was that they did not accept the idea that elite coaching is a male privilege. Janey noted "*just because I'm a woman doesn't mean to say my issues are any different from a man's*" however she did qualify this with "*if you let things be an issue they are*". Sam explained that being a female in the arena of high performance coaching has not been an issue for her. She noted "*I'm a fairly*

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confident woman...I accepted quite early on that I was always going to get through this process" [of becoming an elite coach]. This strategy of believing you are going to become an elite coach and not allowing the idea of elite coaching being a male privilege to subsume you can be seen as a strategy which navigates around issues of power relationships. It could also be viewed as a liberal feminist view, acknowledging that women have equal rights with men in the journey to become an elite coach.

In summary, I have argued that elite or professional coaching in the track and field community within New Zealand can be considered a gendered environment, with the potential to disadvantage some women. Within the context of New Zealand track and field a 'Landscape of Practice' is an appropriate lens to view how the three participant coaches learned to 'become' elite coaches. This lens enables the intricacies involved with learning to become visible, it also acknowledges the potential challenges and conflicts, as well as the potential to negotiate and increase a body of knowledge, while navigating the boundaries of the many Communities of Practice and networks. I suggest that the data indicates that the three main boundaries of conflict are between paid and volunteer coaches; male and female coaches and the competing discourses of professionalism. The strategies each coach deployed to navigate the landscape was varied and specific to each situation as it occurred. There were times when the coach stated something and then contradicted this statement in a later conversation. This identifies the complexity involved around navigating the gendered environment of elite or professional coaching within the New Zealand track and field community.

Future Research

Future research could focus on gaining the perceptions of elite female coaches from other sports in New Zealand. Asking elite coaches from a range of sports may provide a more comprehensive view on female's perspectives and experiences as they become elite coaches.

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If the research was to continue to be focussed on track and field in New Zealand, it may be interesting to gain insight into elite male coaches' perceptions and coaching experiences, of becoming an elite coach. During my discussions with the participant coaches they identified that a potentially difficult time being a coach was the point in their journey between being a club coach and a development performance coach. The coaches remarked that this was a time in their coaching journey where they felt that they had been cast adrift, with no support from the national governing body and no-one was actually interested in helping them get from grassroots to elite. This would be another area to perhaps investigate and look at whether there are more efficient ways to professionally develop all levels of coaches.

A future research focus could be 'Women's Experiences of Becoming Development Track and Field Coaches in New Zealand'. The future research could be directed at looking at what it means to be a female coach within the organisational and cultural structures of Athletics New Zealand. This research could investigate all levels of coaching and identify barriers that prevent or dissuade women from attaining either eliteness in their coaching or being recognised for the expert work they perform in their chosen area or age group within the sport of athletics. This research may provide insight into why there are not more female elite coaches. This insight may come from both an elite and a development coach perspective.

Recommendation:

That Athletics NZ investigates how a stronger culture of sharing and collegiality could be introduced into the New Zealand track and field coaching environment. This collegiality could be a learning opportunity for all coaches at all levels.

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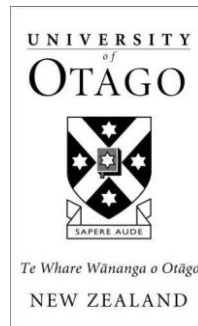
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Appendices

Appendix A: Participants Information and Consent

Reference Number *D12/224* allocated by the Ethics Committee

11th July 2012



Women becoming elite track and field performance coaches in New Zealand

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

Thank you for showing an interest in this project. Please read this information sheet carefully before deciding whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate I thank you. If you decide not to take part there will be no disadvantage to you and I thank you for considering my request.

What is the Aim of the Project?

This project is being undertaken as part of the requirements for a Masters degree in Physical Education.

The aim of this study is to gain insight into the personal experiences of women becoming elite performance coaches within the New Zealand track and field community. The women will be representative of various stages of the coaching journey; and will bring insights into

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how they have progressed (or not) along their own individual pathways towards becoming an elite coach.

What Type of Participants are being sought?

You have been invited to be a part of this project because you are either an elite or development coach within the track and field community in New Zealand

What will Participants be Asked to Do?

Should you agree to take part in this project, you will be asked to:

Participate in an interview or if this is not possible to participate in a Skype interview. It is anticipated that the interview will last between 60-90 minutes. This project involves an open-questioning technique. The general line of questioning focuses on your experiences of becoming an elite coach within track and field in New Zealand.

The precise natures of the questions which will be asked have not been determined in advance, but will depend on the way in which the interview develops. If a line of questioning develops that you are not comfortable with, you are free to decline to answer or withdraw from the interview without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

What Data or Information will be Collected and What Use will be Made of it?

The interview will be audio taped for analysis. These tapes will be stored in a secure location and only I, my transcriber and my supervisors will have access to them at all times. Following transcription of the data the audio tapes will be destroyed.

Whilst personal data relating to your coaching will be collected, you will be given a pseudonym to protect your anonymity. If, and when your data is to be used in publications, you will be consulted for your permission to use this data.

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The data collected will be securely stored in such a way that only those mentioned below will be able to gain access to it. At the end of the project any personal information will be destroyed immediately except that, as required by the University's research policy, any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for five years, after which it will be destroyed.

The results of the project may be published and will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand) but every attempt will be made to preserve your anonymity. If you wish, after transcription of the interview, this data will be available for you to view. Should you desire a copy; the results of the study will be made available to you upon completion of the project early next year.

This project has been approved by the Dean of the School of Physical Education, University of Otago.

