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Juggling Multiple Identities In Elite Level Rugby League:
A Neophyte Performance Analyst's Perspective

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Abstract

‘While performance analysts have been increasingly employed in many elite level sporting organisations, this development has arguably not been matched with a comparable level of critical scholarship addressing how performance analysts experience, understand and practice within a variety of organisational cultures’ (Huggan, Nelson & Potrac, 2015, p. 505). Specifically, the micro-political, emotional and identity experiences faced by neophyte performance analysts as they transition into an elite rugby league coaching environment have not yet been considered. To partially address this situation, the current thesis provides a novel insight into my emotional, identity and micro-political experiences, as I endeavoured to transition into the coaching team for the first time. Data for this investigation was gathered in the form of a daily journal, based on my experiences at the Club, the University and in my home life. These journals were also discussed during monthly supervisory meetings, in order to further understand my experiences. Several interrelated themes emerged from the resulting narrative and were principally understood in relation to the work of Kelchtermans (e.g. Kelchtermans, 2009; Kelchtermans & Ballett, 2002a, 2002b), Goffman (1959, 1963, 1969), Hochschild (1979, 1983), Burke and Stets (2009) and Stryker (1980). I contend that the inherent structural vulnerability of my neophyte performance analyst position, as well as my determination to protect and advance my career meant that I had to learn to act micro-politically. I also assert that the multiple identities I possessed during this time acted cooperatively and conflictingly at different times, ultimately resulting in me not wanting to remain within my professional identity. It is hoped that through presenting the ambiguity, pathos and dynamic nature of practicing performance analysis in elite rugby league, a more grounded understanding of this topic area can be obtained.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

07/05/2012

It's 8.45am and I'm heading in to the University. As I drive, my mind wanders to the internship I'm about to start. *'I'm so excited. I've dreamt about this for as long as I can remember. I'm finally going to work in professional sport!'* A surge of pride washes over me. I feel my shoulders tightening. I glance in the rear view mirror and catch a glimpse of a smile as it creeps across my face. *'Since I was a little boy, all I wanted to do was play sport. I felt at my most comfortable out on the field, surrounded by mates – like brothers to me – all working together; the camaraderie. First football, then anything on offer, and, more recently, rugby. I love everything about the sport: the fierce contact on the field followed by the unrivalled comradeship in the bar afterwards. I would love to have this as part of a professional team, to join in the excitement and joy after winning and even the disappointment and frustration of a defeat. Ultimately, I just really want to be a part of it. To be wanted, a valuable member of the 'team'. I want to contribute to the team's efforts.'*

My mind is jolted back to the present as I enter the car park. I pull into a space, turn off the engine and slump back into my seat. The warmth of the sun penetrates my t-shirt; I can feel it tingling on my skin. As I relax there momentarily, the heat starts to build to an uncomfortable level. My initial delight quickly becomes unease as I think towards my first days and weeks at the Club. *'What if they don't like me? I mean, these are people I really look up to: professional rugby players and coaches. What if I don't fit in?'* I can feel the temperature in the car increasing with my growing anxiety. My t-shirt starts to stick to my now clammy skin. *'I really want this internship to work. I want people to like me. I want to build strong relationships with these people but I'm worried they won't like me. I don't have any reason to be, but I'm scared I'll make a fool of myself, that no one will respect me.'* I can take the building heat no longer. I close off that avenue of thought, collect my things and exit the car. The air and my thoughts immediately feel cooler, fresher. *'Everything will be fine'* I console myself, though it does little to settle my now jangling nerves.

25/07/2016

I recline in the chair at my desk, look around the room and think to myself just how far I've come since my internship. It's three years since my time at the Club came to an end, though I can remember it like it was yesterday. A wave of nostalgia washes over me. My chest swells with pride as I consider my achievements since leaving the Club. *'I've worked at a World Cup. More than that, I'm now the Lead Performance Analyst at a Premiership football academy and I've submitted my thesis. Who'd have seen those things coming when I started? That said, these would have been possible without the knowledge and experience I gained from my internship.'*

The feeling of pride in my chest changes to unease as I recall some of my more challenging experiences. *'Wow it was tough! There were some really hard times but there were some really good times too. I had no idea the level of scrutiny to which my every action would be subjected. I was so naive to the constant surveillance and potential for conflict that was prevalent in my daily interactions. These are the sorts of things you just don't read about in the paper or hear spoken about on the radio or television. No one cares to mention the darker side of the profession. I simply didn't see it coming. I just expected everyone to be working towards the same goal – team or athlete improvement. How wrong I was! No one ever mentions the conflicting agendas of people aiming to justify and secure their own positions and future jobs. They don't talk about the un-supportive and backstabbing actions employed to further one's own standing, nor the frustration, anger and disappointment felt when on the receiving end. They don't tell you the extreme anxiety felt when you're unsure as to what is acceptable to say, to do, to feel or to express to others. Mostly, they don't tell you how to deal with the guilt and self loathing when it is you that is stabbing a so called 'friend' in the back.'*

A knot forms in my stomach as I recalled this last experience. I hated myself for it. But it was because of these experiences that I entered each of my subsequent positions with a greater understanding for the potentially uncooperative actions of others. It's not that these environments were free from struggle, but I was able to use my previous experiences to avoid some of the mistakes I made the first time around. This ultimately allowed me to better integrate into each new position. I became better at navigating potential pitfalls

before they even happened, which allowed me to both experience and enjoy the unparalleled highs that working in elite level professional sport can offer.

1.2 Academic Rationale

Over recent years, the prevalence of performance analysis technologies within the elite level sports context has grown significantly (Nelson & Groom, 2012). This technology has been implemented in order to analyse sports performances, enhance athlete learning, develop training and rehabilitation programmes, identify opposition strengths and weaknesses, inform team selection, aid with talent identification, and provide real time statistics upon which coaches can make vital tactical decisions (Carling et al., 2008; O'Donoghue, 2010; Groom, Cushion & Nelson, 2011; Nelson & Groom, 2012). The integration of such technologies into the everyday practices of sports teams has seen the increased employment of performance analysts: practitioners responsible for completing these types of tasks (Nelson & Groom, 2012).

Despite such developments, there remains a paucity of literature addressing the social enactment of performance analysis (Nelson & Groom, 2012; Huggan, Nelson & Potrac, 2015). Instead, investigations conforming to the positivist research paradigm have tended to concentrate on the analysis of performance patterns in sport (Eaves & Broad, 2007; Eaves & Evers, 2007; Jones, James & Mellalieu, 2008; Hughes & Franks, 2005; Reed & O'Donoghue, 2005), identification of key sports performance indicators (Hughes & Bartlett, 2002, 2008; Jones, James & Mellalieu, 2008; Jones, Mellalieu & James, 2004), development of physiological work rate profiles (Duthie, Pyne & Hooper, 2003; King, Jenkins & Gabbett, 2009; Reilly & Thomas, 1976), and the impact of role and equipment change in sport (Eaves & Hughes, 2003; Eaves, Hughes & Lamb, 2005; Williams, Hughes & O'Donoghue, 2005).

Whilst such investigations have certainly helped to advance our understanding of the physical, technical and tactical sporting demands, it has been argued that the field might also benefit from engaging in a socio-pedagogical analysis of performance analysis in applied settings (Nelson & Groom, 2012; Huggan, Nelson & Potrac, 2015). Here, an argument has been presented for the need to put the person back into the study of sports coaching and organisational life (e.g. Jones, Armour & Potrac, 2004; Jones, 2006a, 2009; Denison, 2007; Toner et al., 2012; Huggan, Nelson & Potrac, 2015). This notion

stems from a practical and theoretical dissatisfaction with the portrayal of coaching environments as apolitical and, repeatedly, the privileging of tactical, technical, and bio-scientific knowledge (e.g. Cassidy, Jones & Potrac, 2009; Potrac & Jones, 2009a, 2009b; Potrac et al., 2013a, 2013b; Huggan, Nelson & Potrac, 2015).

Interpretivist and poststructural investigations responding to such calls have started to consider coaches' pedagogical uses of performance analysis technology (Groom, Cushion & Nelson, 2011; Booroff, Nelson & Potrac, 2015). Groom and Cushion (2011) presented a grounded theory of how elite youth soccer coaches implemented performance analysis. This theory has subsequently been supported by others, who suggested that the integration of video-based performance analysis technologies into coaching is far from apolitical (Booroff, Nelson & Potrac, 2015). Booroff, Nelson and Potrac (2015) noted that in recognition of contextual expectations and demands, Terry (pseudonym) utilised those technologies available to him in order to achieve his own coaching ends. Indeed, this avenue of investigation reflects a wider call from sports coaching papers for such knowledge (Potrac & Jones, 2009b; Purdy & Jones, 2011; Potrac et al., 2013a).

In addition to this, studies have also reported on how athletes experience and respond to their coaches' pedagogical use of such technology within a number of different sporting contexts (Nelson, Potrac & Groom, 2014; Williams & Manley, 2016; Taylor et al., 2017). These investigations are primarily concerned with understanding how issues such as delivery approach and perceived professionalism of the deliverer were of particular significance to attaining positive coach-athlete relationships (Nelson, Potrac & Groom, 2014). Specifically, Taylor et al. (2017) highlighted that coaches have adopted video as an extension of their discipline, with its usage adding to the government of individuals' actions. Interestingly, Williams and Manley (2016) have built upon this notion by suggesting that overly critical and negative analysis of performances that utilise such technologies have the potential to remove an athlete's natural enthusiasm for sport. Indeed, Nelson, Potrac and Groom (2014) concluded that John (pseudonym) did not learn from simply attending video sessions. Instead, John learned from those coaches whom he respected and who offered slick and professional video sessions (Nelson, Potrac & Groom, 2014).

It could be contended that such investigations are providing further evidence in support of the broader coaching research, which is serving to demonstrate that coaching practice can be characterised by issues of ambiguity and pathos (e.g. Jones & Wallace, 2005), trust and respect (Potrac, Jones & Armour, 2002; Purdy, Potrac & Jones, 2008; Purdy & Jones, 2011; Purdy, Potrac & Nelson, 2013) and resistance (e.g. Purdy, Potrac & Jones, 2008; Purdy & Jones, 2011). Indeed, it has been argued that coaching is a power-ridden social activity requiring individuals to constantly implement a variety of strategies to manipulate specific contexts, as well as those people around them, in order to meet their desired goals (Potrac & Jones, 2009b; Purdy & Jones, 2011; Potrac et al., 2013a; Thompson, Potrac & Jones, 2013).

Whilst such developments should be applauded, there remains limited inquiry into the contextual learning of performance analysts and how they seek to navigate their social contexts and manage their relationships with other key contextual stakeholders (Groom & Nelson, 2013; Nelson, Potrac & Groom, 2014). One notable exception to this is the work of Huggan, Nelson and Potrac (2015), which aimed to provide a social analysis of a practicing performance analyst. These authors argued for a critical appreciation of the everyday social realities of being a performance analyst, inclusive of how these individuals interact with the context, inclusive of the potentially opposing beliefs, motivations, and goals that various individuals subscribe to (Potrac & Jones, 2009a, 2009b; Thompson, Potrac & Jones, 2013), and the emotional nature of their working lives (Nelson et al., 2013; Potrac et al., 2013b; Thompson, Potrac & Jones, 2013). Huggan, Nelson & Potrac (2015) presented the narrative account of a practicing performance analyst, concluding that Ben (pseudonym) experienced issues of opportunities, resources, self-image and working conditions (Kelchtermans & Ballett, 2002a, 2002b).

While the work of Huggan, Nelson and Potrac (2015) has certainly provided some interesting insights into the micro-political features of an established performance analyst's work, there remains a paucity of academic research into the experiences of practicing performance analysts within a variety of organisational settings. Indeed, these authors called for the implementation of a range of different representations, including autoethnographies, as a valuable method for helping us to better understand the demands and dilemmas of performance analysts' work (Huggan, Nelson &

Potrac, 2015). This avenue of investigation has helped us to better understand some of the dilemmas coaching practitioners face within their day-to-day job roles (Purdy, Potrac & Jones, 2008). In light of this, Huggan, Nelson and Potrac (2015) presented the argument that implementing an interpretivist methodology would allow for a greater understanding of the everyday realities of practicing performance analysts.

Such research might also usefully consider those emotions that performance analysts experience on a day-to-day basis (Huggan, Nelson & Potrac, 2015). Potrac, Jones and Nelson (2014) argued that research into the political and emotional experiences of coaching can offer a multi-layered insight into the dilemmas and vulnerability of practice. Indeed, Potrac and Marshall (2011) suggested theories of emotion, such as that presented by Hochschild (1983), can be utilised to develop a critical understanding of sports coaching. Their argument for this stance comes from recent investigations that depict the messy nature of coaching (Potrac, Jones & Amour, 2002; Potrac & Jones, 2009a), with these authors proposing investigations examining the emotional reaction of coaching practitioners as they 'strive to navigate the challenges and opportunities of their dynamic sporting worlds' (Potrac & Marshall, 2011, p. 62). This avenue of inquiry could also help further our understanding of the micro-political and emotional working lives of performance analysts, something that would offer a valuable insight to neophytes wishing to work in an elite sports coaching setting.

1.3 Aims Of This Study

In order to partially address the situation described above, the current thesis seeks to investigate my everyday experiences as an intern (and neophyte) performance analyst in elite level rugby league. In particular, this study will explore my struggle for power and status within the coaching team, as well as my conflicting identities and the associated emotional consequences. In order to accomplish this, the current study aims to present my experiences in the form of a narrative account. The main objective of this investigation is to shed light on the murky water of working in elite sport. Towards this end, my thesis addresses the following topics and questions:

- i. How did I experience my interactions and relationships with the Head Coach, Assistant Coach, players and my performance analysis colleagues?
- ii. What issues did I face in my working relationships with these various individuals? How did I attempt to manage and resolve these issues? Why did I choose to act in certain ways and not others?
- iii. What emotions accompanied my engagement in these workplace interactions and relationships? Which emotions did feel that I could display, or instead, had to hide? How did I come to understand the emotional nature of my work in the ways that I did?
- iv. What contextual and situational factors did I perceive to impact on my actions and understandings of the social and emotional nature of practice?

Importantly, as my understanding of the complex nature of completing an internship within professional sport developed, a further research question emerged:

- v. How did I experience my social role as a Husband and as a post-graduate student during my internship at the rugby Club? What issues and emotions did I face and how did I attempt to manage them?

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to offer a comprehensive review of existing performance analysis and coaching literature. When discussing the analysis of athletic performance, as the focus of this thesis is to present the experiences of a neophyte rugby league performance analyst, the review will principally focus on rugby specific analysis literature. Discussion within this chapter will be divided into two sections, initially focusing on reviewing traditional positivistic performance analysis research. This first section will conclude by presenting a comprehensive critique of the paradigmatic and methodological approach underpinning this area of quantitative research. The second section of this chapter will reflect the call of more recent interpretivist and poststructuralist research to develop current understanding of the social complexities of everyday practice in sports coaching. A critical analysis of the limitations associated with this approach will be presented, before the section concludes with a summary of the key findings from the established literature base and how these inform the current investigation.

2.2 Performance Analysis The Story So Far...

2.2.1 Positivist Investigation Of Sporting Performance

As alluded to in the introduction, there are many distinguishable paradigmatic approaches to conducting research within performance analysis and sports coaching, each comprising unique ontological, epistemological and methodological beliefs (Lincoln & Guba, 1994; Gratton & Jones, 2004). Paradigmatic allegiances shape researchers' intentions, theoretical and methodological processes utilised during investigation and the nature of the research questions proposed (Krane & Baird, 2005; Bryman, 2012). Questions traditionally posed in performance analysis research tend to pertain to the methods and assumptions of a positivist paradigm.

Positivists subscribe to a realist ontology (Cook & Campbell, 1979), an objective epistemology and a nomothetic or experimental methodology, typically utilising quantitative research methods (Lincoln & Guba, 1994). Ontologically, positivism's realist perception advocates a single reality or truth, which is objective and external in the individual's mind (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988;

Sparkes, 1992). This reality consists of tangible and stable objects or events that exist independently from people's interpretations and can be captured and understood, or 'known for what they really are' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Sparkes, 1992, p. 20). Epistemologically, positivists aim to provide direct causality between variables, with 'facts' derived from a scientific approach (Sparkes, 1992). Methodologically, positivists implement controlled quantitative data collection methods and the testing of hypotheses and statistical analysis to derive knowledge, whilst simultaneously striving to maintain objectivity (Sparkes, 1992). Positivists assume 'truth' is measurable and through statistical precision, complex information can be reduced to summary measures (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Gratton and Jones (2004) purport that positivists assume sport is stable across diverse times and settings, with measurement and analysis of its precise 'facts' informing the design of theories that can be tested and employed to predict future behaviour.

Early performance analysis research typically utilised empirical investigations, in order to determine statistical significance of cause and effect relationships between predetermined variables and support initial hypotheses (O'Donoghue, 2010). The primary concerns of this area of research were: (1) the analysis of performance patterns in sport (e.g. Hughes & Franks, 2005; Tenga et al., 2010a, 2010b; Jones, James & Mellalieu, 2008), (2) the identification of key sports performance indicators (e.g. Hughes & Bartlett, 2002, Jones, Mellalieu & James, 2004; James, Mellalieu & Jones, 2005), (3) the development of physiological work rate profiles (Reilly & Thomas, 1976; Carling et al., 2008; King, Jenkins & Gabbett, 2009), and (4) the impact of role and equipment change (Eaves & Hughes, 2003; Eaves, Hughes & Lamb, 2005; Eaves, Lamb & Hughes, 2008). Each of these areas of investigation will now be considered in greater detail.

2.2.2 Analysis Of Performance Patterns In Sport

As with many advances in sports research, much of the initial investigations into the identification of performance patterns during competition came from football (Reed & O'Donoghue, 2005). Reep and Benjamin's (1968) early identification of a 'direct style of play' from statistical analysis of notated passing data, suggesting 80% of football goals were scored in under four passes, underpinned a large body of research that sought to explore the

patterns of play attributable to successful and unsuccessful teams. These early investigations implemented quantitative research methods with the intention of identifying cause and effect relationships between in-game variables and outcomes of performance, ultimately presenting objective descriptions of sporting actions and verifying hypotheses (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Reep and Benjamin's (1968) theory was later supported by Bate (1998), who also used statistical analysis of 106 goals from the 1982 World Cup, concluding that 94% of soccer goals scored at all levels consisted of four passes or fewer and 50-60% of all possessions leading to shots at goal originated in the attacking or 'final' third.

When generalising these findings for coaching practitioners, Hughes and Franks (2005) identified that coaches needed to consider their players' technical proficiency when balancing between possession based football and a more direct style of play. This suggestion supports the second conclusion of Bate (1998), which would indicate that a possession based approach might be more effective, when coupled with a more aggressive defensive approach, to increase the number of possessions originating from the attacking third. Other researchers have implemented similar methodologies in further goal analysis, identification of critical incidents leading to shooting (Gréhaigne, 1991; Hughes, David & Dawkin, 2001), and the identification of specific zones relevant to shots or goals scored (Olsen, 1988; Coghlan, 1999; Tenga et al., 2010b), as well as other topics.

These studies are principal examples supporting the statement of Tenga et al. (2010a, p. 237) that 'the common objective of such studies is to determine the most effective ways of playing the game'. Contemporary performance analysis research has aimed to detail the most effective and efficient tactical strategies within other team sports, such as both codes of rugby (e.g. Hughes & Williams, 1988; van Rooyen, Lambert & Noakes, 2006; Eaves & Broad, 2007; Eaves & Evers, 2007). Indeed, Boddington and Lambert (2004) performed a Chi-Square analysis of tries scored, possessions and match time from five matches played by South Africa during the 2003 Rugby Union World Cup. The most notable of these findings indicated that the majority of South Africa's tries came from possessions originating on the right side of the field between the half way line and the opposition's 25m line (Boddington & Lambert, 2004).

Similarly, Laird and Lorimer (2004) analysed 32 international rugby union matches and 152 tries from the 2003 Six Nations, Tri Nations and Argentina Tests, concluding that the majority of tries come from fewer passes and phases of play (Laird & Lorimer, 2004). This work was later expanded to consider phases of play in greater detail, concluding that more successful teams were able to generate greater 'ruck' speed in both codes of rugby (Eaves & Hughes, 2003; Eaves & Evers, 2007). More recently, the origins of tries have been investigated (Sasaki et al., 2007). These authors concluded that 50% of all tries came from scrums and line outs, however there have also been significant increases in tries coming from counterattacking opportunities (kick catches, handling errors and tackle turnovers) over the past three years (Sasaki et al., 2007).

Reed and O'Donoghue (2005) suggested that the ultimate aim of these investigations – prediction of competition results – varies significantly between sports, concluding that football results (57.9%) were predicted more frequently than rugby union (46.1%). This later statement suggests a need for more research into the 'reliability' and 'validity' of performance analysis techniques (Hughes & Franks, 2004; Di Salvo et al., 2006), as well as the production of aids to develop and validate various performance analysis systems (Carling, Williams & Reilly, 2005; Di Salvo et al., 2006; Hughes, 2008a, 2008b, 2008c). It has also been argued that this type of simple data presentation, in many publications, only leads to a partial understanding of such patterns (Hughes & Franks, 2005). Mackenzie and Cushion (2012) also suggested that many of these investigations failed to consider important variables such as opposition quality, action location and competition type, resulting in findings not applicable to general competition.

2.2.3 Identification Of Key Sports Performance Indicators

After the initial investigation and documentation of performance patterns within sports competition, presented above, performance analysis researchers began the identification of a number of specific 'key performance indicators' (KPIs) in various sports (Hughes & Bartlett, 2002). Hughes and Bartlett (2002, 2008) suggested that KPIs are 'a selection, or combination, of action variables [or technical skills] that aim to define some or all aspects of a [sporting] performance' (p. 739). This area of performance analysis research was initially

conducted utilising closed or individual sports such as gymnastics, trampolining, and athletic jumping events, where correct movement technique is critical to success (Hay & Reid, 1988; Yeadon & Challis, 1992; Hughes & Bartlett, 2002; Hauw & Durand, 2004). Following the identification of KPIs in closed sports, a body of research sought to identify KPIs in team sports such as football (Hughes, Robertson & Nicholson, 1988; Winkler, 1996) and both codes of rugby (Eaves & Broad, 2007; Jones, James & Mellalieu, 2008). The majority of KPI research in rugby comes from union and is divided into team and individual KPIs, however there is a significant amount of transferability between the two codes (Jones, James & Mellalieu, 2008; Bremner, Robinson & Williams, 2013).

Investigation into team KPIs, as a function of winning and losing rugby union teams, pioneered research in this area (Jones, Mellalieu & James, 2004). This study used Clip Master Pro® coding software to analyse the frequency of 22 different KPIs from 20 Premiership rugby matches across the 2002/2003 season (Jones, Mellalieu & James, 2004). The authors performed Mann-Whitney U statistical tests to detail those aspects of performance relevant to success and failure (Jones, Mellalieu & James, 2004). Jones, Mellalieu and James (2004) observed that the percentage of lineouts won on the opposition's throw and the percentage of tries scored (out of total tries scored) were the only two KPIs (out of the original 22) that demonstrated statistical significance, to 95% confidence limits, between winning and losing teams. The authors generalised their findings in relation to previous examples, concluding that the 20 non-statistically significant KPIs demonstrated a general trend for successful performance in domestic rugby union (Jones, Mellalieu & James, 2004).

Developing this work, Jones, James and Mellalieu (2008) conducted a similar investigation utilising 19 rugby union matches, highlighting mean and standard deviations of 18 KPIs. It was concluded that this form of analysis allows coaches to 'isolate areas where performances are poorer or better' than previous performances and could be modified to include 'different combinations of indicators' to provide tailored feedback (Jones, James & Mellalieu, 2008, p. 7). This information has previously been utilised in team sports to aid the design and application of tactical models of performance, as well as create a broader understanding of the model behaviours by these different populations (McGarry et al., 2002; Garganta, 2009; McGarry, 2009).

One such investigation is that of Eaves and Broad (2007), who detailed the difference in patterns of play between rugby league teams from Australia and the United Kingdom. Their post game analysis of 12 professional rugby league matches using Sportscore Elite® and Mann-Whitney U tests concluded that teams competing in the National Rugby League (NRL) had significantly more phases of play ($t = -3.33$, $p < 0.01$), used the hit up in the attacking zone ($t = -2.29$, $p < 0.05$) and employed the turtle tackle ($t = -3.31$, $p < 0.009$) more frequently than their Super League counterparts (Eaves & Broad, 2007).

Whilst this body of research furthers current understanding of team KPIs in both codes of rugby, James, Mellalieu and Jones (2005) sought to develop individual player position KPIs in rugby union by conducting a post match analysis of 22 male rugby players from 21 elite level matches. A computerised behavioural analysis system was implemented to develop and notate individual position specific KPIs, with a Chi-Square analysis utilised to observe statistical differences (James, Mellalieu & Jones, 2005). Their investigation concluded that successful carries, passes and tackles for forwards (adding kicking to the list for backs) were statistically significant KPIs for success (James, Mellalieu & Jones, 2005). The authors also suggested that the practical importance of these results lies in the monitoring of these KPIs by coaches and sports scientists, to ascertain the effect of interventional strategies (technical, tactical, mental or physical) upon team and individual performance.

