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Feeling Second Best: Elite Women Coaches' Experiences

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This study centers upon accounts of master women coaches in the UK, connecting the participants' experiences of the structural practices within the coaching profession to their feelings of being undervalued and marginalized. By going beyond previous positivist and interpretive approaches to the issue of women coaches' underrepresentation, I locate the participants' narratives and their oppression within the wider sociocultural context of sport. The strength of patriarchy within sport and coaching is revealed in the private lives of the coaches. Consequently, the findings provoke methodological and theoretical implications for an alternative approach to understanding women's long standing minority status within sports leadership.

Cette étude est centrée sur les récits d'entraîneures britanniques et relie les expériences que font les participantes des pratiques structurelles au sein de la profession d'entraîneur à leurs sentiments d'être sous-évaluées et marginalisées. En allant au-delà des approches positivistes et interprétatives antérieurement utilisées pour étudier la sous représentation des femmes en coaching, je situe les récits des participantes ainsi que l'oppression qu'elles ressentent au sein du contexte socioculturel plus large du sport. Dans le sport et le coaching, la force du patriarcat est révélée dans la vie privée des entraîneures. En conséquence, les résultats ont des implications méthodologiques et théoriques pour l'approche alternative qui permet de comprendre le statut depuis longtemps minoritaire des femmes en leadership sportif.

Women's underrepresentation in coaching has received much attention in the research literature over the recent decades. In the UK approximately 75% of all coaches are men and approximately 94% of all coaches are White (Sports Coach UK, 2007). The recent US figures from the NCAA demonstrate that White men occupy 87% of head coaching positions and 52% of such positions in all women's teams across Divisions I, II and III (Lapchick, 2009). Only 2% of head coaching roles for men's teams were held by White women and only 0.7% by women of color. For women's teams, 35% of women's teams are coached by White women and 5% by women of color (Lapchick, 2009).

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Such statistics demonstrate that women, particularly women from ethnic and racial minority groups, are underrepresented within coaching. Numerical measures are popular in the literature seeking to understand why women and ethnic minorities are so poorly represented in sport leadership roles. These low numbers are then explained by women coaches having lower self-efficacy, less intention, preference, and motivation to coach and higher intent to leave the profession compared with men coaches (e.g., Chelladurai, Kuga & O'Bryant, 1999; Cunningham, Sagas & Ashley, 2003; Cunningham & Sagas, 2002; Sagas & Ashley, 2001; Sagas, Cunningham & Pastore, 2006). While quantitative data illustrate the gendered nature and Whiteness of the coaching profession, they do not provide insight into individuals' lived personal experiences as coaches. Therefore, in this paper, I will investigate women's personal coaching experiences within the wider structure and culture of their profession. I will begin my paper with an overview of research that has sought to explain women's absence from coaching or sport leadership positions. I will then make an argument for an alternative direction to studying women coaches' experiences. Third, I will outline my methodology to study master women coaches' experiences within the UK and will present the findings from this research. I will conclude with suggestions for the future directions for coaching sociology.

Review of Literature

In this article, I locate my research within coaching sociology to review literature on women and coaching. As I indicated earlier, much of the research on women coaches uses quantitative methods. Consequently, some previous research has considered the experiences of women coaches through quantitative methodology. For example, Cunningham and Sagas (2003b) examined the treatment discrimination utilizing questionnaires with 170 assistant coaches of women's US collegiate athletic teams. The research was motivated by the authors' earlier finding that sex discrimination existed in sports coaching and is used as a reason to account for the high dropout rate (68%) of women coaches compared with men coaches (15%) (Sagas, Cunningham & Ashley, 2000). Their conceptual framework was based upon the premise that women assistant coaches experience two types of discrimination—access and treatment—due to which they do not progress through coaching ranks (Cunningham & Sagas, 2003b). The results, contrary to their earlier work, revealed that women were *not* subject to treatment discrimination. However, the researchers acknowledged significant limitations with their research: Only assistant coaches were selected as participants and only women's teams were investigated.