What if Participants have any Questions?

If you have any questions about my project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:-

Joan Merrilees (Student Researcher)

Email: merjo889@student.otago.ac.nz

OR supervisors,

Dr Tania Cassidy and/or

Dr Sally Shaw

School of Physical Education

School of Physical Education

Telephone: (03) 479 9070

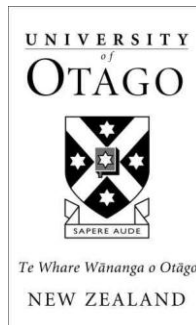
(03) 479 5037

Email: tania.cassidy@otago.ac.nz

Email: sally.shaw@otago.ac.nz

Reference Number *D12/224* allocated by the *Ethics Committee*

11th July 2012



**Women becoming elite track and field performance coaches in
New Zealand**

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

I have read the Information Sheet concerning this project and understand what it is about. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage.

I know that:-

1. My participation in the project is entirely voluntary;
2. I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without any disadvantage;
3. Personal identifying information (audio tapes) will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project but any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for at least five years;
4. Whilst personal data relating to my coaching will be collected, I will be given a pseudonym to protect my anonymity. If, and when my data is to be used in publications, I will be consulted for my permission to use this data.

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5. The results of the project may be published and available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand) but every attempt will be made to preserve my anonymity.

I agree to take part in this project.

.....

(Signature of participant)

.....

(Date)

This project has been approved by the Dean of the School of Physical Education, University of Otago. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact Dr Tania Cassidy on (03) 479 9070 or tania.cassidy@otago.ac.nz OR Dr Sally Shaw on (03) 479 5037 or sally.shaw@otago.ac.nz . Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the result.

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Appendix B: Questionnaire Summary**Ideas for question threads for Interviews****Demographics**

- Age band
- Relationship status
- Children
- Paid employment other than coaching
 - a) Full-time
 - b) Part-time

Coaching Pathway

- How long have you been coaching?
- How did you get started? Why did you start coaching?
- Why do you continue to coach?
- Has your journey been continuous or have you taken time out along the way?
 - a) If you have taken time out, what were the reasons for this?
- What do you see as your achievements in coaching?
 - a) What have you done to achieve this?
 - b) What else would you like to achieve?
 - c) What things are in place to assist you achieve these goals?
 - d) Is there anything preventing you or making it more difficult for you to achieve what you want to?

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- e) Do you consider there are specific attributes you need to become an elite coach within the NZ track and field community? Please expand on this.
- If someone was asked to describe your coaching status what do you think they would say? How would you label yourself as a coach?
 - Did you have a long term strategic plan for your coaching career when you started? How have you managed to stick to this strategic plan? If not what has influenced your progress?
 - Who has helped you achieve your goals to date? Who is currently helping you?
 - To date what has been the pinnacle of your coaching journey? How did you cope with this?

Coaching as Work

- Do you regard your coaching as work? If so, in what way? If not, how do you view your coaching?
- What rewards do you get from coaching?
 - a) Monetary reward: salary? Scholarship? Coaching fee?
 - b) Increased skills and/or expertise?
 - c) Added value?
- Have there been times when you wanted to get out of coaching? If so, could you describe these please?
- It has been suggested “no-one goes into coaching to make money. It’s passion...that does not leave you”. What are your thoughts on this statement?

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- During the last few years ANZ has received more funding which has allowed the establishment of remunerated roles for High Performance coaches. What are your thoughts on paid coaches working for ANZ?
- Did you apply for any of these paid roles? What were your reasons for your decision?
- Are you aware of where the money comes from to pay these coaches? What are your thoughts on this?

Coaching Discourses

- There are many ways to coach. A dominant view is that a coach systematically applies principles of training to maximise athlete potential. What are your thoughts on this model? Is there anything missing from this model?
- Do you see it valuable as a coach to develop a relationship with your athletes?
- How would you describe the relationships you have/had with your athletes?

Professional Development

- How does ANZ support you in your coaching role? How do they value what you do? How do you know this? How does this influence your motivation to coach?
- It has been suggested historically, salaried coaches had responsibility for mentoring coaches and helping them develop as coaches. What do you think of this view? Is it relevant to the current ANZ context?
- Prime Minister's Scholarships and The Coach Accelerator Programme are two ways that ANZ could help with your professional development.

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- a) Have you been able to access either of these through ANZ? Why? Why not?
 - b) If you were offered a place on the Coach Accelerator Programme, would you take it? Why? Why not?
- What do you know about the Coaching Association ANZ? Are you a member? If yes, what is the value? Why join? If no, why not?
 - How could an effective coaches association support you? In an ideal world tell me what this association could look like?
 - If someone was acting professionally as a coach what would that look like?
 - What support do you receive from your national or regional sport organisation with regards to:
 - a) Information regarding relevant conference, articles etc.?
 - b) Support in the form of bringing international coaches to teach/mentor NZ coaches?
 - c) Regular practical workshops for coaches to network and learn?
 - d) Do they ask you, what you need as a coach to develop yourself further? What support do they give you to do this?
 - e) Any other assistance? Please explain what this assistance is?
 - What do you understand is required to become an elite track and field coach in New Zealand?

Women Coaches

- You are a female coaching in the arena of high performance sport. Has this been an issue for you at all? Please explain.

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- Do you think being female creates opportunities for you? In what way?
- Does being female construct barriers for you as a coach? If so, how does this happen?
- Do you have any other roles within sport? If so are you able to elaborate?
- If a developing female coach came to you for some advice on becoming an elite coach, what would you tell her?