Despite the statistical significance of these individual KPIs, due to limited sample size and insufficient data from each playing position, it cannot be accurately determined whether the significance in between-player position differences can be attributed to the different positions, or whether they are merely differences in decision-making, playing style and physical attributes of those players observed (James, Mellalieu & Jones, 2005). This point brings into light the amount of data required to generate stable profiles and the transferability of inferences across different periods of the season. Hughes, Evans and Wells (2001) suggest analysis of less than stable data can be considered 'spurious' at best. Similarly, James, Mellalieu and Jones (2005, p. 71) concluded that some 'bias is inevitable' in judgement regarding this issue, as well as the operational definitions used for certain incidents, such as whether the thrower or the receiver of an unsuccessful pass is responsible.

2.2.4 The Development Of Physiological Work Rate Profiles

In addition to these areas of academic inquiry, performance analysis scholars have combined physiological knowledge and performance analysis assessment measures to develop physiological work rate profiles (Reilly & Thomas, 1976; King, Jenkins & Gabbett, 2009). With reference to previous work on professional soccer, Carling et al. (2008) suggested that of the traditional sports science disciplines, exercise physiology has arguably the greatest impact, a point that is applicable to many team sports (Cahill et al., 2013). Reilly and Thomas (1976) pioneered the use of 'in-game' performance data over laboratory based testing within football, utilising frame-by-frame video analysis to classify players' movements. The authors sourced their data from a combination of hand based notation, audio tape recordings and scaled pitch mapping of English first division soccer matches (Reilly & Thomas, 1976). From this information it was possible to develop work-rate profiles for different playing positions (e.g. full-backs, central midfielders and forwards), including distance covered and the percentage of time each position spent in each ambulatory classification (Reilly & Thomas, 1976). This information has been later added to, for example, O'Donoghue et al. (2001) and O'Donoghue (2002) identified average work-to-rest ratios (1:7-1:10), average energy burst durations (2.5 sec) and key physiological differences between playing positions for elite, semi-professional and amateur footballers.

Advances in the understanding of position specific profiles and progression in technology over the past decade have lead to the development of a number of semi-automated tracking systems, such as Amisco Pro® and ProZone®, which utilise fixed stadium cameras to collect 'real time' data on the frequency and duration of player activities during match play (Taki, Hasegawa & Fukumura, 1996; Carling et al., 2008; Abt & Lovell, 2009). Abt and Lovell (2009) utilised ProZone® to analyse ten individuals during three games in the 2007-2008 English Coca Cola® Championship, concluding that players differ in speeds at which they enter the 'high intensity' threshold and that, as such, individualised running speeds need to be implemented in future investigations.

Unfortunately, due to high installation and analysis costs associated with this technology, its usability is often restricted to larger national governing bodies or teams at the highest division of the richest sports (Di Salvo et al., 2006). The cameras utilised by these technologies have also come under much

scrutiny. In their review of vision-based motion analysis systems, Barris and Button (2008) concluded that many cameras do not have sufficient fields of view to capture the entire playing area or, require athletes to move only within a pre-set restrictive calibration volume. For this reason, the application of such technologies to both codes of rugby has been limited and has tended to focus on information sourced from Global Positioning System (GPS) technologies (Cunniffe et al., 2009). Such investigations have aided in the identification of significant differences in work-rate-profiles between different playing positions for both rugby union (Duthie, Pyne & Hooper, 2003, 2005; Roberts, Trewartha & Stokes, 2006; Deutsch, Kearney & Rehrer, 2007; Roberts et al., 2008; Bompa & Claro, 2009) and rugby league (O'Connor, 1996; Meir et al., 2001; Coutts, Reaburn & Abt, 2003; Gabbett, 2005).

Indeed, Duthie, Pyne and Hooper (2003) aimed to address the paucity of rugby union physiological work rate literature by documenting the in-game movements of 47 players during 16 Super 12 rugby matches in 2001/2002. Video recordings of each player positional group (e.g. front row forwards, back row forwards, inside backs and outside backs) were taken and coded using an in-house analysis system (Part-Timer V1.1), before differences in mean and standard deviations of movement categories (e.g. standing, walking, sprinting, static exertion, lifting and tackling) were analysed through *t*-tests (Duthie, Pyne & Hooper, 2003). The authors recorded significant difference between positional groups in the absolute and relative time, frequency and average duration of activities (Duthie, Pyne & Hooper, 2003). Duthie, Pyne and Hooper (2003) concluded that Super 12 rugby is characterised by repeated high-intensity efforts, alternating with short (<20 sec) recovery periods, with forwards performing 7:31 minutes more work than backs because of a higher frequency (mean = 49) and longer work duration (2.1 sec). In their final statement, Duthie, Pyne and Hooper (2003) noted that the lack of any significant difference between halves indicated fatigue did not affect movement patterns, with their results providing important information for the prescription of training and testing.

Other studies have recorded significant differences in body mass, estimated maximal aerobic power, speed, repeated sprint activity and muscular strength as a product of playing position in elite Super League, NRL and junior rugby players (O'Connor, 1996; Meir et al., 2001; Clark, 2002; Gabbett, 2005;

Sirotic et al., 2009). The most recent developments in physiological work rate profiles of rugby league players utilised just three positional groups; outside backs, adjustables and hit up forwards, to detail the differences in type, duration and frequency of various patterns and intensities of movement (King, Jenkins & Gabbett, 2009). This investigation utilised hand based notation to log frequency, distance covered and duration of the activities of three players – one from each positional group – from video footage of three separate 2005 NRL matches. Player averages and work-to-rest ratios of this data were calculated and significant differences between groups established using a one-way ANOVA with Tukey's Post-Hoc tests (King, Jenkins & Gabbett, 2009). This investigation concluded that outside backs covered greater distances ($6265 \pm 318\text{m}$) than adjustables ($5908 \pm 158\text{m}$) and hit up forwards ($4310 \pm 251\text{m}$) respectively, with hit up forwards spending significantly more time standing ($p=0.001$) and tackling ($p=0.039$), but less time jogging ($p=0.04$) and sprinting ($p=0.001$) than adjustables and outside backs (King, Jenkins & Gabbett, 2009).

Despite the authors of this investigation quantifying these differences by acknowledging that hit up forwards spent less time on the field of play, due to being interchanged more regularly, there was no account of these values as a product of the position group's playing time (King, Jenkins & Gabbett, 2009). Another concern with much of this research is the size of the sample observed (Atkinson & Nevill, 2001; Cunniffe et al., 2009). Indeed, similar to comments made in the previous section of this chapter, acquiring an accurate and unbiased sample of a given population under investigation is common practice for inferential positivist researchers (Toner & Moran, 2014). Unfortunately, this is rarely achieved, with most samples consisting of those individuals willing to volunteer, often in inadequate numbers (Midgley & Christmas, 2014). That said, Carling et al. (2008, p 2), argue that physiological work-rate research provides a 'valuable pool of data' for the everyday practices of coaches, when utilised correctly, in order to make 'objective decisions' on match preparation and the structure of conditioning elements of training (Carling et al., 2008, p 2).

2.2.5 The Impact Of Role And Equipment Change In Sport

This area of performance analysis research has grown in recent years within rugby union, since the introduction of professional status in 1995 (Eaves & Hughes, 2003; Eaves, Hughes & Lamb, 2005). These investigations aimed to

establish the effect of playing status on team KPIs across pre professional eras (e.g. 1988-92 and 1995-97) and post professional eras (1997-99 and 2000-02). Eaves, Hughes and Lamb (2005) implemented hand-based notation of team KPIs from 12 'Five' and 'Six Nations' matches, performing Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis H tests to determine statistical significance between eras. The authors identified significant differences in: lineout frequency ($P < 0.0005$), total game kicks ($P < 0.001$), total game passes ($P < 0.001$), total ruck ($P < 0.0005$), maul ($P < 0.0005$) and scrum ($P < 0.0006$) frequencies, and total game activity or phases ($P < 0.0005$), between playing eras.

These findings supported the earlier work of Eaves and Hughes (2003), who concluded that the overall playing patterns significantly altered over this time frame, with specific reference to: increased ball in play time (26.5% pre 1995 and 32.1% post 1995), increased frequency of rucks (mean 27.9 ± 5.84 1996-1999 and 33.6 ± 9.7 2000+), and other games actions, as a product of the post professional rugby era. They suggested such findings may result from a shift towards faster ruck dominated games with more phases of play (Eaves & Hughes, 2003). This paper outline that more research into the physiological demands of players pre and post professionalism was required to quantify the impact of the modern faster paced game (Eaves & Hughes, 2003).

Subsequent investigations documented the impact of a number of rule changes, implemented (around 1999) by the International Rugby Board (IRB) to improve safety, increase competition, and improve the 'spectacle' of the sport (Davies, 1999; Kervin, 1999). The resulting discussion concluded that, like previous research into the post professional era of rugby union, a significantly higher level of ball in play time (3 minutes 9 seconds) was observed (Williams, Hughes & O'Donoghue, 2005). Unlike previous investigations, significant differences were observed between match-play in the northern (average 29.10 minutes) and southern hemispheres (average 32.27 minutes) (Williams, Hughes & O'Donoghue, 2005). It was suggested that this may have resulted from the increased number of injuries (caused by increased collisions), however further research is necessary to validate this claim (Williams, Hughes & O'Donoghue, 2005).

Similar to rugby union, rugby league has seen a dramatic increase in research focusing on the impact of rule and playing season changes, implemented in response to commercial pressures and spectator appeal

(Dunning & Sheard, 2005). Eaves, Lamb and Hughes (2008) utilised a hand-based notation system to observe time variables in 48 full game performances, over four time periods (1988-92, 1993-95, 1997-98 and 2000-02), to examine the impact of the introduced 10m offside rule in 1993. This investigation supported the conclusion of Smith (2002), that the introduction of 10m offside line had the greatest impact on ruck time, decreasing by 21.3% between 1988-92 and 1993-95 (Eaves, Lamb & Hughes, 2008).

When quantifying their findings for coaches, the authors speculated that the introduction of the 10m retreat had three basic effects that enhanced the importance of 'play the ball' speed: (1) defences take longer to retreat and organise, giving the opposition more opportunity to attack disorganised defences, (2) the increased separation between teams permitted a more direct attack around the ruck area, and (3) attacking teams gain a greater advantage from adopting a flatter line, rather than the traditional deep line (Eaves, Lamb & Hughes, 2008). This paper documented a slight increase in ruck speed in the final sample group, concluding that this was a product of the increased frequency of multiple tacklers, rather than single tacklers in previous samples (Eaves, Lamb & Hughes, 2008). Again, when quantifying these findings for coaches, the authors suggested that tacklers should aim to 'turtle' the opposition, turning them onto their back in order to slow the 'play the ball' and increase their team's chances of retreating and forming an organised defensive line (Eaves, Lamb & Hughes, 2008).

2.2.6 Critiques Of Positivist Performance Analysis Research

While there are many authors critiquing the ontological, epistemological and methodological underpinning of the positivist paradigm in general (e.g. Sparkes, 1992; Crotty, 1998; Markula & Silk, 2011), some within the field of sports coaching have voiced more practical critiques of this position (Cushion, 2007; Mackenzie & Cushion, 2012; Groom & Nelson, 2013). Mackenzie and Cushion (2012) offer a comprehensive review of positivist investigations into performance analysis, concluding that there is a fundamental lack of clarity surrounding issues such as sample size, definitions of variables and applicability of assumptions made by this body of research. Prim and van Rooyen (2012) would also argue that, specifically in the case of rugby league,

comparisons across different investigations are difficult, as there is a lack of consistency between player group and action variables used.

Mackenzie and Cushion (2012) observed that the majority of performance analysis research is conducted from a 'basic science' approach to establish causal relationships between isolated performance variables in an attempt to predict competition outcomes; yet these same authors then endeavour to draw 'applied science' conclusions and develop generalised conceptual models from this data. These authors argue that traditional performance analysis literature consistently reduces complex sporting performances by presenting it in overly descriptive, systematic and unproblematic ways (Mackenzie & Cushion, 2012). These authors also present an argument that the positivistic approach has served to portray coaching as an unproblematic process, or 'series of steps to be followed' (Mackenzie & Cushion, 2012). Such a view assumes knowledge is simply transmitted from coaches to athletes and neglects to consider the complex social aspects involved (Cushion, 2007; Cushion, Armour & Jones, 2006).

Mackenzie and Cushion (2012) also suggest that although the traditional basic science approach has proved useful in developing an initial understanding of performance analysis, the relationship between the research and practice of performance analysis, as well as between researchers and practitioners, needs to be developed. They suggest a shift in the direction of performance analysis research, to develop understanding of the social complexities, the 'intricacies and dynamics' relating to practical application of performance analysis and its integral role within the coaching process (Mackenzie & Cushion, 2012). This view is supported by Groom and Nelson (2013, p. 98), who argue the importance of developing an understanding of coaches' pedagogical use of video-based performance analysis technologies, specifically exploring the 'knowledge, values, beliefs and expectations' that underpin this process. These authors suggest that research of this nature might help to provide insights into how the opportunities and constraints of human interaction impact upon the pedagogical implementation of such technologies (Groom & Nelson, 2013). Such inquiry would allow for capture of the ambiguity and complexity inherent within the coaching process, inclusive of the specific contextual factors influencing the delivery of video-based performance analysis (Groom & Nelson, 2013).

To overcome this shortfall, interpretivist researchers advocate the implementation of hermeneutic or dialectical methodologies to 'interactively explore' and 'subjectively interpret' (Potrac, Jones & Nelson, 2014) the experiences of others (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Such a research approach would allow for a greater 'thickness' of interpretive description of the socio-political nature of the coaching process (Geertz, 1973, Denzin, 1989a; Howell, 2013). Similarly, as positivism is ultimately insensitive to the unique conditions under which performance analysts act, a more ideographic approach is necessary in formulating a greater understanding of the unique aspects of the interpersonal and entirely subjective nature of practicing performance analysis (Groom, Cushion & Nelson, 2011). Here, a call has been made for a greater understanding of the social and emotional nature of this pursuit, in order to better educate those wishing to follow this career path (Booroff, Nelson & Potrac, 2015; Huggan, Nelson & Potrac, 2015).

2.3 Interpretivist Perspectives In Sports Performance Analysis

The previous section of this chapter offered a detailed insight into the application of the positivist research paradigm to performance analysis research. While positivistic assumptions may be suitable for scientific investigation into the physical world, they are not appropriate for investigation of the social world (Sparkes, 1992). This is because positivist research represents performance analysis and coaching as a known, linear, unproblematic, and sequential process (Cushion, Armour & Jones, 2006; Mackenzie & Cushion, 2012). In an attempt to address these issues, the utilisation of an interpretive approach to coaching research has been argued (Cushion, Armour & Jones, 2006; Cushion & Jones, 2006). This approach conforms to contrasting philosophical assumptions to positivism, where knowledge is perceived as the outcome or consequence of human activity (Crotty, 1998).

Philosophically, interpretivism provides a radical alternative to positivist orthodoxy, fundamentally rejecting the belief that people, cultures, social practices, and institutions can be examined and understood through the assumptions and methodologies positivists use to investigate the physical world (Potrac, Jones & Nelson, 2014). Rather than generating nomothetic accounts for future predictions (as with positivism), interpretive inquiry aims to discern how individuals make sense of their experiences and actions (Bryman, 2012;

Potrac, Jones & Nelson, 2014). This perspective is grounded on the belief that the social world is complex, with individuals defining their own meanings within respective social, political and cultural settings (Potrac, Jones & Nelson, 2014).

In this regard, interpretivists adopt an idealist ontology, a subjective epistemology and an ideographic methodology, typically utilising qualitative research methods (Sparkes, 1992; Markula & Silk, 2011; Potrac, Jones & Nelson, 2014). Ontologically, interpretivists counter the positivist notion of objectivity, contending multiple social realities are not 'out there' waiting to be discovered but are relational and based on the entirely subjective consciousness of the social participants (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). From this perspective, the researcher does not assume impartiality, instead they consider themselves an active participant of the research, alongside the research subjects, aiding the building of descriptive, exploratory and explanatory knowledge (Denzin, 1989a). Epistemologically, the researchers strive to provide subjective sense through exploration of the meanings, values and actions of peoples' lives, specifically concerning how people come to understand their world and how they create and share meanings about their lives (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). Potrac, Jones and Nelson (2014) argue that rather than attempting to develop objective truths and predictive theories regarding what coaching is or ought to be, interpretivists seek to explore the experiences of coaches and performance analysts. The qualitative methodologies these researchers advocate position the meaning-making practices of human actors at the centre of investigation (Denzin, 1989a). This naturalistic approach to research relies on such methods as interviews and observations in order to generate information from an insider perspective (Denzin, 1989a).

This research emanates from the belief that people create and maintain their own individual, meaningful worlds (Dawson & Prus, 1995), however that is not to say that the 'mind creates what people say and do' (Sparkes, 1992, p. 20). Interpretivists argue that the mind influences how people interpret the movements and utterances, inclusive of the meanings assigned to them, of themselves and others (Smith, 1989; Potrac, Jones & Nelson, 2014). In this respect, interpretivism recognises that our perception of reality is influenced by numerous different social, political and cultural factors (Stryker, 1980; Potrac, Jones & Nelson, 2014). Social reality, then, can be considered the product of how people individually and collectively make sense of the social worlds in

which they live (Smith, 1989; Markula & Silk, 2011). Importantly, interpretivists argue that the resulting knowledge and understanding can only be obtained by sharing the same frame of reference as the social actor (Berger & Luckmann, 1967).

While the previous subsection of this chapter focused specifically on research pertaining directly to performance analysis, it is important in this subsection to consider some of the wider research conducted into coaching. Traditional interpretivist research in coaching has tended to focus on: (1) coach behaviours and representations of the coaching process, (2) the social complexities of coaching, and (3) the coach-athlete relationship, in an attempt to uncover some of the complexities and nuances of the coaching context. This research has specific significance to the more recent interpretivist performance analysis investigations, as this research has responded to the call for further understanding of the social, political and emotional every-day realities faced by practicing performance analysts.

2.3.1 The Coaching Process: Representations And Behaviours

As mentioned in the section introduction, coaching research has traditionally been dominated by positivist, quantitative approaches that aimed to provide representations of the coaching process as well as detailed accounts of coach behaviours. Lyle (2002, p. 40) attempted to provide a definition for elements of coaching activity, describing the 'coaching process' as a 'purposeful, direct and indirect, formal and informal series of activities and interventions designed to improve competitive performance'. The research that followed aimed to develop idealised representations of and for the coaching process (Côté, Samela & Russell, 1995; Lyle, 1996, 2002). Very few of these have, however, received consensual agreement and it has been argued that much of the social and cultural complexity of the process has been overlooked (Cushion, Armour & Jones, 2006). Similarly, because the data from which these representations are based upon is empirical in nature and embodies idealistic and unproblematic models of the coaching process, they lack any analysis of the process in a real setting or in collaboration with real coaches (Cushion, 2007). As a result, this approach fails to account for the social nature of coaching: the need to understand the underlying experiences, feelings and emotions of the coaches and athletes involved within this complex set of social

relationships (Jones, 2000; Potrac & Jones, 2009a). In this regard, an expansion of traditional avenues of inquiry into the 'who' of coaching, rather than considering the 'how' and 'what' of coaching, has been called for (Jones, Armour & Potrac, 2004; Jones, 2006a).

To date, these investigations have tended to conform to an 'outside-in' approach emphasising structural constraints, as opposed to an 'inside-out' perspective highlighting the muddled realities of personal feeling (Smith, 2002). A call has been made advocating the adoption of an ideographic approach that utilises the interpretivist paradigm, based on the need to understand the social world through gaining first-hand knowledge of the subject matter under investigation (Sparkes, 1992; Potrac, Jones & Armour, 2002; Jones, Armour & Potrac, 2004). This paradigm adopts a number of strategies, including ethnography, case study, interviews and observations (Denzin, 1989a) in order to develop a 'knowledge for understanding perspective' towards the social world of sports coaching and gain a more sophisticated grasp of its complexities (Jones & Wallace, 2005). It has also been argued that assuming a sociological perspective within coaching research allows us to look beyond simple physical performance issues and see sport as a social construction, which influences how people think and live their lives (Potrac, Jones & Armour, 2002; Jones, Armour & Potrac, 2003, 2004). This approach is vital in understanding the nuances, actions and behaviours of coaching practitioners and, in doing so, a greater understanding of the dynamic and complex coaching environment may be produced (Armour & Fernandez-Balboa, 2001; Cassidy, Jones & Potrac, 2009).

2.3.2 Understanding The Social Complexities Of Pedagogical Practice In Sport

A large body of research has recently developed current understanding of the social complexities of both professional practice and the coach-athlete relationship, through the implementation of ethnographies and autoethnographies (Jones, Armour & Potrac, 2003, 2004; Potrac et al., 2000; Potrac, Jones & Armour, 2002). Such qualitative research methods have proven useful for researching topics about which little is understood (e.g. power, impression management, trust, respect, and contradictions or ambiguities prevalent in everyday coaching), providing insightful social inquiry into coaches' everyday actions and strategies (Jones, Armour & Potrac, 2003, 2004; Potrac et

al., 2000: Potrac, Jones & Armour, 2002). A greater understanding of how coaches attempt to manipulate and deal with the many variations that exist within the coaching context has been developed (Jones, Armour & Potrac, 2002).

Reflective of the interpretive approach, ethnographic research involves the ethnographer participating either overtly or covertly in people's lives over a period of time, watching, listening and recording what is said and asking relevant questions (Wax, 1971). Such qualitative methods have proved useful, as they hold the power to provide familiarity with rich description and demonstrations of understanding (Peshkin, 1993). From this methodological approach, it is possible to capture a detailed account of the participant's everyday behaviours over a sustained period of time (Darst, Zakrajsen & Mancini, 1989). Indeed, Cushion and Jones (2006) performed a ten month, season long, sociological analysis into the triangular interaction between coach, athlete and context, within the context of a Premier League academy. Data was collected from participant observations and interviews, with the authors concluding that understanding the context in which the coaches and athletes interact is paramount (Cushion & Jones, 2006). This particular environment superficially supports a developmental ethos; however Cushion and Jones (2006) discovered that football academy coaches are more often judged against game results, which goes some way to explain the constant level of scrutiny these players reported. This investigation stated that hierarchical coaching contexts need careful consideration, as coaches should occupy a higher position than players; though external pressures of performance results and player development impact on continued employment prospects and ultimately coaching behaviours (Cushion & Jones, 2006).

In an attempt to maintain this elevated position and with it the coaches' employment prospects, Cushion and Jones (2006) found that the language the observed coach utilised was in fact a form of symbolic violence, with the specific intention of keeping their athletes 'within a realm of obedience' (Cushion & Jones, 2006, p. 150). The observed discourse was described as 'gendered, autocratic, and hierarchical', with the intention of purposefully punishing poor performance and demeaning efforts by questioning the athletes' masculinity (Cushion & Jones, 2006). Cushion and Jones (2006) further highlight this dominant discourse as being consistent and omnipresent, becoming embodied

as neophyte actors saw such interactions as 'sensible' and 'legitimate' (p 150) and perpetuated the hierarchical power structure evident within coaching. Interestingly here, the scope of Cushion and Jones' (2006) work is not limited to its findings but also the 'methodological appropriateness' (Patton, 2002) required to extract such an authoritarian coach-dominated environment. To this end, it is unlikely such data could have been collected through coach interviews alone, as these may have presented an espoused coaching philosophy that values a positive and supporting environment, rather than the realities of their interactional practices (Patton, 2002).

Similarly, Purdy, Jones and Cassidy (2009) mirrored this methodological framework, examining how power was given, acquired and used by athletes in an elite sporting context. This paper concentrated on a top-level athlete's reactions to their coach's behaviours and how these actions created a climate that influenced and 'housed' coaching (Purdy, Jones & Cassidy, 2009). The investigation centred on the interactions of international rowing selectors and Sean (a pseudonym), a top-level rower, as he prepared for an international regatta season, despite withdrawing from an aspect of the programme (Purdy, Jones & Cassidy, 2009). Based on in-depth interviews and field notes, Purdy, Jones and Cassidy (2009) detailed these interactions from both perspectives through the presentation of modified realist tales, analysing their findings through Bourdieu's capital theory (1977, 1989, 2004). The findings of this investigation demonstrated how various aspects of capital are defined, used and negotiated by social actors within a given context, the significance of which lies in the generation of a greater understanding of power dynamics, pervading discourses and the nature of interactions within coaching (Cushion & Jones, 2006; Purdy, Jones & Cassidy, 2009).

Whilst such results contradict traditional findings that highlight the importance of a positive coaching environment, it would be naive to assume these interactions are a 'one off' occurrence. Similar to the findings of d'Arripe-Longuville, Fournier and Dubois (1998), Cushion and Jones (2006, p. 155) showed that coaches viewed the 'harsh, aggressive, and sometimes threatening discourse as being in the players' best interests' and 'a specific strategy to improve their respective performances'. Additionally, Cushion and Jones (2006) also reported that the coach-athlete relationship was affected by the coach's perception of individuals within the squad; whether they be

favourites, rejects or good players, based on attitude, technical, tactical, and athletic ability. Of particular interest was the coach's inclusion of attitude (the individual's willingness or obedience towards their requests), thus reinforcing the social power structures evident within the academy environment (Cushion & Jones, 2006). Moreover, because of the cultural capital (or legitimate power) possessed by one of the coaches (an ex-professional player), the players perceived the coach as being 'someone worth listening to' and 'someone who's been there and done it', further reinforcing his power and legitimising his actions in their eyes (Cushion & Jones, 2006, p. 156).