Lowry and Lovett (1997) collected further survey data to conclude that women left coaching because of the social conditions they experienced within their profession. These included covert discrimination, time constraints and alternative employment opportunities to coaching (Lowry & Lovett, 1997). Conversely, Parks, Russell, Wood, Robertson & Shewokis (1995) reported that women who stay in coaching had satisfying work experiences despite unequal working conditions. These researchers used the Job Descriptive Index to find that although women athletic administrators were paid less than their male colleagues, they reported comparable job satisfaction. Discrimination, nevertheless, has been identified by researchers as a prominent barrier to women progressing and staying within

coaching (e.g., Abney & Richey, 1991; Drago, Hennighausen, Rogers, Vescio & Stauffer, 2005). Furthermore, Kanter's (1977) theory of homologous reproduction has often been applied within a North American context to examine the influence of gender in the hiring practices of athletic directors (e.g., Lovett & Lowry, 1994, Stangl & Kane, 1991). These studies demonstrate that women's underrepresentation is a product of discriminatory hiring practices because those who are in positions of hiring (mostly men) prefer individuals similar to themselves as a method of reducing organizational uncertainty (Kanter, 1977). Research conducted at high school and collegiate level of US sport has found a positive correlation between the gender of the athletics director and the gender of the coach being hired (e.g., Acosta & Carpenter, 2008; Lovett & Lowry, 1994; Stangl & Kane, 1991).

Women's absence from sports leadership has also been theorized result from so called "agency barriers" (Yiamouyiannis, 2007). Research on agency barriers addresses women's underrepresentation from the perspective that women are less "interested" or attracted to coaching (p. 32). For example, Cunningham, Doherty and Gregg (2007) used Social Cognitive Theory to examine how gender impacts the intentions of becoming head coaches. Using quantitative questionnaires with US based assistant college coaches, Cunningham et al. (2007) concluded that men assistant coaches possessed greater head coaching self-efficacy, greater intention and interest in becoming head coaches, and anticipated more positive outcomes of being head coaches. This research, nevertheless, tends to neglect individual women's coaching experiences and how they make sense of their social worlds.

Interpretive research approaches within coaching sociology examine socially meaningful actions in the natural environment of the participants for the purpose of understanding and interpreting how individuals make sense of and sustain their social worlds (Neuman, 1997). Sartore and Cunningham (2007) explored the impact of gender-role meanings and stereotypes associated with sport on capacities of women to become coaches. Their discussion applied a symbolic interactionist model of identity to propose that the underrepresentation of women in coaching is caused by oppressive social and sport ideology that constrains women's perceptions of themselves as adequate leaders. Consequently, women respond by failing to seek out advancement opportunities and thus unconsciously act in a self-limiting manner. Kilty (2006) also linked women's absence from leadership positions to their experiences in coaching. She interviewed women coaches to find that coaching appointments ultimately favored men whereas women faced suspicions of being a lesbian and felt stress in and a lack of assertiveness toward being a coach. Kilty (2006, p. 226) interpreted the participants' lack of assertiveness and stress as internal, psychological barriers such as "perfectionism" and "inhibitions".

While expanding the positivist and postpositivist research on women coaches' experiences, the interpretive frameworks presume that individuals knowingly control their coaching experiences. Consequently, interpretive perspectives have been critiqued of their lack of interrogation of the cultural, political, and historical context of sport (Markula, Grant & Denison, 2001). For example, Cunningham et al. (2007) explained the underrepresentation of women coaches as an individual problem: women possess less intention, interest and efficacy to become head coaches. Krane (2001) argues that such research fails to account for the cultural influences and social practices that impact an individual's cognitions and behavior. Studies that explore "agency barriers" often omit the historical and cultural roots of

how men coaches have arrived at favoring or choosing coaching as a profession. Furthermore, a critical interrogation of the mechanisms of ideology and the social practices within coaching that serve to oppress or benefit particular individuals' experiences of their profession (Krane, 2001), particularly from their own "standpoint", is absent from the research into women's coaching experiences. There is still little understanding of the link between the structural practices inherent in coaching and women's subjective experiences and there are few studies that examine women's lives as coaches within specific cultural conditions.

Theberge (1993) analyzed how gender is constructed and naturalized through the work of women coaches in Canada. While Theberge's work is seventeen years old, her research remains significant for my project because of its theoretical stance. She connected women's marginal status in coaching to the naturalization of gender difference and the cultural association of masculinity with authority (Theberge, 1993). She found, utilizing Kanter's (1977) theory of tokenism, and through interviews with women coaches from a variety of sports in Canada, that the participants felt isolated through their underrepresentation and were often labeled as "tokens". They were aware of a heightened visibility as the "token" female coaches and felt a great amount of pressure to perform (Theberge, 1993). Their heightened visibility was also a product of being "marked" and stereotyped through their involvement in "feminine" and aesthetic sports (Theberge, 1993).