Indeed, Cushion and Jones (2014) aimed to further the work of Purdy, Jones and Cassidy (2009) by conducting a season long ethnography of 24 players and five coaches at an elite football academy. These authors utilised Bourdieu's work on field, capital, practice and habitus (e.g. 1977, 1989) in order to further understanding of the hidden curriculum in professional youth football, as well as the norms, beliefs, power mediums, and values of their coaches. Cushion and Jones (2014) suggested that despite not receiving direct recognition or planning, these coaches saw getting the players to merge their habitus and field with that of a professional footballer as an integral part of their job role. In this respect, the specific content of coaching sessions, the technical, tactical and physical elements are addressed covertly, whereas the socialisation messages created through the context are only implied (Cushion & Jones, 2014). The players are expected to take on this information through the production and reproduction of 'normal' actions or 'social legitimacy' (Cushion & Jones, 2014). Cushion and Jones (2014) also suggested that respect for authority was also recognised through how individuals of each status group were referred to, or the daily tasks (jobs) they had to complete. In this respect, younger players developed a 'hierarchical awareness' (Sabo & Panepinto, 1990) of their positional identity (Chodorow, 1978) through symbols such as being called 'kids' or 'boys' by senior staff (Cushion & Jones, 2014).

These authors also suggested that through player engagement this process was learned, reproduced and legitimised, or what Bourdieu (1977, p. 82) referred to as 'knowing one's place and staying there'. Importantly, Cushion and Jones (2014, p. 288) stated that through day-to-day routines, the hidden curriculum of the club provided an 'important mechanism enabling the attitudes and norms espoused by the coaches to become embodied by the players'. In

pursuit of their own goals, players engaged in these social practices and, in doing so, contributed to the maintenance and reproduction of the existing culture (Cushion & Jones, 2014). Finally, Cushion and Jones (2014) observed that in complying and legitimising this culture, the players created an environment for symbolic violence to occur (Jenkins, 1992). In this regard, the socialisation process and hidden curriculum were illustrative of an apparatus of control from the coaches and the club as a whole (Cushion & Jones, 2014).

Additionally to ethnographies, recent interpretivist coaching research has begun to recognise the value of utilising autoethnographies (Jones, 2006a, 2009; Purdy, Potrac & Jones, 2008; Potrac et al., 2013a). The term autoethnography refers to writing that aims to systematically analyse an individual's personal experience in order to further understand their cultural experiences (Ellis, 2004; Holman Jones, 2005) and it is useful in studying coaching practices, as well as the coach-athlete relationship. To date, researchers in the sociology of sport have largely utilised autoethnography to explore the concepts of identity construction and reconstruction among others (Sparkes, 2002). By adopting an 'insider's' perspective, such as that afforded by an autoethnography, a detailed understanding of the social and emotional world of individual athletes and coaches can be attained (Jones, 2006a).

One paper arguing for the adoption of such an approach within the study of coaching is that of Jones (2009). Jones (2009) suggests that many of the studies to date have tended to adopt an 'outside-in' approach emphasising structural constraints, as opposed to an 'inside-out' perspective highlighting the 'muddled realities of personal feeling' (Jones, 2009, p. 378). In this respect, Jones (2009) argues that autoethnographies can better document the social, emotional, ethical and ambiguous aspects of such an inherently problematic context. In essence, autoethnographic texts allow 'exploration beyond the surface of coaching and coaches' personas, to highlight what coaches see and feel and how they deal with the dilemmas that arise' (Jones, 2009, p. 379). Jones (2009) continues to suggest that while autoethnographies concentrate on an individual's viewpoint, they are rooted in public concerns, as they depict the individual's interpretation of interactions with the context and key others and their perception of how they define themselves in relation to these others. These texts also offer the space for thick and rich description which has the ability to evoke shared emotional understanding, with the reader able to make

connections with their own lives (Wilson, 1998). Jones (2009) also suggests that autoethnographic texts should be interpreted in relation to social theories in order to be self critical, to go further than just telling 'a good story' (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 738) by making ambiguous experiences more visible. The author concluded by presenting an autoethnographic account of his experiences of working in professional youth football (Jones, 2009). The narrative presented offered an initial insight into some of the author's inner thoughts and feelings, specifically following one interaction with a young player that evoked memories within him from 25 years previously (Jones, 2009).

This work aimed to develop the previous work of Jones (2006a), an autoethnographic account of the lead author's experiences of coaching semi-professional football. The author presents his inner thoughts and feelings before, at half time, and following one particular match (Jones, 2006a). Jones (2006a) suggests that significant contextual pressure to obtain desired results on a tight budget contributed to the considerable stress he was experiencing. In attempting to portray to those others present, this coach endeavoured to present the 'front' (Goffman, 1959, 1969) of an 'upbeat, positive, hardedge, focused, controlled, and confident coach, despite this contradicting his 'true' inner feelings at that moment in time (Jones, 2006a). The coach recalled feeling frustrated that his preparation had been less than ideal for reasons out of his control, that inside he felt anxious the players would see through his 'front' and that he felt vulnerable standing in front of the expectant players (Jones, 2006a). Jones (2006a) continued to interpret these experiences through the framework presented by Goffman (1959, 1969), concluding that like others before him (e.g. Potrac, Jones & Armour, 2002; Jones, Armour & Potrac, 2004), maintaining a desired image while generally managing athlete's impressions were considered paramount. The author also suggested that through presenting a competent coaching 'front', he was striving to maintain the respect of his players (Jones, 2006a), however these players also had a level of power over him and the situation, based on their interpretations of appropriate coaching behaviours. Jones (2006a) also suggested that grounding his experiences in Goffman's (1969) theorising has specific significance due to coaching working in a constant state of uncertainty regarding their interactions. On a deeper level, Jones (2006a) states that in order to project and protect desired self-images, coaches need to portray convincing virtual, as opposed to actual, social

identities (Goffman, 1963). Jones (2006a) links this to Goffman's (1963) notion of stigma, in which the stigmatised individual's situation in life is to gain acceptance and respect (in this instance the coach addressing his players in dressing room), which is exactly what the stigma puts at risk. Jones (2006a) suggests that he, as a potentially discredited individual (Goffman, 1963), had built up a repertoire of coping behaviours to maintain a desired front.

Building upon this early work of Jones (2006a), Purdy, Potrac and Jones (2008) implemented a similar methodological approach to the investigation of power, consent, and resistance within a dysfunctional semi-professional coach-rowing crew relationship. The authors drew upon Giddens' (1984) theory of power, agency, and the dialectic of control, as well as Nyberg's (1981) concept of 'power over power'. Support is given to Jones, Armour and Potrac's (2002) conclusion that 'rather than power being an unlimited capacity which one person wields absolutely over another', subordinate individuals are not viewed as powerless but possess some degree of power and the ability to resist influence (Purdy, Potrac & Jones, 2008, p 5). The first author initially describes a sense of excitement at the appointment of a new coach, whose desire is to produce more professional training and increase competitive standards within the squad (Purdy, Potrac & Jones, 2008). She suggested this coach's practices provided her with a comfortable feeling of being secure and safe in their charge, thus developing a sense of ontological security (Giddens, 1984), or a sense of confidence continuity, and trust (Purdy, Potrac & Jones, 2008).

Despite initial attempts to support this new coaching regime, this relationship soon became frayed due to athlete interpretations of the coach's autocratic behaviours as condescending and leaving little room for athlete input (Purdy, Potrac & Jones, 2008). Furthermore, the athletes began to perceive the coach as lacking in interpersonal skills, saying the coach was often snapping, being unreasonable and treating them as robots (Purdy, Potrac & Jones, 2008). Importantly, Purdy, Potrac and Jones (2008) highlighted that the problem was not a result of a deficiency in expertise or knowledge, but rather the quality of their coach-athlete interactions and communications. This breakdown in coach-athlete interactions ultimately lead to resistance from squad members, who utilised the power of withdrawal of best efforts and derogatory humour in an attempt to regain a sense of power within these interactions (Purdy, Potrac & Jones, 2008). Ultimately, the coach deselected one crewmember following a

post-race argument without telling them and when they attended the next meeting the first author lost all respect for the coach as a knowledgeable professional and as a person, later withdrawing herself (Purdy, Potrac & Jones, 2008).

The more recent work of Potrac et al. (2013a) has shed considerable light on the contested and negotiated reality of working within a professional football coaching context. This investigation aimed to move away from traditional inquiry into the coach-athlete relationships and address the paucity of investigation delving beneath the functionalist portrayal of coaches' working relationships (Potrac et al., 2013a, p. 80). These authors again utilised an autoethnographic narrative of the lead author's experiences of coaching football at an elite level, highlighting the 'degrees of selfishness and 'back-stabbing' actions of his coaching colleagues that were easily discernible underneath the 'veil of co-operation' (Potrac et al., 2013a, p. 80). Potrac et al. (2013a) spoke of his interpretation of the deliberately unhelpful and undermining actions he witnessed his coaching colleagues make, before outlining the shame and guilt he felt as a result of acting in a similar manner to further his own agenda. In doing so, this narrative highlights the competitive, calculating, and uncaring nature of coaches' working relationships, shedding light on 'the dark side of organisational life' by illustrating some of the everyday strategies and manipulatory actions involved (Potrac et al., 2013a). In an attempt to make sense of his experiences, Potrac et al. (2013a) drew upon Bauman's (1996, 2000, 2003, 2007) notion of liquid modernity, to contribute to current understanding of the problematic micro-political, emotional and ethical practice of sports coaching. From this perspective, Potrac et al. (2013a) suggest that the inter-human bonds between individuals within this context have eroded, with individuals thinking primarily of themselves and acting only to reduce their own sense of individual insecurity. Potrac et al. (2013a) suggest that in doing so, self-interest and the protection of individual standing are at the forefront of coaches' social lives. This concept supports the notion that organisations are 'arenas of struggle' (Ball, 1987, p. 19), where groups and individuals use formal and informal power to achieve their desired ends (Blase, 1991). In this regard, Potrac et al. (2013a, p. 86) contend that coaching is 'far from being characterised by straightforward desires to achieve consensus goals', instead, 'individuals may act in accordance with their own motivations and ambitions'.

While these examples detail some of the unquestionable benefits of implementing an autoethnographic approach to interpretivist coaching investigation, it has been argued that the narratives we read have a tendency to present the authors' final constructions and interpretations of experiences of themselves or others (Toner et al., 2012). These narratives often give little consideration to the potential shifting and changing reflective and reflexive, intra- and inter-personal dialogues accompanying the writing process (Knowles & Gilbourne, 2010). For example, while this evolving body of literature provides fascinating accounts of ambiguity, pathos, and complexity inherent in coaching and the coach-athlete relationship (Cushion & Jones, 2006; Potrac & Jones, 2009b; Purdy & Jones, 2011), there has been little in-depth exploration into the impact of subsequent experiences and interaction on a person's understanding of their self, others, their actions, the actions of others, and the interactions that take place between them (Toner et al., 2012). In essence, there has been scant attention paid to how future events influence the re-telling and re-interpretation of an original narrative (Nelson, Potrac & Groom, 2014).

In an attempt to address this, Toner et al. (2012) aimed to present a reflective account of the principle author's dysfunctional relationship with an expert golf coach, however instead of merely presenting his experiences in relation to wider coach-athlete relationship literature, the author intended to showcase some of the messy and challenging realities of the reflective and reflexive writing process. In doing so, Toner et al. (2012) presented a narrative highlighting a change in perception and interpretation of previous interactions with their coach over time. Toner et al. (2012) stressed that the interpretations of lived events can be modified through the process of revisiting, open-discussion, quiet contemplation, and eventually writing; ultimately resulting in challenges to self, others (e.g. colleagues), and dogma (e.g. the many truisms that litter applied sport domains). This notion of re-interpreting through reflection stresses the potential for narratives to evolve, with this example representing a 'moment-in-interpretive time; a frozen moment without an ongoing process of reflection' (Toner et al., 2012, p.74). Toner et al. (2012) utilised the work of Goodson et al. (2010) to draw a distinction between open and closed narratives, describing how engaging with the wider author team supplemented this process. This notion goes some way to counter the statement of Gilbourne (2011), that reflective writing is an insular and solitary process, however the

authors argued this shared process of reading, talking, listening and exchange helped facilitate a reflective dynamic that embraced critical social science (Knowles & Gilbourne, 2010).

The above studies have demonstrated that autoethnographies do not unproblematically shed light on, nor generate insight into, coaching practices and have to militate against accusations of the production of individualistic, melodramatic, self-indulgent texts (Jones, 2009). They do, however, allow an inside perspective on the social worlds of individual athletes and coaches, offering a richer understanding of the coaching process (Cushion & Jones, 2006; Jones, 2006a). That said, further research utilising a wider range of interpretivist methodologies has the potential to increase our understanding of the micro-political nature of the elite sports coaching context (Potrac & Jones, 2009a, 2009b; Potrac et al., 2013a).

2.3.3 A Micro-Political Understanding Of Coaching

In light of much of this ethnographic and autoethnographic research, Potrac and Jones (2009a) call for the implementation of case studies that apply social theories to better understand the concepts of power and interpersonal relationships within elite level coaching. The authors outlined a number of theoretical frameworks (Goffman, 1959; Ball, 1987; Kelchtermans & Ballett, 2002a, 2002b) that could potentially be utilised in order to fully understand the micro-political workings evident within professional coaching. In doing so, it was hoped that elite level coaching would no longer be presented as unproblematic, instead being highlighted as an area of constant struggle, from which a greater picture of how coaches practice and acquired practical knowledge could be developed (Potrac & Jones, 2009a). Potrac and Jones (2009a, p. 574) also call for an increased understanding of how coaches and other various contextual stakeholders initiate conflict and change within the elite level coaching environment before managing the consequences. They argue that such investigation has the potential to highlight how these coaches manage and negotiate the constraints and opportunities they experience, as well as having the potential for insightful reflection by coaches and coach educators (Potrac & Jones, 2009a).

In response to their own call, this work was further developed by Potrac and Jones (2009b), who aimed to explore the micro-political working in semi-

professional football. These authors aimed to present the micro-political strategies one coach used in an attempt to persuade the players, the assistant coach, and the chairman to 'buy into' his coaching philosophy and methods (Potrac & Jones, 2009b). This investigation utilised in-depth, semi-structured and biographical interviews in collaboration with a reflective log relating to those interviews (Potrac & Jones, 2009b). The coach's implementation of specific strategies aimed at persuading the players to see the merits of his coaching were interpreted in light of Ball's (1987) micro-political perspective, Kelchtermans and Ballet's (2002a, 2002b) work on micro-political literacy and Goffman's (1959) writings on the presentation of self. Coach Gavin (a pseudonym) was reported as demonstrating an awareness of the need to recognise and be sensitive to the different ideologies and expectations of his colleagues (Potrac & Jones, 2009b). Gavin was also reported as striving to maintain a professional coaching 'front' (Goffman, 1959) in an attempt to achieve this, through avoiding potentially harmful interactions, manipulating situations to promote his own agenda and engineered training sessions that highlighted the shortcomings of high status players providing resistance to his views (Potrac & Jones, 2009b). Potrac and Jones (2009b, p. 233) concluded that 'in their quest to gain the support of contextual stakeholders and achieve their goals, coaches are engaged in a process of constantly forging and reforging alliances with contextually significant others'.

More recently, Thompson, Potrac and Jones (2013) aimed to further explore the micro-political workings within a professional football coaching environment. These authors conducted five formal narrative-biographical interviews over a four-month period with an elite level Assistant Coach (Thompson, Potrac & Jones, 2013). The resulting narrative detailed Adam's (a pseudonym) understanding of the complex, often ambiguous and micro-political nature of his social interactions and relationships with key stakeholders at one professional football club (Thompson, Potrac & Jones, 2013). Supporting the findings of the above micro-political investigations into coaching (Potrac & Jones, 2009a, 2009b), Adam also came to view his coaching environment 'as an area for struggle' that was 'riven with actual and potential conflict' (Ball, 1987, p. 19). Importantly, Thompson, Potrac and Jones (2013) also reported that while Adam was willing to subscribe to the organisationally shared goal of player improvement, he was initially naive to the reality that other individuals

may act to reinforce or advance their own position (Jones & Wallace, 2005). This was evident in Adam's interpretation of his fluid relationships with the goalkeeping coach and senior physiotherapist, who would at various times engage with, ignore and sabotage him as they deemed necessary (Thompson, Potrac & Jones, 2013).

Interestingly, Thompson, Potrac and Jones (2013) further developed the work of Jones (2006a) and Potrac and Jones (2009b) by considering Adam's experiences in relation to Goffman's (1959) social theorising. In this respect, Adam's initial choice to engage with his colleagues in a confident and professional manner (or 'front') failed to correspond with contextual expectations for behaviour and, ultimately, lead to interpersonal tensions (Thompson, Potrac & Jones, 2013). In doing so, Thompson, Potrac and Jones (2013, p. 12) mooted that 'Adam failed to observe the rituals of deference (respect for others) and demeanour (respect for role) required to maintain the interactional order within the club setting' (Goffman, 1967). This point was further developed to suggest that first impressions are significant in putting interactions off on the wrong foot (Goffman, 1959), with Adam's initial professional 'front' being met with scepticism by significant others at the club (Thompson, Potrac & Jones, 2013).

This point was considered in greater detail, with the authors suggesting that Adam's stigmatisation (Goffman, 1963) resulted from the anti-intellectual culture of the coaching environment present in professional football (Gearing, 1999; Parker, 2000; Kelly, 2008). Previous playing experience was historically regarded as the essential criterion for coaching in elite level football, with formal academic qualifications largely met with suspicion and distrust (Kelly, 2008). Adam ultimately felt that his status as a sports science graduate failed to counter his lack of playing experience in the eyes of his colleagues (Thompson, Potrac & Jones, 2013). In an effort to repair his identity and improve his professional standing, Adam recalled seeking opportunities to have his professional competencies recognised by colleagues (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002b). Adam implemented a number of micro-political strategies such as utilising those materials accessible to him and spending more time in the company of key contextual stakeholders, as a means of reinforcing his knowledgeable 'front' (Thompson, Potrac & Jones, 2013). Thompson, Potrac and Jones (2013) concluded their investigation by suggesting that the

presentation of Adam's story, despite the limitations of a single-case study design, gives further credence to the need to engage with a critical sociology of sports coaching. They called for further research to uncover the 'minute and the mundane', in order to further the portrayal of coaching as the problematic institution it is (Thompson, Potrac & Jones, 2013).

2.3.4 Understanding The Emotional Nature Of Coaching Context

While the above body of literature has ultimately provided some valuable insights into the strategic actions coaches use to persuade, cajole and coerce others to buy into their agendas (Cushion & Jones, 2006; Potrac & Jones, 2009a, 2009b; Thompson, Potrac & Jones, 2013), Potrac et al. (2013b) present a case for future research to also consider the emotional nature of coaching. They suggest that due to the inherent vulnerability coaches experience as a result of the often ambiguous coaching context (Jones & Wallace, 2005; Kelchtermans, 2005), coaches and athletes no doubt 'experience a variety of strong emotions as they strive to navigate the challenges and opportunities of their dynamic sporting worlds' (Potrac et al., 2013b). Potrac et al. (2013b) also suggest that, to this point, coaching literature has tended to be free from emotionality, with coaches largely presented as calculated, dispassionate and rational beings (Hargreaves, 2005).

Central to the argument of Potrac et al. (2013b) is the notion that a sociologically orientated approach to studying emotions has the potential to explain the relationships between the physical body, cognitive processes, and cultural constructions. Potrac et al. (2013b) draw upon arguments suggesting that every social action is accompanied by an emotional involvement, with countless emotions resulting from real, imagined or anticipated outcomes within social relationships or interactions (Kemper, 1978). Again drawing upon the previous writings of Jones and Wallace (2005), these authors highlight a failure in previous literature to adequately explore the tensions and accompanying emotions that arise as coaches strive to fulfil the often contradictory goals that form a significant feature of the coaching context (Potrac et al., 2013b). Potrac et al. (2013b) posit that the challenges, tensions, and dilemmas coaches face on a day-to-day basis are not just cognitive or social in nature, but are also inherently emotional phenomena and need to be understood as such.

In response to this call, Potrac and Marshall (2011) share an autoethnographic investigation with the intention of exploring how coaches and athletes experience a variety of strong emotions as they navigate through the challenges and opportunities of their dynamic coaching contexts. This study offered a commentary from the second author, a practicing coach, which highlighted the value of Hochschild's (1983) thinking for his practical experiences. The second author stressed the importance of considering emotions not only within a domestic sphere, but also in the workplace on a daily basis, contending that the challenges, tension, and dilemmas faced by coaches and athletes are not just cognitive or social in nature (Potrac & Marshall, 2011). Interestingly, this coach points to formal coach education programmes as being the primary socialisation factor responsible for generating his perception of appropriate emotional responses to certain situations (Potrac & Marshall, 2011). Through this experience, the second author came to understand that his actions and emotions were a commodity with a commercial and professional value, which he ultimately wanted his athletes to subscribe to (Potrac & Marshall, 2011).

When considering this coach's experiences in relation to Hochschild's (1983) theorising, Potrac and Marshall (2011) specifically identified the inter-related concepts of emotional management, surface and deep acting, feeling rules, and emotional labour as prominent concepts. They suggested that the second author aimed to manage his feelings to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display (emotional management) (Hochschild, 1983). Potrac and Marshall (2011) also posited that this coach acquired an understanding of this process through their various socialisation experiences as part of formal coach education experiences (Theodosius, 2008). In this respect, Hochschild (1983) states that as a result of these socialisation experiences, individuals developed an understanding of those emotions that it is appropriate to display, as well as the degree to which expression of these emotions is in keeping with their respective social role (feeling rules) (Potrac et al., 2013b). When an individual's true feelings do not meet cultural expectations, they often have to engage in a process of working on either the surface, or deep level (Hochschild, 1983). Hochschild (1983) suggested that surface acts aim to deceive others without deceiving oneself, whereas deep acting is a conscious process of working on one's inner feelings until these are believed as genuine. In

developing this point, Hochschild's (1983) notion of emotional labour relates to the commoditisation of one's feelings for the benefits of an organisation. In his concluding remarks however, this coach suggested that despite the emotional cost of coaching – the surface acting and emotional labour – the rewards of helping someone achieve success far outweigh any negatives (Potrac & Marshall, 2011).

More recently, Nelson et al. (2013) aimed to explore the relationship between emotion, cognition and behaviour within coaching, through the exploration of one coach's narrative account of semi-professional football. Again, these authors argue that while mainstream sociological literature has increasingly recognised the significance of emotions in social life pedagogical activities, existing accounts of sports coaching have largely remained devoid of emotionality (Nelson et al., 2013). Going one step further, Nelson et al. (2013) suggested that although some studies have hinted towards emotions being present within interactions (e.g. Cushion & Jones, 2006; Purdy, Potrac & Jones, 2008; Jones, 2009), there have yet to be any concerted and systematic efforts to consider emotions within coaching research (Potrac et al., 2013b).

Through six semi-structured in-depth interviews of one coach at a semi-professional football club, a narrative-biographical account of this coach's emotional experiences was developed (Nelson et al., 2013). Nelson et al. (2013) utilised the work of Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) cognitive appraisal theory, Denzin's (1989b) writings on understanding emotions, and Hochschild's (1979) work on emotional labour to understand Zack's (a pseudonym) experiences. In this regard, Nelson et al. (2013) suggested that Zack engaged in a continuous process of appraisal to ascertain whether the coaching context, inclusive of the transactions taking place within it, would benefit his personal agenda (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). These authors also suggested that whilst Zack recognised playing attractive football, winning competitive fixtures, and ensuring job security were key concerns, he often engaged in the presentation of an 'emotional front at odds with what he was personally experiencing' to assist in the accomplishment of his goals (Nelson et al., 2013, p. 477). Nelson et al. (2013) noted that Zack experienced considerable pressure as a result of prolonged management of certain emotions that not only lead to feelings of inauthenticity, but also caused key contextual stakeholders to question the sincerity and credibility of his performances (Hochschild, 1983). Finally, Nelson

et al. (2013) suggested that Zack had a key emotional understanding (Denzin, 1989b), as he was clearly able to comprehend the emotions of those players that were deselected, based on his own previous personal experiences. Combined with this, Nelson et al. (2013) drew upon Denzin's (1989b) discussion of the double structure of emotions to suggest that Zack experienced a number of 'emotional journeys' from one feeling (such as anger or frustration) to an altogether different emotion (e.g. guilt).

In their concluding remarks, Nelson et al. (2013) not only highlighted that Zack frequently concealed some emotions, while enhancing others to meet his desired ends, but also detailed how his previous playing experience influenced how he wished to portray himself (Nelson et al., 2013). They posit that based on Zack's experiences, emotion, cognition and behaviours are intertwined inseparably within the day-to-day work of coaches (Nelson et al., 2013). Mirroring the sentiments of Potrac and Marshall (2011) and Potrac et al. (2013a), Nelson et al. (2013) stress that an increased understanding of the role of emotions in coaching is required to better prepare these individuals for the complex realities of practice. Nelson et al. (2013) continue, calling for coaching scholars to provide rich emotional accounts of practice through the implementation of ethnographic and autoethnographic accounts, to explore beyond the surface and illuminate how these individuals feel and how they respond to the dilemmas, challenges and ambiguities they encounter (Jones, 2009).

2.3.5 The Use Of Performance Analysis In Sports Coaching

Whilst the above studies have responded to the call for a more sociological, micro-political and emotional investigation of coaching, the scope of this research is unfortunately limited to coaches and lacks any consideration of other important individuals within the wider coaching team (Groom, Cushion & Nelson, 2011; Huggan, Nelson & Potrac, 2015). Specifically, while these investigations have highlighted how coaches experience the highly contested, negotiated, ambiguous, and often uncaring nature of the coaching context, little thought has been given to the experiences of practicing performance analysts (Groom, Cushion & Nelson, 2011; Huggan, Nelson & Potrac, 2015). The following subsection of this chapter aims to review those few studies that have

started to explore some of the social complexities associated with practicing performance analysis.

Lyle (2002) identified performance analysis as one of the key building blocks of the coaching process; where the ability of the coach to assess performance, diagnose problems and give corrective technical information to athletes is central to effective coaching. Indeed, like initial investigations into sports coaching, early performance analysis modelling work tended to depict performance analysis as a simplistic, unproblematic and given series of events (Franks, Goodman & Miller, 1983; Hughes & Franks, 1997; Hughes, 2008a, 2008b, 2008c). Such representations, or idealist models, of performance analysis fail to consider the use of performance analysis 'in action', reducing the importance of the complexity, scale, social and cultural elements of the process (Cushion, Armour & Jones, 2006).

While the majority of research exploring the sociological nature of practicing performance analysis has been implemented from an interpretivist perspective, it is important to acknowledge the small body of post-structuralist literature relevant to this area (Williams & Manley, 2016; Taylor et al., 2017). Post-structuralism emerged in the 1960s from critiques of structuralism, with Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida considered key figures (Lather, 2006). This paradigmatic approach to research is concerned with discourse, or the language that individuals use within social relationships, the meanings attached to this language, and who has the authority to speak (Macdonald et al., 2002). Post-structuralists often implement discourse analysis through observations and video or audio recordings, as a means of ascertaining what is said or not said, how the interacting individuals position themselves, and the social or cultural consequences of these actions (Macdonald et al., 2002).

From this perspective, Taylor et al. (2017) conducted five hour-long in-depth interviews with one former international field hockey goalkeeper, with the intention of understanding how Claire (a pseudonym) interpreted her experiences of receiving video-based coaching. Taylor et al. (2017) outlined three main areas of resonance or impact for Claire in relation to her experiences of video-based feedback. The first related to her relationship with the camera used to record her training and match performances, where she expressed a number of negative thoughts including: constant scrutiny, jealousy of the immediacy of outfield player feedback, fear to experiment with new techniques,

and the need to control external projections of her thoughts or emotions (Taylor et al., 2017). The second related to her experiences of individual coach feedback, where she expressed feelings of vulnerability when interacting with the head coach, preferring to speak with the goalkeeping coach alone (Taylor et al., 2017). The final area of impact related to her experiences of group feedback sessions, in which she expressed a reluctance to challenge the comments of coaches or other players and felt anxious about her mistakes being viewed publicly (Taylor et al., 2017). Taylor et al. (2017) suggest that the recording of Claire's actions meant that they were subjectively personalised by the coach, other players, and herself, as well as being objectively reduced and measured as data. In doing so, Taylor et al. (2017) suggest that Claire's coach utilised surveillance technologies as a means of governing her actions and ultimately, rendered her docile. These authors concluded their investigation by highlighting the need for critical thought on the application of video-based technologies (Taylor et al., 2017).

In an effort to develop understanding of how coaches use surveillance technologies to govern players' actions, Williams and Manley (2016) conducted a number of in-depth semi-structured interviews with four professional rugby union (ranging from internationals to recent academy graduates) players at one Premiership club. Within this work, it was identified by the players that their every game action was recorded and measured against set KPIs, so much so that players were viewed as machines (Williams & Manley, 2016). Interestingly, Williams and Manley (2016) suggest that whilst features of this managerial approach may be effective for simple algorithmic tasks, they are potentially more harmful for solving more novel problems and increasing sporting expertise. These authors also suggested that the head coach's 'machine mentality' enforced a totalitarian regime where players are judged against these KPIs in order to exercise institutional power (Williams & Manley, 2016). Williams and Manley (2016) documented that such a proliferation of analysis information existed that it became absorbed into the practices of players and lead to self-correction. Williams and Manley (2016) suggest that notions of power and management are not two special positions, but are a conjoined process disciplining the everyday life of members. These authors concluded by suggesting that despite the pretence of enhancing team and individual

performances, the constant surveillance of players was a means of exercising power and control over the players (Williams & Manley, 2016).

While this post-structuralist work offers considerable insight into some of the institutional issues surrounding the use of surveillance technologies in sport, others argue for further interpretivist research to better understand both athlete experiences of receiving video-based feedback and the sociological experiences of practicing performance analysts (Groom, Cushion & Nelson, 2011; Huggan, Nelson & Potrac, 2015). These investigations typically encompass either interpretive interview techniques or a case study design and aim to contribute to the growing body of literature challenging the rationalistic conceptions of sports coaching (Groom & Cushion, 2004). Indeed, Groom, Cushion and Nelson (2011) conducted a twelve-month-long investigation, utilising a combination of open-ended and semi-structured interviews of 14 English youth soccer coaches, in an attempt to understand the delivery of video-based feedback. The authors of this paper presented a grounded theory, based on the concepts emanating from data analysis of the recorded interviews (Groom, Cushion & Nelson, 2011). Groom, Cushion and Nelson (2011) observed three relevant categories: contextual factors, delivery approach, and targeted outcomes, each of which can be described and explained using subcategories and associated concepts.

Groom, Cushion and Nelson (2011) suggested that contextual factors (e.g. social environment, coaching/delivery philosophy, recipient qualities, presentation format, session design, and delivery process), as well as role, power and interaction ultimately framed the delivery of video-based feedback. Implicitly within the social environment, the roles of 'coach' and 'player' were evidently acted out, as was the historical use of video-based feedback to reinforce coercive or punishment power (Groom, Cushion & Nelson, 2011). The authors were mindful of the comments on coaching given by Cassidy, Jones and Potrac (2009), that coaches (and indeed performance analysts) need to be mindful of the power-dominated nature of the coach-athlete relationship if they are to succeed in obtaining and maintaining the trust, respect and confidence of their athletes (Groom, Cushion & Nelson, 2011). One such coach (C3) highlighted the need to take 'a great deal of care' (Groom, Cushion & Nelson, 2011, p 9) when constructing the video, and of the need to be aware of the positive and negative clips, as 'previous negative video feedback experiences

evoke negative emotions' (p 10). These were noted to have a significant effect on both learning and willingness to actively participate in future video-based sessions (Groom, Cushion & Nelson, 2011), highlighting the complex relationship between player, coach, and context outlined in previous coaching studies (Cushion & Jones, 2006; Jones, Armour & Potrac, 2003; Potrac, Jones & Armour, 2002).

Groom and Cushion (2011) also noted that a delivery approach consisting of: motivational videos, opposition analysis, performance feedback, performance modelling, performance reviews, and training, was both significant and interconnected within these contextual factors. One notable finding was coach C5's description of his positive experiences of utilising motivational videos, suggesting that players appreciated viewing their 'best bits' when edited to motivational music of their choice (Groom, Cushion & Nelson, 2011). While other coaches mirrored these feelings, C2 and C9 stressed the importance of giving the correct impression of the opposition through editing of 'good' and 'bad' examples, as the player's 'perception of the opposition' in their mind 'is the key thing' (Groom, Cushion & Nelson, 2011, p 13). These views were also mirrored when discussing performance modelling, feedback, and reviews of fixtures and training, with coaches trying to maintain a balance of positive and negative aspects in order to positively affect their players' trust and respect (Groom, Cushion & Nelson, 2011).

Finally, the authors identified that targeted outcomes consisting of: behavioural changes, facilitation of learning, improved efficacy, and increased motivation were key in the provision of effective video-based feedback sessions (Groom, Cushion & Nelson, 2011). In each of the target outcome subcategories, the observed coaches viewed video-based feedback as an integral tool in 'putting instant pictures in their [the players'] head' and 'develop[ing] game understanding' among other things (Groom, Cushion & Nelson, 2011, p 15). Ultimately, this investigation was able to develop a grounded theoretical framework to better understand aspects affecting the delivery of video-based performance analysis within youth soccer, from the perspective of the coach (or practicing performance analyst) (Groom, Cushion & Nelson, 2011). That said, Groom, Cushion and Nelson (2011) argue that 'in situ' investigation is required to examine the practical application of such a model for practicing performance analysts.

In response to this call, Groom, Cushion and Nelson (2012) conducted an ethnographic investigation into the behaviours and interactions of one English Premier League football academy Head coach. These authors observed this coach's interactions with his 22 players during six video-based performance analysis feedback sessions, in order to systematically analyse this coach's talk in action (Groom, Cushion & Nelson, 2012). From the data, Groom, Cushion and Nelson (2012) observed that this coach presented himself (Goffman, 1959) in his institutional role as 'Head Coach' through an authoritarian manner. They highlighted that he exercised control over the sessions via asymmetrical conversation turn-taking and questioning in order to reinforce his social basis of power (Raven, 1993). Groom, Cushion and Nelson (2012) suggest this asymmetrical institutional talk pattern both reflects and embodies the different level of access to resources and power of the different groups of individuals present (Heritage, 2005). They observed that the players' interaction was constrained to the answering of questions and response to invitations to speak from the coach (Groom, Cushion & Nelson, 2012). It was also noted that players respected and followed these interactional rules as a moral obligation, reinforcing the normative organisational order of the context (Heritage, 2005). These authors concluded that within this interaction, the players' acquiescence to their role within the turn-taking conversations acted to maintain the identity of the coach (Groom, Cushion & Nelson, 2012).

Following the work of Groom, Cushion and Nelson (2012), Booroff, Nelson and Potrac (2015) conducted an investigation into the use of video-based performance analysis in elite youth soccer. These authors conducted four formal interviews and observed ten video-based feedback session of one professional English youth soccer Centre of Excellence manager (Booroff, Nelson & Potrac, 2015). The resultant data was separated into three distinct themes, each highlighting the calculated nature of Terry's coaching practice (Booroff, Nelson & Potrac, 2015). In response to organisational pressures, Terry focused the majority of both the video-based feedback and pitch-based coaching sessions at developing those players he identified as having the best chance for success (Booroff, Nelson & Potrac, 2015). The second identified theme related to Terry's understanding of the importance of an organisational hierarchy, outlining respect and professionalism as paramount (Booroff, Nelson & Potrac, 2015). The final theme identified related to Terry's goal of preparing

his players for being released at the end of their current contracts, by making sure they understood the reasons for their release (Booroff, Nelson & Potrac, 2015).

Booroff, Nelson and Potrac (2015) suggested that Terry's use of video-based performance analysis was inherently political in nature, as he used these sessions to fulfil his obligations in the eyes of his employers. In this respect, Terry's video-based political decisions were influenced by his understanding of the contextual opportunities and constraints of his working environment (Booroff, Nelson & Potrac, 2015). Booroff, Nelson and Potrac (2015) suggested that Terry had an acute understanding of his professional self-understanding, a well developed micro-political literacy, and micro-political action (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a, 2002b; Kelchtermans, 2005). In their concluding remarks, Booroff, Nelson and Potrac (2015) suggest that a variety of different methodological approaches within future research may help further current understanding of the practical application of video-based performance analysis by coaches and performance analysts.

While these investigations consider the provision of video-based feedback from the perspective of those delivering it, others have utilised a similar approach in considering the performance analysis process from the perspective of the athletes. Indeed, Groom and Cushion (2005) investigated the use of video-based coaching with English youth footballers. Semi-structured questionnaires were implemented to gain the perceptions of ten U17 players on season long video feedback sessions (Groom & Cushion, 2005). In this study an adapted version of Felder and Salmon's (1991) Learning Style Inventory was implemented with a video analysis questionnaire assessing areas of potential benefit (e.g. usefulness, learning, reflection, timing, and mental aspects) (Groom & Cushion, 2005). Despite the limited sample size, 'doing on the pitch' emerged as the dominant learning style, followed closely by 'video debrief sessions', with 'talking about situations in the classroom' the least popular (Groom & Cushion, 2005, p. 2). In this regard, all players reported the video-debrief sessions as important, adding that they had 'learned something new from [each of] these sessions' (Groom & Cushion, 2005, p. 3).

Additionally, Groom and Cushion (2005) reported that players were able to separate the knowledge related component of the sessions into two main areas (game understanding and decision-making), with 90% of players reporting that

their perception of their performance had been altered by these sessions. In their conclusion, Groom and Cushion (2005) stated that youth footballers learn in a variety of different ways, with video-based feedback being considered a useful tool in stimulating player learning, providing players the opportunity to: improve game understanding, recognise individual and team strengths, improve individual and team weaknesses, and develop analytical skills. Groom and Cushion (2005) also noted the importance of the perceived impact of these sessions on the players, with careful attention needed on the balance between positive and negative examples.

Similar to the previous writings of Groom and Cushion (2005), Nelson, Potrac and Groom (2014) aimed to detail how an elite ice-hockey player (John) (a pseudonym) experienced and responded to his coaches' delivery of video-based feedback, whilst also considering the perceived impact of these sessions upon his athletic learning and development. This investigation utilised an interpretivist case study approach, implementing four digitally recorded ninety-minute interviews, in order to better understand this athlete's views on and reactions to his previous and current coaches' use of performance analysis technologies to promote athlete learning (Nelson, Potrac & Groom, 2014). Of particular interest in this investigation was the 'respect' John afforded each of his coaches based on his understanding and response to video-based performance analysis sessions, something that echoed the broader working relationships that existed between coach and athlete. John explained his initial respect for his coaches was a product of his perceptions of their current social role and the accolades they had received within ice-hockey (Nelson, Potrac & Groom, 2014). Critically, John also noted that the respect he afforded his coaches was not a rigid constant, but more fluid in nature and increased or decreased as a consequence of his interpretations of the coaches' behaviours and decisions (Nelson, Potrac & Groom, 2014).

One of the main contributory factors to John's increased respect was the production of a 'slick' or well-organised video presentation that he perceived had a considerable amount of time and energy spent in creating it (Nelson, Potrac & Groom, 2014). Interestingly, while John considered three of his previous coaches offered this level of professionalism in their video-based feedback sessions, he reported having little respect for one of his coaches, who he perceived did not apply the same level of time and effort in their preparation

(Nelson, Potrac & Groom, 2014). John reported how this coach's apparent lack of preparation and weak delivery lead to the players losing respect for him (Nelson, Potrac & Groom, 2014). Supporting the comments of coach C3 (Groom, Cushion & Nelson, 2011), this lack of respect impacted on John's pedagogical experiences of these sessions and the subsequent learning or non-learning that occurred (Nelson, Potrac & Groom, 2014). When discussing the pedagogical stance from which these video-based feedback sessions were delivered, John described how he found sessions in which the coach actively encouraged athlete participation through questioning and debates on strategies, to be the most productive and valuable to effective learning (Nelson, Potrac & Groom, 2014). Finally, Nelson, Potrac and Groom (2014) reported that due to the effective learning environment created by these coaches during their video-based feedback sessions, John's respect for both the coaches and senior players (from whom he also learned a great deal) was increased.

2.3.6 Performance Analysis In Practice

Up to this point, discussion has centred on the various experiences of both coaches and athletes in delivering and receiving video-based performance analysis. Unfortunately, though this body of post-structuralist and interpretivist performance analysis literature has started to develop some rich insights into the socio-pedagogical complexities associated with video-based feedback, there has to date been little investigation into the everyday experiences of performance analysts. Huggan, Nelson and Potrac (2015, p. 505) argue 'while performance analysts have been increasingly employed in many elite level sporting organisations, this development has arguably not been matched with a comparable level of critical scholarship addressing how performance analysts experienced, understand and practice within a variety of organisational cultures'. Indeed, they suggest that the traditional tendency to limit analytical focus to the technical features of performance analysts' work comes at the expense of developing a critical appreciation of the everyday social realities of practicing performance analysis (Huggan, Nelson & Potrac, 2015). These authors call for a more micro-political and emotional understanding of the working lives of these individuals from an interpretivist perspective (Huggan, Nelson & Potrac, 2015).

In an attempt to address the paucity of research within this area, the work of Huggan, Nelson and Potrac (2015) stands alone by offering an exploratory insight into the early career experiences of football analyst Ben (a pseudonym). Ben's ten years' experience at three different clubs was collected through four semi-structured interviews and presented in the form of a narrative account (Huggan, Nelson & Potrac, 2015). This work principally applied various concepts of Kelchtermans (2009) and Kelchtermans and Ballett (2002a, 2002b) whilst interpreting Ben's experiences, to develop an understanding of the micro-political learning that occurred over this time. Specifically, Ben perceived the managers as having the power to 'make or break his own career as a performance analyst' and was sensitively aware of the asymmetrical power relationship that existed between the Head Coach and other members of the coaching team (Huggan, Nelson & Potrac, 2015, p. 508). Even at the early stage in his career, Ben identified the Head Coach as the ultimate arbiter of the opportunities, resources, time, and space afforded to him as a performance analyst (Huggan, Nelson & Potrac, 2015). Huggan, Nelson and Potrac (2015) suggested that consistent with the work of Kelchtermans and Ballett (2002a, 2002b) in education, professional self-understanding occupied a prominent place in Ben's personal interpretive framework, specifically those work-place conditions he considered vital to performance of his job role. Through his narrative, these authors identified that his professional credibility was at stake and as such, protection of his personal self-understanding and integrity as a performance analyst were major concerns in his working life (Huggan, Nelson & Potrac, 2015). They also concluded that from this perspective, Ben invested considerable time and energy to impress key stakeholders at the club, in an effort to advance his position (Huggan, Nelson & Potrac, 2015). Again, drawing upon Kelchtermans and Ballett's (2002b) work, they noted that developing a socially recognised identity as a proper performance analyst was a highly valued working condition (Huggan, Nelson & Potrac, 2015). Finally, these authors also reported Ben's belief that alongside the coaching staff, he considered the players to be another group of key stakeholders important to obtain buy-in from (Huggan, Nelson & Potrac, 2015).

These authors concluded this paper by stressing the need for further research into the everyday realities of practicing performance analysts (Huggan, Nelson & Potrac, 2015). Huggan, Nelson and Potrac (2015) suggested that

autoethnographic writings (amongst other methods) on the specific interactions and experiences of neophyte (and more experienced) analysts had the potential to further develop more 'reality' grounded appreciation of the sociocultural environments in which they may be required to operate. To this end, our current understanding of the practical day-to-day realities of individuals learning their performance analysis trade, as well as the social and contextual factors highlighted in this review, is still relatively primitive. Further research is needed in order to better understand the emotional, social and micro-political barriers faced by individuals entering the elite sports coaching environment for the first time.

2.3.7 Critiques Of Post-Structuralist And Interpretivist Coaching Research

Firstly, while such post-structuralist research as that presented above has undoubtedly added value to current understanding of sports coaching, others have outlined a number of critiques of this research approach. These primarily stem from post-structuralisms view that power is relational and ever-present (Markula & Silk, 2011). Markula and Silk (2011) suggest that post-structuralism is determinist and as such, individuals are constrained by power relations to the point that they have no ability to make their own meanings of interactions and experiences. Another criticism of the post-structuralist approach suggests that it is meaningless as it deliberately prevents the full details or the facts of something becoming known (Chomsky, 1995). Others have accused post-structuralism of having a parasitic bias, suggesting it condemns everything and adds nothing to analytical or empirical knowledge (Rorty, 1989; Dawkins, 1998). In this regard, Rosenau (1991) also highlights that post-structuralism is sceptical due to it promoting a 'negative' agenda that is based on the idea of the impossibility of establishing truth. One final criticism of this approach is that not only does its pushing of political agendas cast doubt on its scientific merit, but also its anti-theoretical stance is a theoretical position in itself (Greenfield, 2000, 2005).

In a similar vein, although the interpretivist perspective on coaching and performance analysis has arguably offered rich insights into the sociological, micro-political and emotional nature of the profession (Potrac & Jones, 2009a; Groom, Cushion & Nelson, 2011; Potrac et al., 2013a; Huggan, Nelson & Potrac, 2015), a number of critiques remain (Williams, 2000; Goulding, 2002).

One of the primary limitations to interpretive research is that it abandons the scientific procedures of verification and, as a result, findings cannot allegedly be generalised to other individuals or situations (Williams, 2000). Critics attack interpretivism because it exemplifies a common belief that it can provide 'deeper' and more 'meaningful' understanding of social phenomena, which typically lie beyond the scope of scientific data (Nudzor, 2009). Critics also believe interpretivism fails to provide any agreed doctrine underlying all qualitative social inquiry, suggesting its many '-isms' lie behind and dominate qualitative methods (Silverman, 2006).

Other criticisms of qualitative research include the claim that it is purely descriptive in nature and therefore not rigorous, with flawed data, because of the subjective role of the researcher (Goulding, 2002). This notion is further developed to incorporate a lack of transparency, with Purdy and Jones (2011) rounding off their own conclusions by highlighting that because of its interpretive nature, the findings could not be portrayed as the objective truth. Indeed, the coaches and other significant stakeholders present but not investigated may have had their own interpretation of the events presented, which this study did not include (Purdy & Jones, 2011). This mirrors the conclusion of Purdy, Potrac and Jones (2008), who proposed that autoethnographic endeavours dictate that research is only attained from a single perspective, with other individuals holding differing perceptions of the same situation. Bryman and Bell (2007) would add that from this perspective it is difficult to see how and why researchers might reach their conclusions. The point is, there is no right or wrong, no one approach that is best. This issue resides around the choice of approach that best fits the research's aims and questions, as well as the philosophical and conceptual framework within which the researcher operates (Silverman, 2006).

2.4 Review Conclusion And Research Problem

To summarise, the intention of the current chapter was to review contemporary perspectives in performance analysis literature. Throughout this chapter I have presented some of the key findings from the literature underpinned by the positivist, post-structuralist and interpretivist paradigms, as well as critically considered some of the strengths and limitations associated with such works. In doing so, it is hoped that this chapter has highlighted the

need to expand our current understanding of the social, micro-political and emotional nature not only of the coaching environment as a whole (Cushion & Jones, 2006, 2014; Jones, 2006a, 2006b, 2009; Purdy, Potrac & Jones, 2008; Potrac & Marshall, 2011), but also of practicing performance analysts within the elite sports coaching setting (Groom & Cushion, 2011; Nelson et al., 2013; Thompson, Potrac & Jones, 2013; Huggan, Nelson & Potrac, 2015; Williams & Manley, 2016; Taylor et al., 2017). I believe doing so would provide a greater understanding of neophytes experiences generally, as they transition into highly negotiated contexts for the first time. Specifically, in response to the call from Huggan, Nelson and Potrac (2015), I aim to explore some of these nuances and mysteries through conducting an autoethnographic investigation to determine the social, micro-political and emotional complexities that performance analysts face on a day-to-day basis, to better educate individuals wishing to pursue performance analysis as a career. I feel that this approach would offer such individuals a rich and credible insight, allowing them to see some of the incidents that occurred to me and the variety of strategies I implemented to overcome them. In this way, it is hoped that this work would mean that they were not going into the environment blind to the ambiguity and vulnerability inherent within elite sports coaching contexts, but had at least considered it as a highly contested and political arena.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Within this chapter, I outline the methodological considerations I made when choosing to adopt an interpretivist-interactionist approach to investigating the every-day experiences of practicing performance analysis. I open by discussing the current philosophical and theoretical beliefs in relation to the paradigm debate (Denzin, 2010). The intention of this section is to position the current thesis within an interpretivist-interactionist framework, where investigations seek to understand and interpret phenomena through the construction and reconstruction of the meanings attributed to lived experiences (Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011). Following this, I present a detailed analysis of autoethnographic writing as a form of research. Specific attention is given to prompting critical reflection, personal epiphanies and theoretical interpretation of autoethnographies. I conclude by providing the reader with a detailed criterion from which to evaluate the quality of this investigation.

3.2 *Philosophical And Theoretical Beliefs: An Interpretivist-Interactionist Perspective*

This section aims to situate the origins of this thesis into the wider debate regarding the philosophy of science. Discussion here seeks to present a broad overview of the preferred research paradigm utilised within this investigation. Initially, this section will provide a brief summary of the overarching concepts within the paradigm debate. Discussion will then centre on the historical developments, as well as philosophical and theoretical beliefs within the chosen stance. The section will finish by defining how this chosen stance has informed the current research project.

Morgan (1983) posits that all scientific inquiry requires the researcher to undergo a process of engagement with the chosen subject matter, by interacting with it through a specific frame of reference. This reference frame has subsequently been described at a more fundamental level as being 'a particular set of lenses for seeing the world and making sense of it in different ways' (Sparkes, 1992, p. 12). This notion relates to the different research paradigms, each grounded in a unique set of generically accepted positions regarding ontology, epistemology and methodology (Mallett & Tinning, 2014).

Paradigms allow researchers to distinguish relationships between variables that specify appropriate methodological procedures in order to conduct particular research (Crotty, 1998). To date, that majority of research within performance analysis has been conducted using positivism (e.g. Reep & Benjamin, 1968; Reilly & Thomas, 1976; Hughes & Bartlett, 2002; Eaves & Hughes, 2003), interpretivism (e.g. Groom, Cushion & Nelson, 2012; Booroff, Nelson & Potrac, 2015; Huggan, Nelson & Potrac, 2015) or post-structuralism (e.g. Williams & Manley, 2016; Taylor et al., 2017). These approaches differ according to their beliefs surrounding the nature of reality (ontology), the acquisition of knowledge (epistemology), and the methods implemented to investigate phenomena (Lincoln & Guba, 1994; Bryman, 2012).