Similarly to Theberge's (1993) work, Shaw and Slack (2002) sought to understand how the culture of sports organizations preserve dominant, masculine forms of management and undermine women and their styles of management. Adopting a postmodern approach, Shaw and Slack (2002) scrutinized the construction of gender relations within three English sporting National Governing Bodies (NGBs). Their findings, drawn from document analysis and interviews with officials from the three NGBs, showed that language, policies, and practices served to favor masculinities over femininities. This manifested itself in privileging men over women for leadership positions and belittling and marginalizing women's contribution to the organization. Shaw and Slack (2002) were critical of the policies that have focused on numerically increasing women's representation in positions of decision making without revisions of organizational structures. Drawing from a similar critical perspective, my aim is to understand how the lives of master women coaches in the UK, in their own words, are subject to the structural practices of their profession. My project, therefore, is embedded in critical engagement with the concept of power, and how cultural relations are contested (Sparkes, 1992) within the field of coaching. In this critical feminist project I employ Gramsci's theory of hegemony. A critical feminist perspective has been widely applied to examinations of women athletes' experiences within feminist sport sociology (e.g., Appleby & Fisher, 2005; Cooky & McDonald, 2005; Fasting & Pfister, 2000; Hanson & Kraus, 1999; Krane, Choi, Baird, Aimar, & Kauer, 2004; Krane, Waldron, Michalenok & Stiles-Shipley, 2001; McDermott, 1996; Scraton, Fasting, Pfister & Bunuel, 1999) but remains almost invisible within the field of coaching sociology.

According to Gramsci's hegemony theory, cultural leaderships are secured through the naturalization and articulation of ruling ideas into the mass consciousness and the willing consent of those disenfranchised by ideologies (Bennett, 2006). Social ascendancy and subtle control is secured by an interplay of social forces that infiltrates organizations and individual lives (Krane, 2001). For these

reasons, Gramsci believed that sociological analysis should involve not only an analysis of public institutions but also the organization of consent (Parry, 1984). Accordingly, feminist cultural studies examines how gender is played out in and affected through cultural interactions (Hall, 1996). Sport and coaching has become a patriarchy as a product of years of men's knowledge, practices and behaviors becoming powerful and privileged (von der Lippe, 1997). The strength of the feminist cultural studies project is in confronting the larger cultural and social forces that surround women's lived experiences in sport (Krane, 2001). For example, feminist research argues that sport continues to be a site for male hegemony which is supported by subtle ideological control. While women's participation in sport and coaching might have increased, they continue to be marginalized, trivialized, and sexualized within their sports. This is often based on judgments made upon their correspondence or departure from feminine ideals (Kinkema &Harris, 1998). For example, women athletes are marginalized through derogatory media coverage (Duncan, 1993). Daddario (1994) identified that women athletes are marginalized by the media using strategies such as patronizing descriptions, comparisons to adolescent ideals and the presentation that women athletes are driven by a participation ethos rather than performance. Women's achievements are further trivialized by receiving little attention as to their performances compared with their male counterparts and an over-emphasis by the media on their physical characteristics or their domestic roles (Kinkema & Harris, 1998). Finally, women athletes tend to be sexualized through objectification, commodification and voyeurism by institutional and media structures (Duncan, 1993). Such strategies enable the reproduction of patriarchal patterns in sport (Duncan, 1993) by framing men as more powerful and undermining the athletic achievements of women athletes (Sabo & Jansen, 1998). In my study, I examine further how women coaches are influenced by the ideological control in sport.

Methodology

The relative absence of women from coaching is most significant at the most elite levels of the profession. Therefore, my research focuses on women senior national coaches in both men and women's major team sports (football /soccer, field hockey, rugby league, rugby union, cricket, netball, basketball and volleyball) in the UK. At the time of data collection, nine women occupied such positions out of a possible 43. As no women in the UK occupy national head coaching roles within men's teams, all participants coached women's teams. Informal letters of information were initially emailed to the nine women coaches identified using purposive sampling. Six women agreed to participate in the study and consequently were sent formal letters detailing the study. To achieve a greater depth into their experiences, I conducted semistructured interviews with the participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