Disclosure of a philosophical view is not often explicitly detailed, however such disclosure can assist in the understanding and interpretation of the research process (Creswell, 2009). Indeed, Seale (1999) suggested the quality of research is enhanced if the researcher actively engages with philosophical and methodological debates, while McNamee (2005) posits that the cultivation of philosophic concerns in research is critical to becoming a reflective practitioner. Research is often classified in terms of the philosophical and paradigmatic assumptions underpinning it (Mallett & Tinning, 2014). The importance of this lies in the impact of these philosophical views on the research methods, designs, and strategies of inquiry implemented by these researchers (Morgan, 2007).

Interestingly, there are many contradicting beliefs when it comes to the different research paradigms (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). These arguments are not limited to differences between paradigms but also intra-paradigmatic similarities (Giddens, 1976), as explained by Sparkes (1992), who highlights the internal diversity and disagreement regarding what constitutes the main features of the different paradigms. Smith (1990, as cited in Sparkes, 1992) posits that the crucial features of this perplexing debate are born of the complex background knowledge and philosophical commitments of the researcher themselves, either implicitly or explicitly generated and 'rarely consciously and deliberately adopted' (Hawkins, 1987, p. 372). After careful consideration of the different paradigms, I find myself adopting a broadly interpretivist standpoint, with specific interests in symbolic interactionism and dramaturgy. For the purposes

of this investigation, I have chosen to focus on an interpretivist-interactionist case study approach.

Despite research paradigms stretching back to Classical Greek times, with Aristotle and Plato (positivists) on one hand and Sophists (anti-positivists) on the other, the development of many ideas now associated particularly with qualitative research can be linked to the classic writings of Kant (1781). Indeed, in the 1962, 1970 and 1996 publications 'The Structure of Scientific Revolutions', Thomas Kuhn demonstrated that the history of scientific discoveries could not be understood as a simplistic linear accumulation of knowledge. Kuhn highlighted that many developments in science result from 'paradigms in crisis', where previous theories and practices are challenged and eventually survive or are surpassed by superior theories, or 'paradigm shifts' (Kuhn, 1970; Abernethy & Sparrow, 1992). These writings informed the research that later followed and are at the heart of a number of different intellectual traditions, including phenomenology (Schütz, 1970; Heidegger, 1962), symbolic interactionism (Mead, 1934; Goffman, 1959; Blumer, 1969), and ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1967), among others (Potrac, Jones & Nelson, 2014).

Indeed, Mills (1959) challenged scholars researching human disciplines to construct a viewpoint and methodology allowing the examination of an individual's private troubles, occurring in the world of experience and how these are connected to personal issues and responses to these troubles. Despite the adaptation of this stance to underpin inquiry in numerous academic fields, it was not widely adopted within the academic field of sports coaching until 2000 (Potrac, Jones & Nelson, 2014). This lens for conducting research is a philosophical alternative to positivist orthodoxy, rejecting its beliefs on the examination of the social world as well as the assumptions and methodologies it advocates when acquiring knowledge (Potrac, Jones & Nelson, 2014).

It is important to acknowledge that discussion within the previous chapter of this thesis has specifically detailed the notions of positivism, post-structuralism and interpretivism. The literature review chapter also expressly stated that the current investigation will be conducted from an interpretivist perspective. As such, discussion within the remainder of this thesis will concentrate on the interpretivist paradigm and how the current thesis specifically aligns with this paradigmatic approach.

Ontologically, interpretivism promotes multiple and relative social realities based on the subjective consciousness of the social participants (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Interpretivists believe that the world does not stand independent of the observer, that it contains its own dialectic and can only be discovered by participation with it (Denzin, 1989a). As such, interpretivists do not believe that the general rules and external societal structures exist and the premise of social research is to explore the meanings and interpretations of social actors in specific situations (Markula & Silk, 2011). This has been eloquently explained by Burrell and Morgan (1979, p. 260) who state that:

‘The social world is no more than the subjective construction of individual human beings who, through the development and use of common language and the interactions of everyday life, may create and sustain a social world of intersubjectively shared meaning.’

I reject the notion that ‘there is a real world ‘out there’ that can be objectively measured’ (Mallet & Tinning, 2014, p. 13), believing that the social world is complex and individuals make their own meaning within given political, cultural and social contexts (Markula & Silk, 2011). I share the view of Potrac, Jones and Nelson (2014) and would argue that the meanings I attached to the various actions and behaviours of myself and others within my social world (that of the elite sports coaching context), were open to revision, often revisited and re-interpreted.

Given this highly subjective view of interpretivist ontology, interpretivist epistemology is equally highly relativistic and exclusive to the social actors directly involved within each situation (Markula & Silk, 2011). Knowledge and understanding then, can only be obtained by sharing the same frame of reference as the social actor and, as a result, knowledge is entirely subjective to the actor’s specific reality (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). That said, Kvale (1992) argues that certain interpretations of reality may be more plausible than others when considering the specific contexts. Interpretive epistemology assumes that people cannot separate themselves from what they know and that findings emerge through dialogue in which conflicting interpretations are negotiated and based in that particular moment (Burger & Luckmann, 1967). I would argue that knowledge is the outcome or consequence of this human dialogue or activity and is a human construction that can never be certified as true, as it is ever changing and problematic (Sparkes, 1992).

The impact of this on interpretivist methodology, which requires the researcher to adopt an ideographical approach to the study of society, demands a more in-depth and thorough hermeneutic analysis of social situations (Markula & Silk, 2011). In this respect, hermeneutics concerns the science of interpretation or a systematic analysis of such lived experiences (Heidegger, 2008). Scholars have argued that individuals directly observing and experiencing social interactions within a given context can be considered as valuable data for interpretation (Heidegger, 2008). This understanding requires first-hand knowledge and comprehensive analysis of the subject's account of a situation (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). As a result, interpretivist investigations are commonly smaller in size: placing more emphasis on the researcher's insight and validity, rather than focusing on the results or outcomes of the study (Denzin, 1989a). Interpretivism is characterised by being existential and biographical, naturalistic, based on sophisticated rigour, both pure and applied (Denzin, 1989a). Interpretivism is deliberately non-positivistic and rejects the five main assumptions of positivism (Denzin, 1989a). In this respect, I have adopted an idiographic methodology to explore and interpret my experiences of practicing performance analysis; to understand the meanings of this unique and subjective context by offering thick description and thick interpretation (Mallet & Tinning, 2014; Potrac, Jones & Nelson, 2014).

With the above discussion in mind and having identified interpretivism as being the paradigm that I have the greatest affinity with, I feel that my research interests would primarily be of a qualitative and subjective nature. This preference for interpretivism is based on the desire to conduct a more in-depth or intimate type of research, allowing me to observe and understand a given social context, whilst effectively becoming part of the group under investigation. In this respect, I attempt to 'make the world of problematic lived experiences of ordinary people directly available to the reader' (Denzin, 1989a, p. 7) and allow my experiences of it to shape the nature of the investigation. I aim to do so by spending an extended period of time immersed in the social context under investigation and offering a detailed account of the thoughts, feelings and emotions that result from my interactions and experiences of practicing performance analysis within an elite level rugby Super League club.

This perspective attempts to join traditional symbolic interactionist thought (Blumer, 1969) with ethnography (Agar, 1985), the case study method (Stake,

1978), and the interpretive, hermeneutic, phenomenological work of Heidegger (1962), as well as many others. The focus is on capturing the voices, actions and emotions of 'those life experiences that radically alter and shape the meanings persons give to themselves and their experiences' (Denzin, 1989a, p. 10). Obtaining an 'emic perspective' or immersion into the group's culture is at the heart of this form of research and should allow me to experience a more powerful and meaningful connection to the social group and provide richer and more meaningful research data (Fetterman, 1989). This perspective would allow the inclusion of my own subjective experiences of the world as a 'lived experience' (Husserl, 1965), which would help to construct meaning making as an interpretive process of 'being-in-the-world' (Heidegger, 1962). As interpretive interactionism is ideographic (Allport, 1942) and emic (Denzin, 1984, as cited in Denzin, 1989a), therefore assuming that all human beings are universal singulars (Sartre, 1948), the adoption of such a research design would allow particularising into the reading and interpretation of one person's interactional process and those rituals and taken-for-granted meanings embedded within them (Goffman, 1972; Garfinkel, 1967).

In light of this, I intend to conduct an autoethnographic type of research based on my own personal experiences of the social environment, from the perspective of a neophyte. This type of investigation is typical of my chosen paradigmatic approach to research and will allow for an in-depth insight into the social context of a neophyte performance analyst within professional rugby league. I aim to become 'a full and active member of the team in order to learn about their way of life from the inside, to feel what it is like for the people in the situation' (Sparkes, 1992, p. 28). Although this method of research may ultimately be limited in its breadth, due to focusing on the experiences of one neophyte analyst at one particular Club, it offers extremely deep and substantial meaning based on thick descriptions of the emotions, feelings and interactions experienced in real time. Thick description is the cornerstone of interpretation studies and without it, authentic understanding of the study area would not be possible (Denzin, 1989).

3.3 Autoethnography

This section aims to discuss the term autoethnography and its relevance to the current study, beginning with a brief definition. In order to fully understand

what an autoethnography is, it is important to understand where the term comes from, as Ellis, Adams and Bochner (2011, p. 273) argue that 'a researcher uses tenants of *autobiography* and *ethnography* to *do* and *write* autoethnography'. Ellis (2004) and Holman Jones (2005) posit that autoethnography relates to a research or writing approach that aims to describe and systematically analyse (*graphy*) an individual's personal experience (*auto*) in order to further understand their cultural experiences (*ethno*). This mode of conducting research, in an attempt to move away from the traditionally dominant design used in both natural and social science disciplines, flourished in the late 1990s, with scholars arguing for research that was explicit in taboo areas such as ethics, interactions and emotions (Flyvbjerg, 2001; Ellis, 2004; Bochner, 2013; Douglas & Carless, 2013; Gearity, 2014). Stake (1978, p. 5) suggested that case study designs 'will often be the preferred method... because they are epistemologically in harmony with the reader's experience and thus to that person a natural basis for generalisation'.

This notion came as a direct response to Trinh's (1991) call for work that seeks to generate knowledge through detailing the truth of life's fictions, where experiences are evoked. Such a method of conducting social science developed with scholars writing stories or 'impressionist tales' of their cultural experiences (Van Maanen, 1988), focusing on their practical knowledge of specific cases and utilising rich descriptions of characters, plot lines, and unexpected complications and resolutions (Polkinghorne, 1988, as cited in Gearity, 2014; Denzin 1989a; Flyvbjerg, 2001; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). In short, autoethnographic research was developed as a qualitative methodology tied to storied writing of an individual's accounts of their interactional experiences within a given context (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Ellis, 2004; Bochner, 2013). Autoethnography is self-reflexive in nature, focusing on the heart (Ellis & Bochner, 2000) and infused with aspects from the growing field of narrative research (Reed-Danahay, 1977; Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Ellis, 2004). If autoethnography is done, it should consist of a layered consciousness, it should be personal and scholarly, descriptive and theoretical, and both evocative and analytical (Ellis, 2004; Bochner, 2013).

To this point, autoethnography has been depicted as a clear-cut reflective process, however many have questioned the tenants of true autoethnography. Gilbourne (1999) sought to clarify the term and its usage within the current

literature. From this perspective, Knowles et al., (2001) made a distinction between different levels of reflection, presented in the form of a continuum. This continuum begins with technical reflection (typically linked with issues of efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability) and moves through practical reflection (associated with the exploration of personal meaning) and critical reflection (provides links between specific situations and wider concepts such as justice, emancipation, the value of professional goals with the intention of contributing to ethical decision making) to ultimately autoethnography (Anderson, Knowles & Gilbourne, 2004; Knowles & Gilbourne, 2010).

For Gilbourne (1999), autoethnography differs from critical reflection as it requires an awareness and examination of self in juxtaposition to wider contextual matters such as institutional power, personal empowerment, and the emancipation of self or others. In developing this notion, Holman Jones, Adams and Ellis (2013) suggest that for personal writing to be considered autoethnographic it must contain: (1) purposeful commenting on or critiquing of culture and cultural practices, (2) contributions to existing research, (3) embracing vulnerability with purpose, and (4) creating a reciprocal relationship with audiences in order to compel a response. Autoethnography then, attempts to understand the self and others and to recognise our own place within an oppressive structure (Risner, 2002). In doing so, autoethnographers retrieve and revisit their stories in words, illustrations and journeys, before zooming in on particular words, shapes, and preferences located underneath and between narratives and finally, zooming out to the larger concerns regarding emancipatory change (Risner, 2002). It is with this discussion in mind that the current investigation ultimately strives to create an autoethnographic account of my experiences during my internship. Although this is the ultimate goal of this thesis, this may not be achieved from the outset (Anderson, Knowles & Gilbourne, 2004; Knowles & Gilbourne, 2010). As my knowledge and understanding of what constitutes autoethnographies developed over the course of this investigation, I believe my stories more accurately display a progression through the first three levels of reflection, before ultimately being autoethnographical towards the end of my narrative (Anderson, Knowles & Gilbourne, 2004; Knowles & Gilbourne, 2010).

Importantly, autoethnography has often been implemented in order to support the metaphysics of presence (Derrida, 1972), which advocates that

real, concrete individuals live lives containing meaning, with these meanings having solid presence in these peoples' lives. The utilisation of an autoethnographic approach allows sociologist scholars to uncover how these real individuals give subjective meaning to their life experiences (Schütz, 1967). In doing so, this method relies on the subjective verbal and written expressions of meanings attributed by those individuals under investigation, which are viewed as windows into their inner life (Denzin, 2014). This is the fundamental principle of interpretive hermeneutic investigations (Heidegger, 1962), which aim to interpret and understand social events through analysis of their meanings for the human participants present within the events.

Despite this notion, it has also been argued that there is no clear window into the inner life of an individual, as their unique language, signs, and process of signification ultimately filter their interpretation and representation of events (Derrida, 1972). Indeed, Derrida (1972) furthered this point by stating that language, in both its written and its spoken forms is always inherently unstable, in flux and constituted by other signs and symbolic statements. For this reason, it has been argued that there can never be a clear, unambiguous statement of anything, including an intention or meaning (Denzin, 2014). Also, experience, lived or otherwise, is discursively constructed. It is not a foundational category and it does not have an ontological reality independent of language and interaction (Scott, 1992; Pollock, 2007). There is no empirically stable 'I' giving a true account of an experience (Denzin, 2014). Experience, then, has no existence apart from the storied acts of the performative 'I' (Scott, 1992; Pollock, 2007). It is in the detailing and interpretations of these real life performances by the flesh-and-blood people experiencing them that is the focus of interpretive autoethnographic investigations.

Significant arguments for the use of autoethnographic research concern it allowing researchers to obtain thicker, richer accounts of the area under investigation by virtue of being closer to it as it unfolds (Gearity, 2014). The principle argument is that autoethnographers typically attempt to insert themselves into the given social context under investigation (Bochner, 2013). Subsequently, the narratives produced consist of their experiences and interactions (Bochner, 2013). This comes from the belief that the perspective of the individual in question is critical for determining the 'what' and 'how' of problematic social experience and, as such, is vital in order to produce rich

accounts of their experiences (Denzin, 1989a). It is also argued that preserving experiences at the time of occurrence, instead of having to recall previous experiences at a later date, allows for more accurate recollection and prevents any subsequent experiences biasing interpretation (Denzin, 1989a).

Autoethnographic narrative approaches to investigation are considered highly appropriate in collection and presentation of the subject's accounts of their interactions (Denzin, 1989a). These narratives are temporal constructions, the content of which can only be told by the person who experienced the events (Culler, 1981). They are stories detailing the sequence of events that contain special significance for the narrator and their audience, usually consisting of a plot with a beginning, middle, and an end. Autoethnographers gaze back and forth; first interpreting events through an ethnographic wide angle lens that focuses outward towards social and cultural aspects of their personal experience, before looking inwardly and exposing a vulnerable self that is moved by and may move through, refract and resist cultural interpretations (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). Simply put, the subject matter for interpretive autoethnography is the life experiences of a person, with autoethnographers connecting the autobiographical and personal to the the cultural and social by privileging concrete action, emotion, embodiment, self-consciousness, and introspection (Ellis, 2004; Douglas & Carless, 2013). For interpretive-interactionists, thickly described instances of problematic social interactions that are connected to personal troubles represent adequate subject matter for interpretation (Geertz, 1973; Denzin, 2013). Ellis (2004) states that artistic autoethnographies should: contain narratives depicting people as characters, provide dramatic tension through the description of problematic social interactions or epiphanies (described later) around which the stories revolve or towards which a resolution or explanation is provided, and include value or meanings given to the crisis through a point or moral to the story. It is also recommended that all biographical-interpretative studies incorporate each of the single personal experience narratives, self and personal experience stories and cross-case analysis of materials collected (Denzin, 1989a, 2013).

Other advantages of this form of research outlined in the wider autoethnographic literature include the personal benefits of writing stories. This can have a therapeutic effect on the author, helping them come to terms with the lack of initial catharsis (Sparkes, 2002). It can also aid in the development of

one's imagination, often increasing interpretive openness and deep or complex thinking (Ellis, 2004; Pearce, 2010). Alongside these undeniable benefits, others have suggested this form of research has marked benefits on wider society, through encouraging critical and reflective thinking in others, empathy, facilitating dialogue and influencing political and pedagogical practices (Ellis, 2004; Holman Jones, 2005; Markula & Dennison, 2005).

The development of my autoethnographic narrative relates specifically to my two-year internship at a Super League rugby Club. As I joined the Club halfway through a season, my internship can be divided into two main phases of data collection, each divided into two further subsections. The first phase of my data collection relates specifically to the time between my inception in May and the end of that off-season, at the end of October. During this time, I embarked on a full time position at said Super League Club, as their joint head of Performance Analysis, working alongside another PhD student intern and a full time assistant. This was my first experience of 'first grade' professional rugby league, despite previously spending two seasons volunteering with the same Club's under 18s programme. In short, I was a neophyte performance analyst very much learning my trade at this stage. The second phase of my internship therefore relates to the period of time from the beginning of the subsequent pre season (in November) to the end of that season (the following September). During this time, I furthered my technical development, becoming more proficient at my job, and started to consider other aspects affecting my ability to perform my job role. Despite the clear separation between phases, this represented one continuous data collection period, though the relevance of this distinction will become evident later.

Despite the ongoing support for this research method, a number of issues and limitations have been suggested regarding how autoethnographic texts are to be critically analysed in terms of epistemological, aesthetic and political criteria (Denzin, 2014). Critiques of autoethnography often tend to revolve around the argument that these texts are self-indulgent, introspective, individualised or narcissistic, usually occurring when the author structures a narrative lacking in a significant struggle and without valid connections to wider public issues (Sparkes, 2002; Holt, 2008). Autoethnography has been criticised for being too artful (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011) and not scientific, lacking theory, concepts and hypotheses (Denzin, 2014). Critics contend that a single

case only tells one story, or one interpretation of one story and, as such, narrative inquiry is not scientific enough (Denzin, 2014). Critics argue that autoethnographers do too little fieldwork and offer verisimilitude based on small samples, biased data collection, and self-absorbed text without analytical insights (Denzin, 2014). Similarly, Mazzei and Jackson (2009) have also expanded this notion, suggesting that the focus often centred on the narrative rather than the performative 'I'. Others have also argued that because autoethnographies focus on a single author, they lack the analytical or social elements of other social science research designs (Gearity, 2014).

Methodologically, due to its interpretive pursuit, autoethnographic texts have been criticised as lacking in the fundamental positivistic principles of reliability, generalisability, and validity, as well as the specific meanings positivism associates with these terms (Denzin, 2014). In contrast, these terms have significantly different meanings to interpretivists and autoethnographers, something that will be discussed in greater detail later (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011). It is important to recognise that autoethnographic texts can never claim to be valid and reliable accounts of events; rather they are interpretations and representations from one person's perspective (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011).

Importantly, there are a number of highly contextual and relational ethical considerations to take into account when conducting autoethnographic research (Tullis, 2013; Gearity, 2014). Tullis (2013) posits that researchers performing or writing about culture through their personal experiences will find their once private feelings, thoughts, and emotions permanently recorded. Despite the writing process being considered by many as therapeutic (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011), some argue that the levels of personal and emotional disclosure required to effectively write autoethnographic texts can result in vulnerability (Chatham-Carpenter, 2010; Tullis, 2013). This is because the scrutiny, or perceived potential scrutiny these texts may undergo from peer review panels, at conferences or societally, with the perceived hurt to personal, emotional, and professional dignity central to the author (Wall, 2008; Tullis, 2013).

Tullis (2013) further developed Ellis' (2007) notion that although autoethnographers claim to write stories of their own experiences, they cannot avoid implicating others. In this regard, some contend that all individuals who appear within autoethnographic texts are participants and, as such, must

voluntarily consent prior to the project starting (Tullis, 2013; Gearity, 2014). Ellis (2007) suggested that obtaining consent from those others included within autoethnographic narratives is not easily resolved by employing a signal or universal procedure. Often, it is not possible or practical to obtain informed consent from all those individuals who will have some part, large or small, within an autoethnographic text (Tullis, 2013). As such, in order to keep the identities of those individuals mentioned within my narrative confidential, all names and organisations will be replaced with pseudonyms, with all but the most significant of identifying data (e.g. age, race, sex) removed (Tullis, 2013). As a secondary measure, all hard copies of my diary entries were destroyed after use and all electronic copies were stored on either my own personal password protected laptop, or backed up on my personal password protected external hard drive. Importantly, the list of pseudonyms was only ever seen by myself and, as such, the true identities of the individuals within my autoethnographic accounts were never explicitly stated to any other individuals.

Unfortunately, Tullis (2013) also highlights that due to the nature of autoethnographies, there are some instances where it is not possible to avoid revealing a person's or community's identity (e.g. family members or professional colleagues). These techniques do little to keep confidential certain information when others already know the make-up of a family or organisation (Etherington, 2007; Tolich, 2010). Many will seek out these individuals to check the accuracy or interpretation of events (Ellis, 1999; Tamas, 2011), however this may lead to disagreements regarding the interpretations of events, with subtle meanings to the author lost (Tullis Owens et al., 2009).

There are, however, others who take a different approach to conducting autoethnographic texts (Denzin, 2014). Drawing on the post-structural and postmodern writings of Marx (1983), Denzin (2014) suggests interpretivists have four lessons to learn. Firstly, researchers do not study lived experiences, instead they study and create lived textuality (Denzin, 2014). Secondly, through the lens of these texts, the reader confronts the other whose partial presence is presented through quotes and excerpts from talks (Denzin, 2014). Thirdly, the legitimisation of these texts can only be given by the claims and spaces it makes and offers to the reader (Denzin, 2014). Finally, the authority of the text rests on its ability to reach out from the writer to the world studied, to speak back to the world it describes, and to articulate a set of self-referential

experiences that allow the writer to make sense of and understand this world in moral and political terms (Denzin, 2014).

Denzin (2014) argues that the intention of these texts is not to convince the reader or writer that this interpretation of actions, events, and interactions constitutes the most valid or correct version of the truth. As it is impossible to know the minds of those others present within these interactions, it is not possible to offer their, possibly contradictory, interpretations of the same events (Denzin, 2014). In this regard, whilst not presenting publicly anything that you would not want to show those individuals mentioned (Ellis, 2004; Tolich, 2010), autoethnographers should remain true to their interpretation of events (Denzin, 2014). Indeed, Gearity (2014) would argue that an abused or marginalised coach or athlete would offer a different perspective from that of the abuser, oppressor or dominant group. These individuals should strive to accurately present their interpretation of events and interactions, whilst also stressing to their readers that the presented narratives are *their* interpretation of events (Denzin, 2014).

With the above discussion in mind, the current thesis aims to present my interpretation of my experiences as I entered into the elite sports coaching environment at a Super League rugby Club. Prior to initiating the project of work, the Club were informed of the nature of the investigation and agreed to participate. That said, I did not give them the opportunity to comment on my narrative as, for me, it represents my interpretation of events. In line with the writings of Denzin (2014), I do not consider this account as factual or truthful, but rather simply how I came to understand my experiences during my internship. As such, I wanted to accurately present *my* interpretation of events and interactions as I experienced them, inclusive of the subterranean thoughts, feelings and emotions they elicited within me. For this reason, I would urge the reader to remember that the narrative presented in the following chapter represents my interpretation of my experiences, with others no doubt having their own, potentially conflicting, interpretation of the same events.

3.4 Prompting Critical Reflection: Maintaining A Reflective Journal And Attending Supervisory Meetings

As mentioned above, autoethnographic texts utilise personal experiences as subject matter, recognising that these experiences offer a rich resource upon

which the practitioner can draw (Anderson, Knowles & Gilbourne, 2004). This process relies on the autoethnographer engaging in critical reflection upon their experiences, acknowledging that in order to reflect upon the self, it is important to first know, understand and accept the self (Mearns & Thorne, 1999; Petitpas, Giges & Danish, 1999). The following section of this chapter aims to highlight the importance of critical reflection within autoethnographic research, as well as present how the keeping of reflective journals and attendance at supervisory meetings can aid in this process.

3.4.1 Reflective Journals

A reflective approach to the research process is now widely accepted in much qualitative inquiry (Ortlipp, 2008), with researchers urged to discuss themselves, their 'presuppositions, choices, experiences, and actions during the research process' (Mruck & Breuer, 2003, p. 3). Keeping self-reflective journals is a strategy that can facilitate this, whereby researchers use their journal to examine personal assumptions and goals, and clarify individual belief systems and subjectivities (Ahern as cited in Russell & Kelly, 2002). In doing so, it is possible to develop a level of self-awareness through documenting their learning 'journey' and any subsequent reflection (Pavlovich, 2007). The collation and recording of personal experiences and interactions in a reflective journal allows an individual to capture a permanent record of thoughts, feelings and emotions at the time of the event, to be ever preserved in time (Spalding & Wilson, 2002). These journals often stimulate an internal dialogue within the individual recording their experiences, which serves as a secondary analysis of past events (Colton & Sparks-Langer, 1993). It is the re-analysis and re-interpretation of these past experiences that creates a greater understanding of the appropriateness of behaviours within a given context and, subsequently, increases knowledge and understanding of the inner workings of the context in question (Spalding & Wilson, 2002). The challenge for autoethnographers lies in mastering the art of self-reflection and developing a system for documenting such reflections that suits the nature of the research setting (Duncan, 2004).

Through autoethnography, researchers are not simply presenting a record of the world they visited or were a part of, instead they offer an insight into their interpretations of that world (Duncan, 2004). In my research, the desire to make sense of my unique world required such a theoretical framework. From my

privileged position within the coaching environment, I could report directly from my experiences as they happened, with the physical, emotional, and psychological details of the experiences fresh in my mind. In order to promote the required level of critical reflection both within and upon my time at the Club, it was collectively agreed between my supervisors and myself that I was to keep a daily diary of my thoughts, feelings, and emotions in real time. This allowed me to capture the tacit knowledge and embodied experiences in relation to my interactions with the players, coaches, and other important individuals at the Club. In total, 227 separate journal entries were collected over the two-year internship, with the majority of these being transcribed either at work at the end of the day (when privacy allowed), or immediately on arrival home.

Having never kept a diary before, I found it difficult to know what to write. As such, I initiated my entries with discussion of my practical, technical, and social experiences at the Club. During the first few months, I discussed these entries with my critical friends, who's questioning of my entries allowed me to think more critically and ultimately develop a richer account of my experiences. As a result of this process, it also became apparent that I could not accurately and truthfully portray my thoughts and feelings as part of my internship without situating them within the context of my other social identities. In short, I understood that in order to fully understand my Club experiences, I had to include those relevant experiences outside Club life. It was collaboratively agreed with my supervisors that I should include those important events within my personal and academic life that were in some way intertwined with my experiences at the Club. That said, while not purposely writing entries regarding days off, if a significant development occurred in my personal life that had specific relevance to my work, I would write it into the journal as a retrospective account. As a result, the content of these daily entries varied massively, dependent on the nature of interactions experienced both at the Club and away from it, with a significant increase in length of daily entries noticed over the duration of my internship.

These journals were organised into specific calendar months, ranged in length from five to ten thousand words, and served a number of different purposes. Firstly, in writing down my experiences, I externalised my assumptions and reactions to specific situations that might otherwise have remained unacknowledged. Secondly, documenting these events preserved

ideas, interactions, inner dialogues, and feelings which could have subsequently been forgotten. Finally, these extracts provided evidence of the linear sequence of interconnected experiences and allowed me to later analyse trends and fluctuations over the course of my internship. Alongside these journal entries, a number of important emails and text messages were also documented in order to supplement data collection.

To date, a number of limitations of this form of data collection have been identified. One of the main issues with reflective journals as a source of data concerns the author's preparedness to write openly, versus the tendency to write what the author feels others want them to write (Phelps, 2005). It has been argued that authors of reflective journals lack the depth and rich description required, and that they often shape their narratives around the readers' perception of what should be told, rather than accurate portrayals of their interpretations (Phelps, 2005). These accounts, though reflective, may only accurately display technical and practical levels of reflection, without entering the required level of cognition for critical reflection, and indeed, autoethnography (Anderson, Knowles & Gilbourne, 2004). For a narrative to be considered autoethnographic, the author needs to experience an epiphany, reflect upon the nuances of that experience, write to show how the aspects of experience illuminate more general cultural phenomena and show how the experience works to diminish, silence or deny certain people and stories (Holman Jones, Adams & Ellis, 2013).

3.4.2 Supervisory Meetings

In an attempt to overcome some of these limitations, it was agreed that I should attend a number of supervisory meetings to aid in my reflection and data collection. In short, my supervisors acted as critical friends or 'trusted person[s] who ask provocative questions, provide data to be examined through another lens, and offer critiques of [my] work', during my data collection, analysis and representation process (Costa & Kallick, 1993, p. 50). This supports the notion that reflection can often be a shared process, with supervisors supplementing the reflection of their supervisees (Knowles et al. 2007). During these meetings, supervisors may challenge the origins of their supervisees' thoughts, feelings or actions and initiate discussion with the intention of extracting deeper meaning and interpretations of these experiences (Knowles et al. 2007). In doing so,

these meetings serve as a means of incorporating deeper layers of reflection and meaning from previous events (Knowles et al. 2007).

During the course of my internship, I attended monthly meetings with my supervisors with the intention of presenting information from my diaries to them so that they could help me to provide a deeper level of reflection on the instances that took place. The added advantage of this was that it would also help me to think more critically and reflect more deeply upon myself in the subsequent weeks and months, in order to be able to address the types of questions I would be asked by my supervisors. In total, I attended 15 supervisory meetings during the course of my internship and a further 15 after (as a means of categorisation and theming of reoccurring problems and construction of my narrative). These meetings typically involved my two supervisors and myself and took place at various locations around the University. The duration of these meetings ranged anywhere from one hour for shorter sessions up to two and a half hours for longer, more intense sessions.

The typical agenda of these initial meetings would consist of me presenting what I considered the major events from the previous month, interactions and/or important incidents that occurred in this time period. My supervisors would ask questions such as: How did this example make you feel? How did that feel at an embodied level? What were you thinking at this point? Can you talk us through your internal dialogue as you experienced this? This process invited me to provide a thicker description of the events and recall them in more critical detail. All of these meetings were recorded using a Dictaphone and were later transcribed verbatim by myself in order to keep a record of this information. On the whole, I found these meetings to be extremely beneficial, as my supervisors asked probing questions that caused me to consider my experiences at a deeper level. There were, however, a few occasions I found these meetings to be less beneficial. On these occasions, it was not the meeting itself or the support provided that was not beneficial, but the pressure of preparing material in advance, that was impacted on by either my personal or work life. I felt that my supervisors (and I) expected a high level of academic work, which necessitated significant time and effort to establish. Unfortunately, as will hopefully become evident in the following chapters, I was not always afforded the required level of time to prepare to the necessary standard. Similarly, on these occasions, I felt uncomfortable in the meeting, uneasy that

my supervisors would be unimpressed with my work. These occasions aside, I generally felt entirely comfortable with the type and nature of questions posed by my supervisors, feeling that I could honestly open up to them. In this regard, the type of questions my supervisors asked became gradually more probing, as they sought to draw out increasingly deeper meanings from my experiences, which was mirrored by the increasing depth of reflection I applied to my extracts over this time.

3.5 Personal Epiphanies: Analysis And Representation

The current section of this chapter aims to elaborate on the analysis and representation of data collected through reflective journals and supervisory meetings, as part of an interpretivist autoethnographic investigation. Denzin (2014) suggests that the subject matter of interpretive autoethnographic research is organised in terms of biographically meaningful events or moments in a subject's life (Poulos, 2009). These moments are based around ongoing social dramas and have a complex temporal rhythm (Denzin, 2014). They can affect a person's life at either the surface level (e.g., buying a newspaper; effects are unremarkable, taken for granted and unproblematic) or a deep level, which cut to the inner core of a person's life and leave indelible marks (Denzin, 2014).

These deep events are referred to as epiphanies and occupy a central place in a person's life, often consisting of a pivotal meaning structure that organises their other activities (Denzin 2014). Epiphanies, then, are storied events, narratives that rearrange chronology into different forms and layers of meaningful experience (Turner, 1986). Interpretive researchers attempt to secure self and personal experience stories that deal with surface and deep level events, moments of crisis that fundamentally alter meaning structures in a person's life. These epiphanies, how they are experienced, how they are defined, and how they are woven through the multiple strands of a person's life, constitute the focus of critical interpretive inquiry (Denzin, 2001). This is because in social life there is only interpretation. That is, everyday life revolves around persons interpreting and making judgements about their own and others' behaviours and experiences (Denzin, 1989a). For this reason, Bochner and Rigg (2014) suggest that autoethnographic stories, as performances, must follow conventions and, as such, fundamentally require the inclusion of an

epiphany or crisis that provides dramatic tension, around which the emplotted events depicted in the story revolve and towards which a resolution is pointed. This is because lives are primarily being shaped by epiphanies or turning point moments, which leave permanent marks on the lives of those experiencing them (Denzin, 2014). In essence, autoethnography aims to re-tell and re-perform the life experiences of individuals where the sting of personal history intersects contextual politics and cultural beliefs (Denzin, 2014).

Epiphanies, then, can be defined as the turning point, interactional moments that leave marks on people's lives, that have the potential to create crises or transformational experiences for that person and typically consist of instances where personal character manifests (Denzin, 1989a). The individual experiencing these epiphanies is never the same, as these moments occur within the larger historical, institutional, and cultural areas of the individual's life and are often interpreted by the individual and others (Strauss, 1959; Denzin, 1989a). Denzin (1989a) defines four types of epiphany: the major, the cumulation, the minor or illuminative, and the relived, with the observer attempting to understand the larger historical setting for meaning of the inner life and external career of the individual (Mills, 1959). These epiphanies can be positive or negative. Some are ritualised (such as passages relating to an individual's status), some are even routinised (such as the daily derogation of a subordinate), while others are totally emergent and unstructured (where the person enters them with little prior understanding of what is going to happen) (Denzin, 2014). Ultimately, the meanings given to these experiences are retrospective, as they are relived and re-experienced in the stories people tell about what happened (Denzin, 2014). Unfortunately, there are very few serious accounts of research applying the interpretive perspective to the study of such personal troubles and turning point moments in the lives of interacting individuals (Denzin, 1989a), with even less research applying this approach to the study of performance analysis professionals.

On completion of my internship, I reviewed my journal entries and supervisory meeting transcripts to establish key themes and trends. This process allowed me to identify those positive or negative instances I believed were of major importance or relevance to the current investigation. Inevitably, some instances were overlooked due to constraints on space, time and relevance to the general aims of this paper; however these formed the basis of

my 'stories'. These stories were constructed with the aid of my personal supervisors in the aforementioned supervisory meetings and through the process of critically reflective writing within my journals. Throughout the writing process, I created the conditions for rediscovering the meanings I attributed to past events (Ulmer, 1989), in this case, my interactions and experiences as part of my internship. I created new ways of performing and experiencing past events, not as a series of events, but as a series of scenes, inventions, emotions, images, and stories (Ulmer, 1989), which I could seize hold of as they flashed up in my 'moment of danger' (Benjamin, 1968, p. 257). In essence, I created the space to insert myself into the past and construct the conditions to discover new meanings and understandings regarding my experiences, which ultimately allowed me to rewrite and re-experience them (Denzin, 2014). As a result of this process I was able to invent a new version of the past, a new history: the fundamental tenant of interpretive autoethnographic writing.

After careful review of my journals and supervisory meeting transcripts, several key themes emerged as dominating my experiences during my internship. Once these had been identified, discussed, and mutually agreed with my supervisors, I once again consulted my journals with the aim of generating a timeline of events and instances where these key themes emerged. The outcome of this process was the identification of four significant periods within my internship, as well as ten significant areas of interaction that had significant implications for my interpretation and understanding of my experiences in relation to these epiphanies or turning point moments. This would be the basis of my results and would form the content of my narrative. This narrative documented a chronological representation of my time in position, whilst detailing the specific interactions, epiphanies or critical incidents contributing to my understanding and interpretation of the main interconnected and interwoven concepts and themes discussed within this thesis. Each individual story, despite presenting a distinct turning point moment within my understanding of one of these themes, also contributes to my interpretation of the inner workings of the professional sports coaching environment.

It has been argued that the value of the autoethnographic method lies in the user's ability to capture, probe, and render their understandable problematic experiences (Denzin, 2014). Denzin (2014, p. 6) suggests that 'we must learn how to connect (auto)biographies and lived experiences, the epiphanies of

lives, to the groups and social relationships that surround and shape persons. In this regard, people build autoethnographies and identities based on their experiences associated with the social or cultural names attributed to them (e.g., man, husband, student, analyst) (Denzin, 2014). The autoethnographer seeks to develop representations that 'extract meaning from experience rather than to depict experience exactly as it was lived' (Bochner, 2000, p. 270). These representations are shaped by social and personal factors including race, class, gender, and contextual politics and are neither self-evident nor straightforward, often containing drama, ritual, and storytelling (Denzin, 2014). They present 'ritually structured liminal experiences connected to moments of breach, crisis, redress, reintegration, and schism' (Denzin, 2014, p. 53). As such, their narrative texts freeze events and lived experiences into rigid sequences, which are open-ended, ambiguous, inconclusive, and always open to multiple interpretations (Denzin, 2014). These temporal representations create a second self within their text; multiple selves speak, the self of the storyteller and the self of the individual within the story (Denzin, 2014). It is in the merging of these multiple selves, the building upon one another that provides the context and occasion for the generation of a larger story being told (Denzin, 2014).

3.6 Theoretical Interpretation: 'Telling More Than A Story'

So far, this chapter has outlined those methods implemented in order to collect and present my experiences during my internship. The current section of this chapter aims to explore some of the theoretical concepts utilised within this investigation in order to understand and interpret my experiences. This notion comes from the perspective that speech cannot speak for itself (Mazzei & Jackson, 2009) because its meanings are not transparent and the construction of the written text based on speech is just that, a construction (Denzin, 2014). These constructions create the possibility for a performative pedagogy that calls for performances to intervene and interrupt public-life, unsettling and challenging previously taken-for-granted assumptions and creating space for questions and dialogue (Denzin, 2014).

As previously discussed, as autoethnographers write about lives, they ultimately bring the world of others into their texts (Tullis, 2013). Therefore, autoethnography has been deemed a radical form of writing, which

transgresses social structures of dominance and reproduces the struggle for voice of those on the wrong side of the power relationship (Clough, 1990). Autoethnographic texts must articulate a set of self-referential epiphanic experiences that allow the reader to vicariously share, and from which the reader can make sense of and understand in moral, political, and theoretical terms (Denzin, 2014). Many argue that autoethnographic narratives do more than simply present an individual's story, they offer scholarly and justified interpretations based on multiple sources of literary information (Duncan, 2004; Jones, 2009). These texts attempt to negate the argument that the methodology is unscholarly, with an over-reliance on personal writing style to evoke direct emotional responses in the reader (Duncan, 2004). Instead, autoethnographers interpret their experiences in relation to various social theories with the intention of not only increasing understanding of the social context in which they work, but also looking beyond what people say to understand the shared system of meanings we call culture (Goulding, 2005; Jones, 2009).

In the world of research, the term 'theory' can have various meanings and can be considered descriptive, explanatory, predictive or propositional (Fawcett & Downs, 1992). Theories of one kind can lead to the development of theories of another. Autoethnographic studies, such as that presented in this thesis, are more suited to creating and applying theories as opposed to testing them. While some autoethnographers let their stories 'stand alone' or 'speak for themselves', others argue for the inclusion of theoretical complement (Jones, 2006a). It is argued that the inclusion of such theory allows the ambiguous to be made more visible and apparent to the reader (Jones, 2009). Such an approach allows autoethnographers to do more than just 'tell a good story' or understand themselves and others 'in deeper ways' (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p 738).

At the time of this thesis, there are many social theories implemented in relation to understanding the behaviours and experiences of sports coaching personnel at various levels (Purdy, Potrac & Jones, 2008; Potrac & Jones, 2009a, 2009b; Potrac & Marshall, 2011; Nelson et al. 2013). These investigations have tended to concentrate on detailing the experiences of coaches, interpreting their findings in relation to the interpretivist concepts of emotional management and labour (Hochschild, 1979), micro-political literacy and action (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a, 2002b), structural symbolic interactionism (Stryker, 1980), identity (Burke & Stets, 2009), and presentation

of self (Goffman, 1959), among others and as such, they hold specific relevance to the current thesis.

In the present thesis, my experiences were principally understood in relation to four framing devices. The first theoretical backdrop used was the work of Kelchtermans (Kelchtermans & Ballett, 2002a, 2002b; Kelchtermans, 2005, 2009), addressing the development of micro-political learning in teachers throughout their careers, as a means of reducing the vulnerability they experienced as part of their job. Kelchtermans reported that vulnerability is a structural circumstance of teaching that has the potential to elicit strong positive and negative emotions within teaching practitioners (Kelchtermans, 2005, 2009). Kelchtermans and colleagues also outlined that teachers have a clear understanding of how they wish to be perceived professionally, as well as being aware of those conditions required to achieve their professional objectives and experience workplace satisfaction (Kelchtermans & Ballett, 2002a, 2002b; Kelchtermans, 2005). Finally, Kelchtermans' work highlights the types of strategic actions with which teachers will engage in an effort to cope with the structural vulnerability they experience as part of their job and to protect and advance their careers (Kelchtermans & Ballett, 2002a, 2002b; Kelchtermans, 1996, 1999).

The second theoretical backdrop used to interpret my experiences was provided by Erving Goffman (1959) and his writings on *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. In this work, Goffman (1959) provides a dramaturgical metaphor describing how people negotiate and validate identities in face-to-face encounters and how people establish frames within which to evaluate the meaning of encounters. Specifically, this work provides a detailed analysis of how, in order to fulfill societal expectations of acceptable behaviour, individuals and groups attempt to control the impressions they give to others and the types of actions they may or may not engage with to reach desired goals (Goffman, 1959). Goffman (1959) states that people cannot freely choose the version of the self that others will accept, rather they are constrained to define themselves through daily performances in congruence with socially accepted statuses, roles, and relationships (Branaman, 2000; Papacharissi, 2002). The presentation of self theory ultimately aims to conceptualise an individual's manipulation of their exterior expression or front, to offer or conceal aspects of their identity within a given context (Goffman, 1959).

The third theoretical framework used to make sense of my experiences of practicing performance analysis was provided by Arlie Russell Hochschild's (1983) *The Managed Heart*. Inspired by Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical theorising and Freud's (1911, 1915a, 1915b) ego defences, Hochschild's (1983) theory of emotional labour considers the way that people manage their emotions to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display. Specifically, this notion focuses on the relationship between the emotions that an individual feels, the emotions that the individual chooses to display to others, and the social context within which these emotions are displayed (Potrac et al., 2013b). From her observation of United States flight attendants, Hochschild (1983) illustrated how, through a process of socialisation, people learn which emotions are appropriate and expected within a given social context. In this regard, individuals frequently engage in a certain amount of acting within social encounters that require them to manufacture or mask certain emotions (Potrac & Marshall, 2011).

The fourth framing device used to interpret my experiences of balancing work, my academic studies, and my personal life, were the inter-related notions of identity theory and symbolic interactionism (Stryker, 1980; Burke & Stets, 2009; Stets & Serpe, 2013). One of the principal objectives of identity theory is to explain how the various identities possessed by individuals relate to one another (be it through cooperation or conflict), how these are managed and negotiated within interactions, and how they influence thoughts, feelings, actions, and behaviours (Burke & Stets, 2009; Stets & Serpe, 2013). Burke and Stets (2009) highlighted a number of different methods of ranking the many different identities of an individual, as well as how striving to have one identity verified by important individuals often results in a lack of verification for another identity. These authors also suggest that when this occurs, the individual is likely to experience role conflict or role strain that will promote identity change to reduce the discrepancies between identity meaning structures (Burke & Stets, 2009). Interestingly, within the symbolic interactionist strand of identity theory, there are two major programmes of research (Turner, 2013). Of primary concern to interpretation of my experiences is the structural programme, which aims to explore how social structures influence an individual and how the structure of the individual informs social behaviour (Stryker, 1980; Serpe & Stryker, 2011).

3.7 Judging The Quality Of The Study

As mentioned in the previous sections of this chapter, many have endeavoured to judge the quality of interpretivist autoethnographic research against the traditional positivist assumptions of validity, reliability and generalisability. Unfortunately, this method of judging trustworthiness falls some way short when it comes to ascertaining the quality of autoethnographic writing, with Sparkes and Smith (2009) concluding that this frame only leads to the conclusion of 'bad research'. Clough (2000) also warns that the appointment of such a rigid criteria for judging the quality of an autoethnography only conceptualises and normalises these new writings. In doing so, we forget that this form of writing was once thought to be 'bad' or improper sociological inquiry and, subsequently, the positivist political and cultural traditions it strives to counter (Denzin, 2014). Validity then – a text's claim to authority – can only be given internally by the claims and space autoethnography offers the reader (Denzin, 2014). Simply put, autoethnography cannot be judged by traditional positivist criteria, as the goal is to write a performance text that moves away from others in ethical action (Denzin, 2014). To this end, it has been argued that no single unchallenged paradigm has been established that can decide what does and does not constitute valid, useful, and insightful knowledge (Bochner, 2000).

In order to address this, a number of scholars have detailed various inter-related approaches to determining the goodness of interpretive autoethnographic writing, including subtly nuanced consideration of the literary, substantive, and aesthetic dimensions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Bochner, 2000; Christians, 2000; Ellis, 2000; Richardson, 2000). One early method of determining the worth of qualitative investigations is that presented by Lincoln and Guba (1985). In this work, the authors presented a detailed critique of positivist research approaches, putting forward their own special criterion of goodness for qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Lincoln and Guba (1985) countered the traditional trustworthiness measures of internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity by substituting the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability to ensure their own parallel notion of trustworthiness. Significantly, in offering these corresponding empirical procedures, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested that if this criterion is

achieved, adequate (if not absolute) trustworthiness of qualitative research approaches could be affirmed.

In adopting a criteriological stance, this viewpoint seeks to judge all forms of qualitative inquiry against a pre-established notion of trustworthiness (Sparkes & Smith, 2009). This creates problems for autoethnographers and, indeed, Lincoln and Guba (1985) have subsequently reconsidered their original criterion to incorporate ontological relativism, though espousing epistemological foundationism. It has been argued that these two positions are incompatible; either the existence of foundations of reality outside of oneself that can be known objectively through the appropriate use of procedures or techniques has to be confirmed, or there has to be an acceptance that in a relativistic world of multiple mind-dependent realities, there is no technical court of 'last resort' to appeal to in order to judge the quality of autoethnographic interpretations (Sparkes & Smith, 2009). Indeed, it has been suggested that methods or techniques alone will distinguish between the two (Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011). Unfortunately, such a criteriological approach only serves to close down conversations, to blunt knowledge within a discipline, and to stifle creativity, with concepts and issues not explored in new ways (Sparkes & Smith, 2009).

In an attempt to move away from this criteriological stance, Christians (2000) presented the concept of interpretive sufficiency, consisting of three interconnected criteria that shape these representations of the social world. Within this concept, conscientisation suggests that such performances should possess an amount of depth, detail, emotionality, nuance, and coherence that permits the formation of a critical consciousness (Christians, 2000). In doing so, conscientisation offers the oppressed, silenced or previously ignored a means of gaining their own voice and the opportunity to change their culture through collaboration (Denzin, 2014). Alongside conscientisation, these representations should also be free of racial, class, and gender stereotypes, exhibiting representational adequacy (Christians, 2000). Finally, if these accounts represent multiple voices, enhance moral discernment, and promote social transformation they are considered authentically adequate (Christians, 2000). These deep, emotionally nuanced, multivoiced and stereotype free ethnographic texts should empower people to discover moral truths about themselves, while generating social criticisms that lead to efforts at social transformation (Christians, 2000). This is a dialogical epistemology and

aesthetic that imagines how a truly democratic society free from prejudice and oppression might look, while expressing an ethic of empowerment (Denzin, 2014). It stresses the value of human life, truth telling and nonviolence, while enabling social criticism and engendering resistance through authentic adequacy (Christians, 2000). Ultimately, the ethic of interpretive work represents a call to social criticism and social action for new forms of human transformation and emancipation (Denzin, 2014).

Building upon this notion, Ellis (2000, 2009) offers a fully developed literary aesthetic, advocating writings that conform to the concepts of interpretive sufficiency and authentic adequacy. Ellis (2000) wants authors to construct engaging and nuanced texts that immerse the reader, leave lasting effects and challenge them to feel. These texts should privilege evocation over cognitive contemplation and tell the readers something novel about social life, social process, the experience of others, the author's experience, and the reader's own life (Ellis, 2000). Alongside the criteria of interpretive sufficiency and authentic adequacy, Ellis (2000) adds a third concept, literary value or aesthetic merit (Richardson, 2000). Ellis (2000) demands traditional literary criteria, including strong plots and characters, dramatic tension and flow. These texts should be carefully edited and demonstrate an economy of words whilst striving to fully develop vivid scenes, characters, smells, pictures, and feelings that feel like real life (Ellis, 2000). Finally, Ellis (2000) wants careful analysis and interpretation that draws upon relevant literature and questions whether the author has learned something new about themselves during the writing process.

Bochner (2000) supports Ellis (2000) in advocating texts that move the reader, devictimise stigmatised individuals, and demand a standard of ethical self-consciousness. Bochner (2000) also raises a number of issues surrounding interpretive sufficiency, questioning whether these new narratives utilise language in such a manner as to allow the reader to extract meaning from experiences, as opposed to depicting experiences exactly how they were lived. For Bochner (2000) this requires the author to demonstrate an abundance of concrete detail (e.g. feelings and emotions) and a structurally complex narrative, embedded in the curve of time that weaves past and present together in the nonlinear space of memory. In doing so, Bochner (2000) demands a level of emotional credibility, vulnerability, and honesty, as well as a complex story of

two selves: who the author was and who they are now, transformed by their crisis.