Following Patton (1990), I employed an interview guide approach to structure the interviews. The interview schedule devised for the purpose of the research focused on (1) the participants' background in and early experiences of coaching, (2) the obstacles and achievements the participants had experienced throughout their career, (3) the participants' experiences of relations with men and other women within their sport and coaching, and (4) the participants' ideas for the development of aspiring national women coaches. Participants were also asked

to elaborate on any further relevant information that arose during the course of the interview. Each interview lasted between 60 and 120 min. All interviews were tape-recorded and analyzed using the constant comparison method of data coding (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This involved unitizing each interview transcript into smaller units of meaning and the response to each interview question comprised a unit. Each unit of meaning was then compared with other units of meaning and subsequently grouped with similar units to form a category (Tesch, 1995). When a unit of meaning could not be grouped with another, it formed a new category. Rules of inclusion for each category were written and connected to similar categories to show relationships and patterns across the data.

My aim was to make the participants' voices heard and their experiences visible. As a part of my critical feminist position, I followed feminist research ethics by Brabeck and Ting (2000). First, I conducted the research process from the perspective that the participants' experiences were morally significant (Brabeck &Ting, 2000) and thus, developed trustworthiness and respect of the participants by employing the technique of member checking of the interview transcripts. However, none of the participants requested any changes to their interview transcripts. Second, I aimed to recognize my potential power position as the author of the study (Brabeck &Ting, 2000) and thus, sought to equalize the researcher-researched relationship through considering each participant as the authority on their experiences. I also made explicit my feminist perspective, the aims of the study, and the theoretical perspective of the research. Furthermore, to protect the identity of the individual coaches, I anonymized both the participants' names and the sports in the findings. I do acknowledge the participants' experiences within different sports are diverse, but as they represented only few sports and occupy high profile positions within UK coaching it was necessary not to reveal the type of sport they coached.

Feeling Undervalued and Underrated: Women Coaches' Experiences

In this section I discuss the coaches' personal struggles in their attempts to be recognized and appreciated as professionals. I have organized my results into two sections. First, I present the interviewees' accounts of how they have experienced the trivialization of their leadership and performance accomplishments. Second, I analyze the structural practices that contribute to the participants' feelings of marginalization.

Undervalued and Trivialized: Perceptions of the Participants' Accomplishments

During our interviews, the participants described how they are not given the credit they deserve as coaches. The women experienced pressure in their relations with male coaches, male players, and the governing bodies of their sport to prove they are competent performers or leaders of their sport. One interviewee detailed her experience:

> I coached a boys' team... It's always that you have to win respect… You have to show them you can play, if you did a free kick and put it in the corner, then everyone had respect for you.

Women coaches often operated in the shadows of male coaches. Based on the interviewees' accounts, an elite coach was often presumed to be a male:

> "Coaches are men" that's what people perceive. When I went to Australia… with the Under 19 England side, I had a male manager. Whichever ground we turned up to, the host would automatically go to my male manager and ask what he wanted for the coaching session. I felt annoyed. It's that automatic preconception that the male is the coach and the woman is the one who does all the running around.

One participant from an ethnic minority background felt that she had to prove her coaching ability even more:

> I was very suspicious [of the governing body's decision to appoint me] because it was very out of the blue. Maybe it was to kill two birds with one stone, you know, "she's female, she's black". . . [So] when I decided to take [the job] . . . it was a 'cannot fail' that drove me because I was female and black, [and so] young, aspiring coaches will look at that and go "well anything is possible".

The participant conceptualized her racial identity as a cultural symbol and understood her position to be a demonstration that Black women can hold powerful roles in sport (Carrington, 2007). In addition, she was aware of the extra "burden of representation" of having to symbolize the capabilities of her entire minority cohort (Puwar, 2004, p. 62). The other participants who identified as White did not discuss the impact of their ethnic identity on judgments of their ability to coach. Obviously, the dominance of Whiteness in coaching has shaped these participants' experiences as they did not consider their racial identity as an important matter (McDonald, 2009; Shinew, Glover & Parry, 2004). However, all the participants felt the need to prove themselves as coaches.

One participant recounted her experience of not being selected for a national coaching position because her playing achievements were trivialized by the [male majority] board of selectors:

> It's a risk for them [the selectors]. That's what they start saying that "you've only played women's [sport]". . . I've played at the top; I've played in a World Cup final!

The same participant also endured poor relationships with male players. This has continued into her coaching career because her male colleagues and committee devalue her coaching potential:

> The club [players] were always like "oh we're better than them". . . It's the same with coaching. . . It's the levels ones and twos that look like "what do you know?" The first level four [coaching award] I turned up for and I walked in and the first half an hour, they're [men coaches] always like "what do you know?"

Despite such trivialization of these participants' previous playing achievements, the women have reached the most powerful positions of coaching. These participants have negotiated the power relationships they have experienced to reach the highest echelons of their profession (Ryba & Wright, 2005).

Marginalization of Women Coaching Through Structural Practices

The critical approach contends that there is an institutional, as well as cultural, "center" to sport (Messner, 2002). The structural "center" is contestable but continues to remain an extremely powerful foundation and reference point for the gender regimen of sport and individual experiences (Messner, 2002). The personal feelings expressed by the participants in the first part of this paper are created and influenced by the structural practices within the coaching profession. The participants describe several practices that contributed to their feelings of unworthiness. In this section, I detail how integration/segregation of sports; gendered appointments; the prevalence of homophobia and heterosexism; and fewer coaching and developmental opportunities shaped women coaches' experiences.

"Integration when it Suits, Segregation when it Doesn't": The Empty Rhetoric of Equal Opportunities

In the following discussion, I present the frustrations of the women regarding the significant lack of women in men's sport although men are represented or even control women's sport. It is worthwhile to note that the terms "men's" and "women's" sports reflect the views of the participants who differentiated between them during the interviews.

Within the UK, there is a distinct lack of women coaching men's sport and this was a source of concern for the participants. One interviewee described this as a policy of "integration when it suits, segregation when it doesn't". The exclusion of women from positions in men's sport is an essential tool in reproducing men's political and social oppression of women (Anderson, 2008). It appears that equal opportunity policies do not apply to men's sport. Instead, men maintain an involvement in the running of women's sport but this right is not returned to women in men's sport:

> We always make sure that it is mixed [in the women's game] ... So now, they have two male national coaches and two women, saying, "we have the mixture". But where is the mixture on the men's side? . . . That's the men wanting the good places in women's [sport].

According to statistical information, no women hold senior coaching roles in any national men's team sports in the UK whereas 16 head men coaches lead women's national teams in seven of the eight major team games. For the coaches I interviewed "equal opportunities" appears then to be an empty rhetoric:

> There's this whole equity thing that I'm not sure always exists…

> Sometimes we've had [men] come in … they have no idea. They dip in and out and suddenly want to tell you what's the best for the women's game.

One participant attempted to explain why men might desire control over her team:

> After the success we had in 2003 with [a woman] coach and the silver medal, the sponsors became interested in women's [sport]…I think they [the governing body] thought "now we have to have a man" [as coach] because the pressure from the men in women's [sport] was too big. . . When it means more and it's tougher, then it's like "let the men take over", that's the feeling I get.

This participant's explanation concurs with Burton-Nelson's (1994) assertion that once women start achieving, then sport is no longer a method of demonstrating male superiority. Knoppers, Meyer, Ewing and Forrest (1993) also contend that as more women enter male dominated professions as coaching, there is an increase in sex segregation and a rise in gender boundaries. This appears to be a form of "policing" the boundaries of sport by men to supervise and maintain control of the most "valuable" positions.

Gendered Appointments

Within this section, I provide evidence as to the depth and intricate structure of male control of sport through a focus on the control of coaching. Puwar (2004) claims that as men move through organizational hierarchies, they create layers of networks, forming an "all boys together" environment that marginalizes and controls women (p. 85). The networking of men and appointments consolidates the legacy of patriarchy (Puwar, 2004). The biased selection of men over women was experienced by one participant:

> I thought I was going to get the job off her [of national women's senior head coach] but because of all the politics, they wanted a man. They didn't say that but you could read that between the lines.

The appointments to high performance coaching roles demonstrate men are chosen over women to some of these positions. For example, one participant, who has more qualifications, a greater wealth of experience both as a player and coach than the majority of her male colleagues and any other woman internationally, found herself unemployed. This is because, in her opinion, men have been awarded the coaching positions in both the men's and the women's game. It was my perception during our interview, that the participant felt angry and unwanted:

> Because I'm a female, there's no way the county set-ups would even look at me to do that and the only job that really would be open would be the national women's job and they've given that to a man as well... If you think of any male England captain with a level four, they would not be out of a job. Yet that's where I find myself today.