While Ellis (2000, 2009) and Bochner (2000) present arguments for the literary and aesthetic criteria of autoethnographic writing, Richardson (2000) offers five criteria for a substantive evaluation of this form of inquiry. The first criterion presented is substantive contribution, which questions whether texts present sufficient contribution to understanding social life and whether they are grounded in adequate social scientific perspectives (Richardson, 2000). The second criterion presented is referred to as aesthetic merit and links into Bochner's (2000) questions regarding interpretive sufficiency. This perspective demands texts that are artistically shaped, interesting, complex, and succeed aesthetically. Richardson's (2000) third criterion is reflexivity and relates to concepts such as how the information was gathered, any ethical issues that were present in the process, and the level of self-awareness present in the text. In drawing all of these aspects together, Richardson's (2000) fourth criterion assesses the emotional, intellectual, and scholarly impact these writings have on the reader. These representations should move the reader to generate novel questions, try new approaches, and move them to action (Richardson, 2000). Richardson's (2000) fifth and final criterion aims to establish whether these works truly express a reality. That is, 'does this text embody a fleshed out, embodied sense of lived-experience? Does it seem 'true' – a credible account of a cultural, social, individual or communal sense of the 'real'?' (Richardson, 2000, p. 10).

Together, these authors offer a set of interpretive criteria emphasising literary and aesthetic qualities of work, as well as its substantive contributions to an area of knowledge. Each scholar demands to be moved both emotionally and intellectually while simultaneously advocating texts that empower (Denzin, 2014). This can be interpreted as a new aesthetic criterion of dialogical requirement (Denzin, 2014), asking if these texts invite the reader into another person's view of the world and move them. Through writing in this way, the author should strive to provoke self-reflection in the reader (Denzin, 2014).

Ultimately, these authors strive to generate a comprehensive list of principles that aid in determining the quality of interpretive autoethnographic texts. Due to interpretive philosophical stance of this thesis, I invite readers to consider the quality of this investigation in relation to the non-foundational list

provided by Smith, Sparkes and Caddick (2014). Specifically, I would like the reader to evaluate this study in relation to the following questions. First, does this investigation make a *significant contribution* to current understanding of the social life (Smith, Sparkes & Caddick, 2014)? That is, does this research generate insight and deepen understanding about the everyday realities of practicing performance analysis within elite level rugby league? Second, is this a *worthy topic* of investigation in terms of being relevant, timely, significant, interesting or evocative? That is, is there a paucity of pertinent inquiry or a sufficient call for exploration of this topic area within related literature? Third, is this investigation rich in *rigour*? Does this study use 'sufficient, abundant, appropriate, and complex theoretical constructs, data, and time in the field, sample(s), context(s), and data collection and analysis' (Smith, Sparkes & Caddick, 2014)? Fourth, does this investigation provide *resonance*? That is, does this study not only provide a better understanding of my social world by enabling you to experience moments from my life as a neophyte performance analyst, but also permit you to make sense of your own situation? Finally, does this thesis provide *heuristic significance* in terms of inspiring you, the reader, to further question, probe and explore the social, micro-political, and emotional realities of practicing performance analysts within the elite sports coaching context?

3.8 Section Conclusion

This chapter has provided a detailed overview of the methodological approach implemented within this thesis. I have specifically considered the overarching autoethnographic framework, ontological (realist), epistemological (subjectivist) and methodological (personal epiphany inquiry) positions adopted. I have also presented arguments for the implementation of this novel methodological approach within the field of performance analysis. I believe this approach offers the potential to better connect the disjointed nature of the literature, whilst providing an avenue to explore some of the complex social realities of practicing performance analysis within elite sports coaching.

4.0 Results

4.1 Introduction

Within this chapter, I aim to present my experiences during my internship in the form of an autoethnographic narrative. This narrative will be split into four separate, yet interconnected chapters. Within each chapter, I offer a number of short storied extracts, each containing one or more stand alone critical incidents that I experienced, as well as hopefully adding to a broader understanding of my collective experiences during my internship. Prior to presentation of my stories, I offer a cast of important characters and a brief timeline of my internship.

4.1.1 Cast Of Characters And Timeline

As this chapter is an autoethnographic narrative, a variety of different tenses and prose will be implemented, including direct conversational quotes and italicised internal thoughts and feelings. Importantly, I feel that in order for the reader to fully understand my experiences, they need to be aware of those important others that will appear throughout my narrative. Below, I present a list of all pseudonyms and a brief description of job title or relation to me, in the order that they appear within my narrative.

Craig – Me, the lead author

Cory – University Lecturer, the main link between the Club and the University

Charlie – Assistant First Team Coach

Derek – Head First Team Coach

Murphy – Joint Lead Performance Analyst

Ian – Assistant Performance Analyst

Louise – My Wife

Nick & Peter – My University Supervisors (Critical Friends)

Lopini – Senior First Team Player (International)

James – Head of Youth Development

Brian & Darrel – Junior First Team Players

Chris, Eden, & Kyle – Senior First Team Players

Ricky & Jim – Strength and Conditioning Coaches

Murray – Senior First Team Player

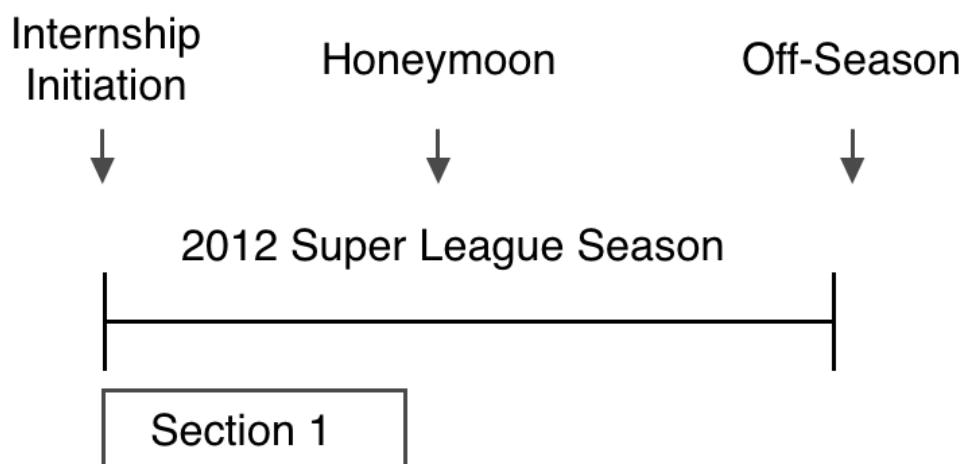
Dan – Senior First Team Player at a Different Club
William – First Team Kit Man
Cooper – Senior First Team Player
Tony – Head of the University's Sports, Health and Exercise Department
Simon – Ex-First Team Player, Assistant Coach and Academy Coach
Mike – GPS/Sports Science Intern
Clive – University Lecturer
Pierce – Assistant Physio
Bruce – Senior First Team Player (International)
Sean – Club Chairman
Adam, Dave, Jamie, & Norman – Personal Friends
Kevin – Head Physio

Following this, I also believe it important to offer the reader a brief timeline of my internship. This representation considers my internship in relation to the different Super League playing seasons. For ease of the reader, this representation has been broken down into four distinct, yet interconnected time periods, each relating to one of the subsequent sections of my narrative. This diagram can be found on the following page.



4.2 The Early Days: First Impressions

This first section relates to my early experiences (highlighted by the first portion of the timeline – see below) as I initially accepted the position and subsequently, began to learn the practicalities of the job role. Here, among other things, my principle ambition was to make a positive first impression at the Club and the University, to gain the acceptance of my work and University colleagues. These experiences will be presented in the form of my first story, *Story 1: Excited Beginnings*, which encompasses the period of time from initially accepting the position until leaving for my honeymoon: three months, running from the beginning of April 2012 to the end of June 2012.



4.2.1 Story 1: Excited Beginnings

Honeymoon Period

06/04/2012: How Wrong Could I Have Been?

I check my University emails and find I have one from Cory (a Lecturer at the University). It has no subject and simply reads:

‘Hi Craig,
Would it be possible to have a chat with you either tomorrow or Thursday if you're around? If not, maybe early next week.
Cheers,
Cory.’

With Cory being a psychologist I'm convinced the absence of a ‘subject’ for the email is either a really good thing or, more likely, a really bad thing! *‘Have I done something wrong? Why is he emailing me?’* I think to myself. I rationalise that it must be because I’ve missed a few ‘compulsory’ lectures. *‘It’s probably going to be a telling off!’* I begrudgingly arrange the meeting for the following week and convince myself everything’s going to be okay.

At the time, I had no idea just how wrong I was to be worried. My wildest dreams would still have fallen some way short of how amazing this would inevitably turn out to be. As it was, Cory outlined the preliminary design of the internship and PhD opportunity. I was to joint the Club full time upon completing my undergraduate studies and was to keep a diary of my experiences, to better understand what it is link to transition into an elite sports coaching environment. I was told they had selected me based on my strong undergraduate performance and my volunteering at the Club. I was sceptical, as I was in the process of lining up a teaching qualification; I even had a school to sponsor me through it. After numerous meetings to discuss my other options, weigh up the pros and cons, and finalise everything however, I accepted the internship and the position was confirmed. The first two weeks consisted of me just trying to ‘find my feet’ at the Club. I loved it. I just wanted to be around the place and get

to know everyone. Despite previously volunteering with the academy, this was my first taste of first team professional sport and it was sweet and intoxicating; everything I'd expected and more. During this time, I was keen to demonstrate my enthusiasm and find my place within the coaching team.

07/06/2012: Looking The Part

This morning I arrive at work to the usual office. The difference today is the parcel waiting on my desk. *'Oh wow! I know what this is'*, I think, heart skipping a beat. I'm ecstatic, a tingle of excitement runs over my whole body. I think back to my first day at the Club, seeing everyone so smart and united in the Club's corporate uniform. I remember back further still to my debut for my local rugby club. The feeling of excitement, unity, and inclusion, I was part of the team. I've eagerly waited to experience this at the Club and now I finally have my kit.

Opening the parcel, I find everything neatly folded in protective plastic wrapping. Admiring it for a second, I think *'now I'm going to look the part. Everyone's going to know I'm part of the Club for sure!'* I don't open them, *'not now, be cool, leave it till tomorrow'*. I take them straight to my car, grinning from ear to ear and step into the Assistant Coach's (Charlie) office to see if anything needs doing, being sure to take the smile down to an acceptable Friday morning level. I don't want to have to explain my delight at such a small thing to them; they might consider it 'petty' as they already have their kit.

Looking back on this after completing my internship still brings back the same intense emotions. I now have a greater appreciation of the importance of this moment on subsequent interactions and, ultimately the success of my integration into the coaching team. I understood how wearing the Club kit would change how others at the Club viewed me for the better. I also felt that by wearing the Club's uniform, I would be equal to many of the other back room staff, giving me more credibility both personally and professionally. I was interested to see how this would affect my relationship and interactions with others, as well as my position as a lead analyst within the larger coaching team.

07/06/2012: Looking The Part, Continued...

On entering the office, I say a courteous 'Hello' to everyone in the room in turn, Charlie (Assistant Coach), Derek (Head Coach), and Ian (Assistant Analyst). I get a polite response from each and ask Charlie if there is anything he needs doing. Over the past few weeks, Charlie has been the person who's found me jobs while I await my own computer. He seems keen for me to learn. Last week he asked Ian to show me how to do the individual player's statistics. *'This is great,'* I thought, *'exactly the kind of thing I'm looking for.'* It gave me the perfect opportunity to learn some of the shortcuts and keyboard commands regularly used, making notes so I didn't forget. Today is no different. Charlie asks me to put this week's game on the players' computers, something I've never done before. I've seen Ian do it badly once before and am sure I'm capable of doing it better. I like that Charlie keeps asking me to do things. I want to do as much as possible and I sometimes feel that Murphy either underestimates my abilities or simply holds some things back. *'Maybe he doesn't want me to know everything. Maybe he still wants to look like he knows best in front of the coaches.'* Anyway, at least Charlie can see that I'm willing to get stuck into things.

I was convinced that the more I did, the better I would look to the coaches, a belief that stuck with me throughout my internship. I'd always imagined the ideal analyst being someone who: knew exactly what they need to do, could do it quickly and efficiently, could solve problems, was enthusiastic about their work, and had good personal and working relationships with colleagues. This was precisely what I was aiming to achieve throughout the early stages of my internship and despite knowing some of these might take time, I was convinced I could at least show good enthusiasm from the outset. At every opportunity, I asked if anything needed doing, whether it was to Derek, Charlie, Murphy or Ian. I just wanted to do as much as possible and demonstrate my willingness to learn and showcase my newly developing skills.

12/06/2012: Thrown In At The Deep End

I arrive at the Club to find everyone but Murphy present. The coaches are eager to review last night's game. *'Perfect,' I think, 'I can sit in Charlie's office and listen: what a great opportunity to hear what the coaches are looking for.'* Ian starts the video and the coaches begin reviewing the game. Ten minutes into the first half, Ian tells them he has to leave immediately for a meeting at the University. Turning to face me he asks 'are you okay to take over?' 'Eeerr... Yeah sure.' I stammer in startled response. *'I was just expecting to watch! This is precisely the opportunity to show my development.'* I think to myself. *'It's just me, Charlie and Derek. All I want is for nothing to go wrong, to be seen to be doing a good job'* 'Yeah sure Ian, no problem, good luck' I reply. I'm left to my own devices with Derek and Charlie to play the entirety of the game, absorbing everything they say and thoroughly enjoying the experience.

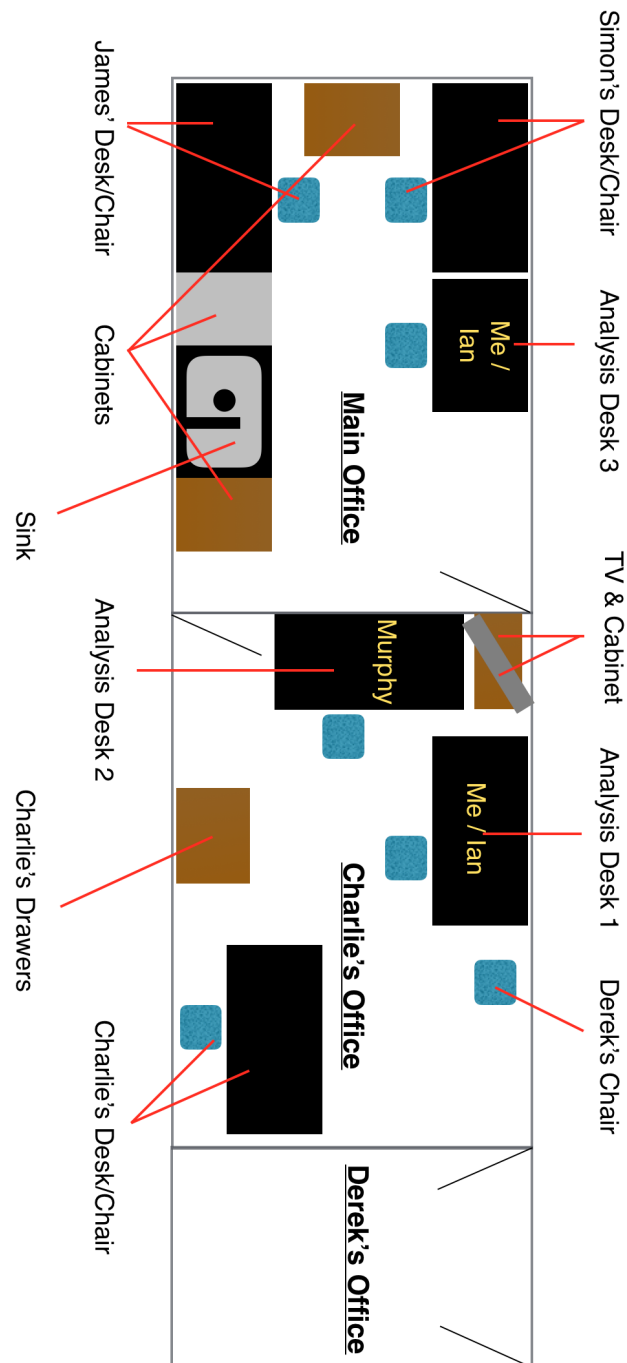
This was my first opportunity to demonstrate any form of technical proficiency to the coaches and show them I was capable of fulfilling the role of performance analyst. I placed considerable significance on the positive comments I received: Derek's 'well done Craig' and Charlie's 'nice job mate', as they served to validate my own perceptions on my professional development. I also understood this would be my best chance for a quality one-to-one interaction with the coaches for a considerable time and felt that this early interaction would have long lasting positive effects on my relationships. I was very glad for the opportunity and hoped that I would get another one soon.

19/06/2012: Out Of My Depth

On entering the office, I greet Ian and Murphy, who inform me that my Mac has arrived. *'Fantastic! Now I don't have to stand around looking over someone else's shoulder, I can familiarise myself with the basic controls at least. I've seen how long it takes to preview and review games and I'm convinced I can speed up the process. Now I can really start to make a difference to the department.'* Murphy

quickly gets me set up in the main office and leaves me to work on footage of our next opponent.

At this point I believe it is important to offer the reader a visual representation of the office layout. As such, the below diagram shows the three offices of the coaching department, as well as the desk positions and who generally sits at each desk.



19/06/2012: Out Of My Depth, Continued...

I really enjoy getting stuck into my match preview, feeling that at last I'm contributing to the team. I start looking for the kinds of things I've noticed the coaches ask for when they go through a game, so I have them ready in advance. Unfortunately, I realise I need to find out some information on the basic 'plays' that we, as well as our opposition, use, as I don't know what I'm doing.

I sit for a second weighing up my options, *'I could ask Murphy... but he seems disinclined to share information. Maybe not Murphy, who else? I could ask Ian? No, he'll just think I'm stupid and, anyway, I'm meant to rank above him. I was brought in to joint lead the department. I don't want him to think I'm too naive for the job. What about Charlie? Yeah that's not a bad idea. He's the one person in the office that's gone out of his way to help me learn since I got here. I'll ask Charlie.'* I sit with Charlie for about half an hour asking the technicalities of each of the plays I've written down. To avoid sounding naive I make sure to say something like 'we use a similar play at my club but its called...' then I insert (or make up) the name of a play'. *'I don't want to show any of the others exactly how little I know about the sport. I don't want them thinking I'm incompetent. Anyway, I think I got away with it.'* I thank Charlie for his help and apply my new knowledge to footage of next week's opposition.

I was delighted at this interaction, gaining so much information from this one conversation with Charlie, a very technical coach with an extensive knowledge of the minutiae of the game. I had convinced myself that spending more time listening to the coaches would help me learn the intricacies in no time. Reflecting on this interaction now, I could really appreciate my naivety at this time. I simply hadn't developed the knowledge and understanding of the game others had and could now see the vulnerability of my position. I knew I wouldn't have been able to blag my way through, needing to learn fast and showcase my knowledge as quickly and efficiently as possible. This was exactly what I intended to do and I was elated to find the following week that I would finally be present in the coaching box for the game. I'd been given a live coding

job and wanted to impress with my first chance to display competency under the pressure of competition.

22/06/2012: The Pressure Of Competition

Game day and I'm very much looking forward to my first experience of the coaching box and live coding. I'm extremely apprehensive at the prospect, as I don't want to mess up. *'Just keep things simple and stay quiet'* I tell myself. I decide to make things as easy as possible to avoid any major issues, planning to review the kick efficiency of both teams based on a criterion that Murphy and I developed in the week. The game kicks off and my first few instances to code are fairly easy. Once I get into the swing of things I pick up pace with the coding process, however my decision-making at times lets me down.

The decisions I struggle most with are those containing ambiguity regarding the operational definitions of certain instances, something I need to overcome in the future. *'I need to discuss the definitions of these events with the coaches prior to the next game.'* It's a really contradictory experience for me: on the one hand, I'm excited and my adrenaline is pumping – the atmosphere of the coaching box really helps to enthuse me, it's electric! On the other hand, I'm frightened of making any mistakes. I'm petrified of getting things wrong. Just the thought of it turns my blood to ice. To make things worse, every time Derek doesn't like something he shouts and swears so loud and with such malice that I think he might punch someone; it's terrifying! This only adds to the pressure I'm feeling.

It was an amazing experience – one that I was keen to replicate. I couldn't possibly have known at the time that Derek wasn't really that angry, that's just how he was during games. I suppose the pressure of the occasion mixed with the risks to his job security and the helplessness of not being on the field all culminated in these outbursts. I can really empathise with his stress, knowing now what I do about the lack of security within the world of elite sport. Over time I would come to realise this and relax, however for now, I was just happy to get through it without incident. Also, as I'd done the preparation on our next

opponent I was hoping for my first chance at organising a video session for the players. I couldn't wait. I really felt like I was finding my feet and fitting in. I hoped my going away wouldn't change anything.

Honeymoon, Period.

This excited beginning to my internship was not limited to the positive experiences I was having at work. My partner (Louise) and I were getting married upon finishing our undergraduate studies, something we'd been planning for a number of years. As such, when I agreed to the position, despite the Club and the University both being keen for me to start immediately, I stipulated the need to have some time off for the honeymoon. Louise and I decided this would be the perfect time, to draw a line under one chapter of our lives, graduating from University, and begin our transition into the 'real world' together. We'd been engaged for two years but decided that we didn't have the time or money while completing our degrees to have the honeymoon we wanted. We weren't concerned about the size of the wedding but we wanted a honeymoon to remember.

18/04/2012: How To Tell The Wife?

I arrive home after a long day at the University. I park up, turn off the engine and sit for a minute. Taking a deep breath, I wait for the end of Wonderwall, before turning off the stereo and thinking about today's meeting with my supervisors and Cory. We discussed the internship again. They want me to start right away. *'I can't do that; we've been planning this for years'*. I told them Louise and I are getting married and want to go away for three or four months and that we've been planning, saving and looking forward to doing so for two years. *'That didn't go down too well,'* I thought to myself. They said they'd have to put it to the Club and see but they didn't think that would work. They asked me how short I could make the trip. I said I'd have to speak to Louise and get back to them. Realising I've been sitting in direct view of the front room for nearly ten minutes, I'm jolted back to the present. *'Louise isn't going to like this. Oh boy, just be calm, we can work something out. This is a great opportunity.'* I lock the car and start up the steps to the house. I

begin to plan how the conversation is going to unfold, or how I want it to. *'You'll be all right, Louise will understand.'* I take a deep breath and turn the key.

As it happened, she completely understood. We compromised on a month-long trip, which I relayed back to Cory and he confirmed a week later that the Club were happy with this. We were both so excited at the prospect of me coming back to a full time job and what made it even better was that I received my first pay packet before going on our honeymoon. I didn't know it then but the honeymoon would still be incredibly fun and exciting and we would get to spend some quality time to focus on each other. All I had to do was finish planning everything for the wedding and honeymoon. That was easier said than done. We'd decided to convert a van into a camper, receiving help and parts as wedding presents from our family. Between Louise, my dad, his Wife, and myself, we were doing everything ourselves but time was short.

21/06/2012: No Quality Time Together

I'm getting worried the van won't be finished in time for the wedding. It's putting considerable pressure on my father and I, as well as my relationship with Louise. We're arguing and grating on each other. I know it's because progress on the van is slow and I haven't had a single day off since graduating. I often go to the Club, work a full day then go round to my Dad's on my way home and spend a few more hours on the van. Every day I'm not at work I spend working on the van too and Louise and I simply haven't spent the quality time together that we've become accustomed to over the past 6 years. *'Just the other day we had an argument about how we never spend any time together, that I'm never around and she feels she's planning everything herself.'* Hopefully, thanks to the international weekend, I'll be able to take a few days off so I can really make some headway on the van and even though I still won't be able to spend any time with Louise, the fact that the van might get finished will at least ease one of the stresses.

This helped immensely. I took four days off and spent them working on the van, getting it very near finished. I was also able to help Louise organise some more of the wedding planning, which really lifted our spirits, reduced stress levels and brought an end to the conflict. Everything seemed rosier now we were closer to the goal and we were both more excited than stressed. Louise and I were spending more time together planning the honeymoon and, as it got closer, it started to feel real. Also, the prospect of becoming a 'Husband', to love, provide for, and support Louise, was really exciting me.

Adjustment Period

During this time, I was also really enjoying the challenge presented by my postgraduate studies. Sure I was nervous at first, I mean who wouldn't be? Before completing my undergraduate degree, I never really thought of myself as an academic person. The only other member of my family to make it past college was my uncle, writing his PhD in Computer Sciences over 25 years ago. This only made attempting such a venture even more daunting, though the thought of my families' pride was a major factor in my decision. The one thing that played into my favour from the outset was the practical nature of the investigation: having a full time job on which my study was based and that for the first few months all I had to do was keep a diary really eased me into the process.

17/05/2012: Saying More Than Words

I arrive at the Club for my first meeting with Murphy to discuss job roles, the difficulties occurring so far this season, and how he was balancing work and his PhD. Seeing Murphy in person, it's clear he's under considerable pressure. This was confirmed during our discussion as he details the sheer number of hours the Club demands. He explained that the performance analysis team originally agreed to do a level of work that could be comfortably covered by two analysts, however the last person left, leaving just Murphy, assisted by Ian. I'm not really listening to what he is saying about the technical side of the job at this stage as I'm more concerned about what I'm picking up from his non verbal communication. He appears tired, run down, and drained. He's

clearly working harder than he ought to be and I'm concerned for him. I quickly change the subject back to job roles and how I might best aid him in his workload.