Knoppers and Anthonissen (2001) highlighted a similar informal and unstructured nature of coaching appointments, which benefit men as holders of power in sport. In their research, Dutch coaches acquired their coaching positions when casually

asked by their male managers. The use of male networks was also prevalent in seeking and appointing (male) coaches (Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2001). Membership of these "old boys' networks" is reliant not upon qualifications or experience, but on having the correct contacts or mentors (Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2001). The problem for women coaches is that networks create alliances and exclusions (Acker, 1992). Consequently, many women are "out of the loop" regarding future vacancies (Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2001). This was experienced by one of the participants:

> At times you have been frustrated because you think "I think I've done a really good job" and yet I haven't actually been seen to be the next person to step into that coaching role. That's the frustrating bit because it doesn't matter how good a job you do sometimes. . . you don't sometimes get the opportunity.

Gendered coaching appointments are one possible practice of institutionalizing men's dominance over women (Connell, 1987). The homosocial practices highlighted in this section help maintain the norms of hegemonic masculinity.

Heteronormativity, Homophobia and Heterosexism

I have so far discussed the empty rhetoric of equal opportunities and a gendered appointment system as two significant structural constraints on women coaches that have contributed to their feelings of unworthiness. Further examples of the restrictive structural practices are heteronormativity and compulsory heterosexuality (Scraton & Flintoff, 2002). Heterosexism as an "ideological system that denies, denigrates and stigmatizes any nonheterosexual form of behavior, identity, relationship or community" (Herek, 1992, p. 89) is accepted as the social norm and social institutions are built upon an assumption that opposite genders are attracted to each other (MacGillivray, 2000). Johnson (2003) argues that maintenance of compulsory heterosexuality by the dominant culture is achieved through ostracizing sexual minorities and impressing the need for women to appear feminine. The following passages show how heterosexism and homophobia have contributed to the participants' feelings of oppression within their profession.

Excluding one sport, traditionally viewed in the UK as a "feminine sport", the coaches from other team sports reported being labeled as "unfeminine" or "lesbians" because they are women in leadership positions. The participants were aware that women in "traditional" men's sport are often perceived as masculine. For women to be seen as nonfeminine and mannish usually means to be thought of as being a lesbian (Caudwell, 2003). One participant described:

> I've experienced a male stereotyping, you know, macho, not as feminine as the normal female… you know, your interests aren't in make-up and doing your hair.

Another participant discussed the association with being a lesbian:

> Automatically everybody jumps to the conclusion that you're a lesbian… [it's like] "oh you're not married"? . . . For goodness sake, how many men have to answer these questions and they don't. That's one of the biggest issues is the sexuality one. It hurts.

One coach understood that heterosexuality is the social norm and that heterosexual identities are socially desirable and privileged. She was conscious that there are often homonegative connotations attached to women's involvement in the sport she coaches. Feminist research argues that the association between sport involvement and being a lesbian is damaging (Krane & Barber, 2005), because it means the denouncement of a positive identity for and the marginalization of sexual minorities (King, 2008). The following participant is trying to eradicate the connection between her team and a "lesbian image" through the deliberate presentation of a "heterosexy" appearance. Therefore, the tactic against "labeling" is to present an image of feminine heterosexuality by selecting her most "attractive", feminine players as representatives. At the same time, this action tends to preserve homophobia in her sport:

> Is it a good thing to have an image of an attractive girl who endorses the sport? Of course it is. Certainly we do that, we try and get the good looking girls because of the perception of the butch, gay; trying to beat those perceptions so that parents want their kids to come into the sport. It's not a bad thing.

The presentation of heterosexuality was also used by another participant to attract public attention to her team and sport:

> The media we get is when we get a new body suit or something like that. Then we see the body suit being photographed, displayed, which the girls are quite happy to do…This is what you have to do to get publicity. It's the sexist angle on it; it's not a bad thing if it's done correctly.

These quotes highlight how male hegemony continues to thrive through the compliance of the subordinate groups (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). In the case of my research, some of the women coaches were central in the normalization of heterosexism within their teams by supporting the hyper-feminized, sexualized representations of their sport.

Fewer Coaching and Developmental Opportunities

The flaws within the UK coaching infrastructure also contributed to the participants feeling of the "second best". In this section, the participants report an inadequate number of opportunities to coach, to develop, and to be educated. This, the coaches reported, was not the same for men and as a result, the participants felt unguided and unwanted within their governing body.

> How many full time jobs are there for female coaches in this country, how many full time jobs are there for male coaches in this country? I can coach but there's no male club, and it's just male clubs that have full time coaches... You have to bang your head against the wall so many times…It's a lonely job.

This participant expressed her dismay at a lack of opportunities in the UK to coach as a consequent of the simultaneous integration and segregation of sport. Another participant agreed that a lack of opportunities is the cause of her current unemployment despite being one of the most qualified coaches in her sport worldwide:

> Quite simply because I am a woman [there a lack of opportunities]. If I was a man, I'd have a full-time job in performance coaching. So [all the men] I did the level 4 with... is coaching an international team or a county team in this country.

In addition to the opportunity to coach, the participants felt their career had been hindered by the fewer opportunities to develop as coaches. One coach believed that flawed coach education in her sport had prevented her from being the best coach she wanted to be. Now that she has left coaching, her governing body has not approached her to make use of her vital experience:

> I probably would have liked more opportunities to develop…myself as a coach and that's been left too much to chance, you know. I want to be the best for the players but I don't think there's a structure in place that enables [that]... [Now I have finished as national coach] nobody is coming to me to get that knowledge... nobody has picked up the phone. It's like overnight you have gone from being coach to being a nobody... [That makes me feel] quite sad actually… I've given all these years now all of a sudden, it's stopped.

For two other participants, the inadequacies of the coaching infrastructure put heavy burdens on them and distracted from their primary roles as coaches:

> You can't just concentrate on coaching…The discussions are about "should we talk about football even though we have a coach conference, we don't have any money; we can't train more because we don't have the players, who work too much". . . . It means development takes a longer time, when you have to spend it on so many other things.

These participants feel undervalued because they find few opportunities for further education or coaching at their level and lack quality support.

Discussion and Conclusion

My exploration of the experiences of senior national women head coaches demonstrates that structural practices limit their coaching possibilities. Women coaches' emotional struggles illustrated that they worked within a male dominated sport culture (Kidd, 1990). Their oppression was not overt discrimination but more subtle, insidious ideologically based oppression that contribute to women's continued underrepresentation (Halford & Leonard, 2001). The trivialization of the participants' previous playing achievements and their current coaching ability was evident in everyday experiences. Such accounts of "everyday inferiorizations" illustrate how the organization of group inequalities relate to micro events of everyday lives (Essed, 2002). The narratives of the participants described women's position in coaching neither as an individual issue nor an institutional one (Essed, 2002). Therefore, coaching sociology should focus on how structural inequalities are manifested into the practices of "everyday" to understand women's unequal representation within the profession.

Similar to Theberge (1993), I have contextualized women coaches' sense of being "second-best" within the sociocultural work environment: women coaches

felt that they had to work harder to prove their coaching competence. Therefore, oppressive gender ideology impacts women's lives as coaches (see Sartore and Cunningham, 2007) but the "self-limiting behaviors" of women are grounded in the structural practices within the profession. Like Kilty (2006) I found that the competence as well as the sexual identity of the coaches was often questioned and there were ambiguous hiring practices, but I situated these "internal barriers" within an organized system of patterns of beliefs and practices (Kirsch, 2000). It is likely that women are less attracted and less likely to remain in coaching because the ideological construction of sport as a masculine domain and the consequent structural coaching practices fail to recognize their contributions (Kerr & Marshall, 2007).

Future research should be directed at extracting the multiple cultural meanings, experiences, and implications of what it means to be a woman coach within the organizational and cultural structures of coaching. While my work begins to highlight women's subordination within the coaching culture, I have only briefly critiqued the Whiteness of the coaching profession. Therefore, the intersectionality of women coaches' oppression should be discussed further to recognize that women are not a homogenous group and to represent their lives and realities as diverse (Birrell, 1990). Thus, it is important to listen to different voices within the field of coaching to conduct "dynamic relational" analyses of the relationship between various power lines such as class, race, gender, and sexuality (Azzarito & Solomon, 2005, p. 25). An entire reconceptualization of coaching might be needed to embrace a more complete ethic of care within the profession, to enable "self-actualization" and professional as well as personal development (Kerr & Marshall, 2007, p. 3) of all individuals interested in coaching.

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