Over the coming days we met a number of times and spoke on the phone at great lengths. My original assumptions about Murphy's mental state were confirmed after these chats and I was keen to help him. We came up with a mutually beneficial schedule that would allow completion of the agreed work while enabling each of us a weekday off for PhD work. This schedule had the best interests in mind for the both of us: Murphy was to take more time away from the coaches to catch up on his studies and I was to take a stronger role in the office to increase my interaction time with the coaches. Despite this, in my haste to help both Murphy and myself, there were a few factors that I failed to consider. I may not have been so eager to help had I known then what impact these omissions would have on the success of my internship. None the less, we arranged a meeting at the University prior to my second 'critical friends' meeting to get our supervisors' opinions on the schedule.

19/07/2012: Positive Feedback

Once I finish going through the videos with the coaches I hand the file over to Ian for some final editing, as Murphy and I have an appointment with our supervisors (Nick and Peter) at the University. During the meeting, we put forward our ideas for the new schedule and receive good feedback. We explain the decision-making process leading to its design and the benefits to each party. This really boosts my confidence that we are going to make something good out of this opportunity and we end the meeting with everyone feeling positive.

Murphy leaves to return to the Club and Nick, Peter, and I begin our second 'critical friends' meeting. I'm physically shaking with a mixture of excitement and nervousness. I'm nervous that my work isn't up to the required standard. *'I hope I'm analysing things critically or deeply enough. Am I asking myself the right questions and incorporating enough emotion into my diary? I've tried to incorporate the feedback I got last month but is it enough?'* I ask

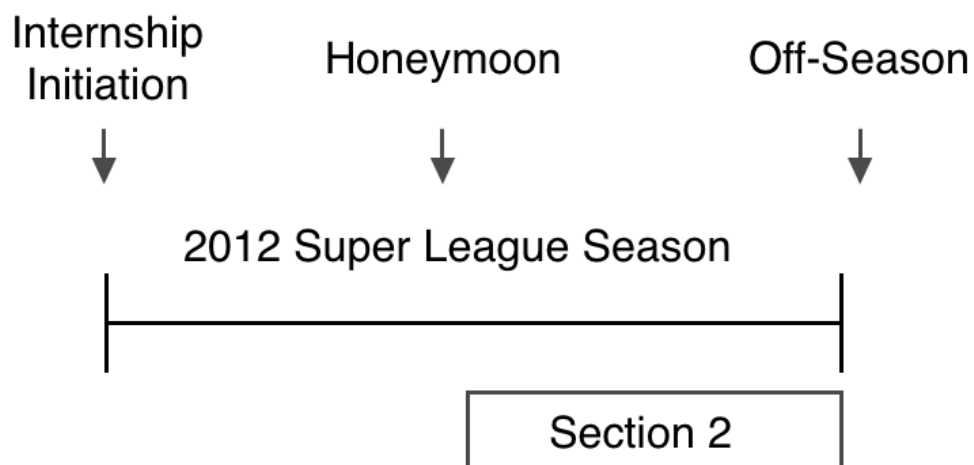
myself. *'I'm so excited though, I think I've collected some really good information over the last few weeks'*. My nerves are settled right away as Nick tells me how excited he is for the meeting, 'I'm really looking forward to reading your extracts. It usually takes hours of interviews to get the depth of information you are presenting. I don't think I've ever had this many questions to ask before!' This really settles my nerves. I present my extracts and excitedly await the debate I know will follow. Peter finishes first, smiles and points to the last page, looks up at me and asks, 'can you talk more generally about the nature of your interactions with this person at this time?' I eagerly respond and happy with my comments, look to Nick who has another question for me. 'That's really interesting, do you feel you have to look out for this person?' *'Another excellent question I'd not thought of'* I think to myself as I begin my response.

The meeting ends well, they're impressed with the information I've collected and happy with the way things are going. Nick suggests that I should just keep things 'ticking over' as I am, with regards to my journal keeping. Peter seconds this, adding that I should just get my head down and get on top of the work expected of me at the Club, enjoy my honeymoon, and arrange a meeting with them on my return.

I left the meeting feeling really good about myself. Nick and Peter kept me grounded but also flattered my ego. I received strong feedback on my early thoughts, which made me more determined to succeed. They also told me exactly what I needed to hear. I know now this was truly sound advice that really allowed me to feel at ease with my academic work and to concentrate on developing practically. My supervisors clearly knew that as I progressed as an analyst, I would also develop academically and the work would follow. That said, their comments helped me to think about my future experiences from another angle. I began to factor into my diary extracts, answers to the types of questions I thought they would ask in these meetings. I felt good coming out of the meeting. It was safe to say that I was truly embracing all aspects of my life at that time and was looking forward to married life after returning from my honeymoon.

4.3 On The Periphery: Being Outmanoeuvred

This second section relates to my experiences after returning to the Club following my honeymoon (highlighted by the second portion of the timeline – see below). During this time, I began to realise that simply being technically proficient at my job was not the only criteria by which others judged me. I also became aware that each individual within the coaching ‘team’ had their own agenda and that others utilised my absence to further their own position. These experiences are presented in the form of my second story, *Story 2: Not Part Of The Team*, which encompasses the period of time from retuning from my honeymoon to the end of that first off-season: around three months, running from the beginning of August 2012 to the end of October 2012.



4.3.1 Story 2: Not Part Of The Team

Disenfranchised

On returning from my honeymoon, I was eager to start where I'd left off. I knew I'd been away for a month but I didn't think anything would have changed dramatically. Unfortunately, I was acutely aware of a change in the office almost immediately. The ramifications of this alteration would turn out to be immeasurable. Murphy had stuck to his plan of spending less time in the office, and Ian, who had been kept on to assist him while I was away, had been taking my more central role in the office. With my return and Ian's support role supposedly coming to an end, I figured on a seamless transition into the role of Lead Performance Analyst at the Club. Unfortunately, for me, the University decided that Ian should stay on to support Murphy and myself for the remainder of the season and my apparently 'seamless' transition was somewhat unsettled from the outset.

12/08/2012: Disproportionate Attention

I arrive at the Club early and find I'm the first, yet again. With my commute taking anywhere between 45 and 90 minutes, I have to set off 90 minutes before I need to be there. As a result, I often arrive before anyone else, which wouldn't be a problem if I had a set of keys. This really annoys me, as I'm usually the first one here in the morning and it seems silly for both Ian and Derek to have sets when they come together after Ian broke his wrist last week. I'm not sure whether this has something to do with me supposedly getting Ian's set when he leaves at the end of the season, or whether it's something else altogether.

They get out of the car laughing. *'What's so funny?'* I think, but I don't get to know. I greet them both and get a courteous response. Nothing elaborate, no asking how I've been, just a hello. I can see their relationship developing on a daily basis, with Derek now driving Ian in every day. I'm green with envy. *'What do I have to do to make him like me? Why does he like Ian so much, he's not even going to be here next season, I am.'* I don't begrudge Ian, not at all, I'd just like an equal share in Derek's attention. We walk into the office and

set up. Derek goes into his office to make a call, leaving Ian and me to start this week's videos.

We work on this for the rest of the day with the only interruptions being when Derek calls through for something. *'Why does he never call for me? He always calls 'Ian?' and I don't like it. I bet it's just force of habit from when I was away last month. He's just used to shouting 'Ian' and getting a response. Never mind, I'm here now so he'll soon learn I'm just as willing to help.'*

My spirits were lifted shortly after this, as Murphy informed me he was due a fortnight's holiday starting next week. I was so excited at the prospect of taking charge. I knew this was my chance to show everyone that I could handle the pressure of being in charge and maybe take back some of the emphasis from Ian. I wanted everyone to know that just because Murphy wasn't there, didn't mean that everything would go wrong. No, they were going to see that I was competent and confident.

19/08/2012: My Big Moment

I arrive at the Club relishing the opportunity that today presents. It's the first game while Murphy is absent and, as Ian's shown no interest in learning the match-day set up, the first real occasion for me to show the coaches my technical knowledge. I give myself plenty of time to set everything up and start working through things methodically. I start at the very beginning of the process by checking the gantry and the feed from the cameras. *'All good up here, next is the capture box and laptops'*, I think as I descend the rusty old ladder from the gantry. *'Oh yeah, Ian took the only capture box home last night so I can't actually check if I'm getting a feed. Not to worry, everything else seems to be working fine,'* I motivate myself with, *'just need to wait for Ian and we're all sorted, easy! I'll text him to make sure he's going to be here in time.'* My stomach twinges with unease at the thought of not having everything ready when the game starts.

I didn't really have time to dwell on the knot in my stomach as I had a more important and potentially more lucrative job drawing my attention. In the previous week, Derek had asked me to produce a motivational video show to the players before the game. This video consisted of what Derek and Charlie considered our biggest tackles and best tries over the season to date. Derek had originally asked Ian to compile the clips and put them to music, however he didn't know how to do this, so I told him I'd handle it. There was added pressure on me to get it right too, as the coaches hadn't had time to approve the video before we showed it to the players. They just had to trust me to deliver on my promise. This was yet another perfect opportunity for me to show off my skills.

19/08/2012: My Big Moment, Continued...

As I walk, I think about their possible reaction to the video. '*Will they like it? Does it have enough impact? Will it motivate?*' I plug my laptop into the television and connect the speakers for a trial run. Charlie walks in just as I start and is eager to see the finished article. 'Let's have a look then Craig' he says smiling with anticipation. I show him the video and before it's even finished I know he's impressed. He's nodding to the music and bracing for every crunching tackle, synced perfectly to the beat. 'Very nice;' he says smirking confidently 'if that doesn't pump them up, what will?' With this the players and Derek enter. Derek delivers his quick pre-game speech and finishes with 'and so Craig has put a little something together to get you into the mood; away you go Craig.'

The video's a smash, everyone loves it. The coaches trusted me and I well and truly delivered. I feel fantastic, a swelling of pride in my chest. Grinning from ear to ear, I put my equipment away; I've completely forgotten the troubles that still await me in the coaching box. As I head there, lost in my own world, I'm stopped by one of the senior oversees players, Lopini who walks over to me before his warm up to say how much he liked the video. This is the icing on the cake! 'Would you be able to make a video like that for me and Murray [one of the other first team players]?' he asks. 'Yeah sure Lopini, no problem. We can sit and go through your clips in the

morning if you like?' I reply, beaming with inner pride. We agree to chat in the morning and I head off.

This was a real highlight. I knew it at the time, however reflecting on this interaction on completion of my internship has really given me a greater appreciation for it. I could see how this interaction helped shape and develop my relationship with the players and coaches. I was by no means the top dog in the department, but I could see a new appreciation for my skills and knowledge developing. An understanding started to mature that if Ian couldn't sort a problem, I was the person to ask. I didn't have long to dwell on this, as I still had to finish setting up the coaching box. Ian arrived with the capture box, just half an hour before kick off. We turned everything on and had no signal. I hurriedly ran up to the gantry to check the camera signal again, all working fine. I ran back into the coaching box and started to retrace my steps. I made sure that everything was connected properly and, after a minute or two, I realised the error of my ways; or so I thought.

19/08/2012: My Big Moment, Continued...

One component of the match-day set up isn't turned on. *'You idiot Craig, the first time you're left in charge and you mess up!'*. I have signal to the television that the coaches like to use but I'm not getting signal to the laptops for live coding and replays. *'Shit, this is the most important thing for Derek'* I think, heart now pounding in my chest. I try everything I can right until kick off but nothing seems to work. Infuriatingly, Ian's no help at all. He just panics and stresses, hopping and flapping around in the tiny coaching box saying how much Derek and Charlie are going to hate not having replays, rather than actually trying to sort the issue. *'I really don't want to have to tell Derek we have no video replays; he won't be happy. We have to fix this!'*

Two minutes before kick off the coaches come in and I still haven't fixed it. *'Why the hell didn't Ian come and hour early like I did? This didn't have to happen and now everything is ruined! Derek's just going to think I'm incompetent and can't do anything without Murphy. I'm so angry with Ian! I've done everything I can to make*

sure it all works. All he had to do was bring the capture box and he can't even do that right.' I swallow my pride. Palms sweating, I tell Derek the problem and brace myself for the response. As I finish, I see the disappointment and frustration in his face. It hurts me deep in my chest. *'I'm a failure.'* 'What do you mean we don't have replays?' Derek vents. 'Well that's just brilliant... What's the point of us even being here?' These words cut into me, they leave a gaping wound from which I feel I'll never recover. I'm certain this is the end of my credibility. *'I've failed. I can't even recover some of the damage by doing the most important live coding and interacting with the coaches. Ian's broken wrist means he isn't fast enough to do the harder, but less important, individual stats.'*

At half time I have another look at the problem with the feed and manage to isolate it to the capture box that Ian brought, though he insists it was working yesterday. I noticed a number of extremely small switches on the back of it before the game, *'you've tried them in the "on" and "off" positions already, no joy!'* I dejectedly try a number of different combinations. *'Finally!'* I manage to get it to work just in time for Ian to set up his second half coding and the video replays. 'I've fixed the problem with the video feed: it was the capture box that Ian brought' I very proudly inform Derek and Charlie when they arrived back for the second half. It's evident the damage is already done though. I get no thanks, only an 'oh good' for all my troubles and somehow I feel Ian came out of the situation without a scratch. *'How's he managed that? It was all his fault!'* We lose the game and I'm convinced Derek at least partially blames me for it. I leave the ground ruing the missed opportunity for success, agonising over my failures and hating Ian a little more.

Despite my best efforts at resolving this issue, as well as my faultless motivational video, I had done nothing to change my fortunes while Murphy was away. I was devastated but I did not feel guilty for blaming Ian at the time, as it was his fault. Looking back on this interaction now, however, I feel I could have handled the situation more gracefully and not drop him in it. As it was, I do not feel that Ian took this personally and truly blamed himself. I also feel that he was

so comfortable in his relationships with the coaches that they would not think bad of him in any case. In fact, I saw Ian's relationship with Derek and Charlie grow over the next few weeks and because I hadn't managed to capitalise on Murphy's absence, I felt my relationship with them suffer as a result. That said, I was optimistic that given the right circumstances, I could change their opinions of me. I was convinced that if they would just lower their guard for a minute they would see that I was hard working, punctual, and quite knowledgeable. I didn't know exactly how to go about it at the time, however I was aware I desperately needed to increase the amount of time I spent interacting with them.

Unfortunately, little changed over the last few months of the season and I started to notice things. Silly little things that suggested Derek and Charlie had a lot more contact with Ian outside of work than they were letting on – half conversations with hidden meanings and references that I didn't understand because I wasn't privy to the original conversation. It wasn't nice, feeling like the only person excluded, like everyone else was in some sort of exclusive club I couldn't join. I wanted nothing more than to be in the club, to be the one they were laughing and joking with: the favourite. I still thought that I could change their opinions of me, influence them for the better, but it never happened. I didn't want to take this home either. Why should I worry Louise about it? Anyway, we were having so much fun together that I didn't want to cast a dark shadow over it. I was writing everything down in my journal and conceded to keep it to myself until a point where I felt more comfortable sharing it, once everything had turned itself around.

23/08/2012: A Glimmer Of Hope?

I arrive at the Club and find that Derek and I are the only ones in today to preview our next opponent. '*Perfect*' I think. We sit for the whole morning and I get a real breakthrough: Derek and I connect in a way that we've not done before. Up until now, when going through videos, Derek either talks to Charlie or to himself. Today I get the impression he's talking directly to me; at one point he actually turns to me for a response. 'Do you know what I mean [about the quality of their attack]?' he asks. Without thinking I reply 'their poor performance is a result of them playing from left to right rather than right to left. They seem to play better with Matt at first receiver and

Dan out the back.’ I don’t expect a response as I had kind of just strung some words together in the hope that they would go unnoticed and not attract criticism, however Derek clearly ponders them momentarily. The next clips showing this move demonstrates my point perfectly and Derek is quick to support my statement. ‘You’re right mate, they do look better that way’ Derek mutters thoughtfully.

From this point on, I feel an overwhelming confidence to stop the video, point at the screen and talk through my thoughts on the plays, with Derek nodding and agreeing with the majority of my comments. ‘*You’ve done it, he actually likes your analysis.*’ I continue to put forward my beliefs for the remainder of the match and help Derek to collectively form a plan of attack to be used against them. This was the breakthrough I was looking for. Ian and Murphy didn’t even get to make suggestions for the game plan, they just agreed with Derek. He actually took my comments and advice and used them to form his strategy.

This interaction, along with the positive experiences I encountered after the motivational video gave me a slight glimmer of hope, that there was still a chance for good relationships at the Club. I didn’t think for a minute that I had made enough of an impact to consider myself ‘part of the team’, however I did feel I was ever so slightly further on than I had been. Unfortunately, this feeling was short lived. Over the next few weeks I had fewer and fewer interactions with the coaches and we slipped into a poor run of form, all but guaranteeing our place outside the play-offs. To tell the truth, I wasn’t too disappointed. I’d become disenfranchised from the Club, present and yet distant at the same time. Sure I was there, I was doing my job but I wasn’t really there. My heart wasn’t truly in it and I wasn’t part of the team. I didn’t enjoy that period and I didn’t share in the emotions of the occasions. I was happy for the team to lose because I just wanted the season to be over so that I could spend more time with Louise. I hated leaving her to go to work, where I wasn’t enjoying myself, counting the hours till I could leave and have fun again. I found myself fabricating excuses during these last few months. I used false University

commitments as excuses to get off early and spend more time either at home with my Wife, or at the University with friends.

I just wanted to start afresh next year with a new group of players and a new performance analysis department, just Murphy and me. Some of the players that I had really bonded with over the season were leaving and it really highlighted the fickle nature of the sport and brought a lot of things into question. That which stood out most for me was what exactly was going to happen next season? The conversations with Murphy about the University's involvement were becoming more frequent and the Club was showing greater signs of resistance to University interns. I perceived there to be a change in status of Murphy and myself, as we always seemed to be either forgotten or more often than not, an afterthought. The trip to London was a prime example, as well as the fact that Murphy and myself were the only staff members not to have been issued a full set of kit or our own keys to the office.

05/09/2012: Uncertain Future

I arrive home today after a short day at the Club. The main thought running through my head is what Derek said just before we left. He brought a message from the Club's boss saying that there's only room enough on the London trip for one of the performance analysis team. I really want to go along, having never been on an overnight trip with the team. I can only assume that, at this late stage in the season, the Club is looking to cut its losses and save as much money as possible. With the team already out of the play-offs, this game is irrelevant and a prime opportunity to save money.

As I sit in the car outside my house I get a text from Murphy telling me he has just had a meeting with Cory. He was unsure of the Club's monetary position for next season, as well as the amount of support that the University would provide. He also mentioned the possibility of us being pulled out of the Club if finance was an issue, meaning that we'd complete our studies in and around the University. I don't really know how to take this information. I'm completely caught off guard by it but one thing it does do is increase my feelings of disenfranchisement and even justify the self imposed distance or insularity I've been keeping as the season concludes.

'That is all right for him, he's pretty much collected all of his data but what'll happen to me? I've only just started! Does this mean I don't have a PhD and a job come the start of the season? This is a really big worry for me. I'm totally conflicted. Sure, there have been some problems but I really like certain aspects of the job and want to keep doing it. I was addicted to the adrenaline of match-days and loved getting to know the players, my idols in a way, but some of the realities I've experienced over the last few months have really made this difficult. I also don't feel financially secure at all! I have nothing to fall back on if this goes wrong. I really have all my eggs in one basket, so to speak.'

This insecurity and blatant shunning by the Club really left me questioning whether I even wanted to be part of the 'team'. It seemed depressing to think that this initial integration period, which encompassed so much potential for really developing my professional identity at the Club, had so much turmoil. I really found it hard to connect and form a positive relationship with the Club as a whole, what with the implications of my month's honeymoon, the setbacks I experienced when Murphy was away, the Club's poor run of form, the negative atmosphere at the end of the season, the fractious links between the Club and the University, my lack of full kit or a key, and my favourite players leaving. It was a devastating blow to my desires to make a good impression. It also couldn't have been further removed from the feelings I was experiencing towards my University commitments and home life. I couldn't wait to leave the Club every time I was there. I just wanted to go home and enjoy my time with Louise.

I was also starting to think about some of the politics that my supervisors had been talking about in my critical friends meetings. Could I now see small snippets of them emerging in day-to-day life at the Club or was I just looking into it too much? I wasn't sure. I'd experienced unparalleled positives in the last few weeks, however the overall trend still lead to a wholly disenfranchised feeling that I simply couldn't overlook; a stark contrast to the joy and excitement I was experiencing in my home and University lives. The start of the internship had promised so much potential and excitement, yet I found myself leaving at the end of the season with insecurities, doubts, and nagging questions I didn't

have answers too. Would stepping up my level of interaction next season work? Who knows? What I did know was that I just wanted to leave the Club as soon as possible and start afresh after the off-season: a clean slate. I'd said my farewells to the backroom staff and bid them a good off-season, praying that I could somehow change things next season.

4.4 Fighting For Acceptance: Power Struggles And Insecurity

This third section relates to my experiences during the first part of my second season (highlighted by the third portion of the timeline – see below). During this time, I became acutely aware of the conflicting agendas of those within the wider coaching team as a whole, as well as the performance analysis department more specifically. Among other things, I identified what I needed to secure to be seen to be doing a good job, the actions others might take to further their own ambitions, and some of the tactics I implemented to safeguard my performance analyst identity. Interestingly, it was primarily during this time that I developed an understanding of the complex interrelationship between the different aspects of my life and how these could at times act cooperatively and at other times act conflictingly. These experiences will be presented in the form of a number of stories: *Story 3: Tenerife*, *Story 4: Wrestle*, *Story 5: Mixed Feelings*, *Story 6: International Ambitions*, and *Story 7: Slump*, which encompass the first half of my second season. This period of time was around six months, running from the beginning of November 2012 to the end of April 2013.



4.4.1 Story 3: Tenerife

Injured

19/11/12: Juggling With One Hand

I'm sat in hospital waiting for Louise to come and pick me up. I've just had a follow up appointment to recast the elbow I dislocated on Saturday. As I sit in the waiting room, a wave of dejection washes over me. This is my second major injury in as many years and it couldn't have come at a worse time. My whole arm from hand to shoulder is in cast and I have to do everything with one hand, my left. I'm incredibly slow and clumsy at everything including typing and I'm worried about getting the first draft of my literature review finished in time, never mind being able to do my job at the Club. *'I was so excited after last Friday's University meeting,'* I think to myself. *'I have an outline for my literature review and really wanted to get it done this side of Christmas, before the new season starts. Oh well, that's not going to happen now!'* I slump in my seat, feeling depressed.

Completing this section of work promptly would have greatly reduced the time I would have to spend on it during the season, substantially reducing my stress levels. Unfortunately, this injury meant I wasn't able to do so and would now have to try and write this section while significantly hampered by my physical impairment and the strong painkilling medication I was taking. My positive outlook was being tested to the limit. How was I going to complete the work while trying to juggle the demands of Club and home commitments when I had to rely on the help of others for even menial tasks? More importantly, how was I going to cope without my freedom?

21/11/12: Feeling Hopeless

Today is my first day at the Club after injuring my arm and it's crap right from the off. As I can't drive, Louise and I set off two hours before her 9:15am lecture so she can drop me at work first. Unfortunately, she isn't confident driving and I can see that she's stressed and upset about it. *'I don't blame her'* I think to myself, *'I*

feel so guilty for making her do something that's clearly upsetting for her, and completely useless for not being able to help out. I feel hopeless, a failure.'

I got there eventually and she managed to get back to University, only five minutes late. It was hard work trying to coach her through it, constantly praising and reassuring her, but she managed it. I knew the next few weeks were going to be tough for the both of us. Louise was going to find running me around very difficult, because I usually did the majority of the driving. Now, however, she would have to do it every day for the next month and would find it both physically and mentally draining. I would have to spend considerable energy to try and encourage her through it but was quickly running out of resolve myself. I was pulling my hair out at not being able to do things for myself around the house and things were even worse when I got to work. I still didn't have a key to the office, as Ian had been retained for the coming season and kept his keys. This meant that I would arrive at the Club for around 8.30am and either have to ask to be let into the office or if no one was there, wait outside till someone arrived. The combination of the two was enough to drive me mad. I was at rock bottom. I was angry, irritated, and frustrated. I was bored and uncomfortable sitting around the house all day and started snapping at people for no reason.

01/12/12: Irrational Anger

I'm sitting alone on the sofa, my arm is in cast and my tablets are wearing off. 'CAN I HAVE SOME PAIN KILLERS PLEASE?' I yell in the general direction of the kitchen. No answer. 'LOUISE?' 'WHAT?' comes the short response. I ask again. 'Just a minute, I'm busy' she calls. 'I NEED THEM NOW!' I yell, frowning at the television. 'I SAID JUST A MINUTE!' I get them myself and settle back in my seat. A minute later Louise comes in with tablets and I say I got them myself. 'Thanks for letting me know' she snaps as she storms out. I'm left to ponder, '*did I need them right away? Why was I so rude to her?*'

I can see now that this interaction typified my behaviour and feelings at this difficult time. I was depressed but couldn't see it. I felt useless. The stress

of not being able to alter my fortunes at work, mixed with my inability to complete my literature review, was starting to get to me.

Preseason

The issue of not having a key to the office was really starting to get to me. I was disappointed more than anything that I wasn't considered important enough to get my own keys. More than that, I was deeply saddened there wasn't a single person in the office that thought about how much this issue actually affected me. No one ever said, 'I can see you're having trouble with your injury so, to make it easier, you can have my keys until you're better'. Being someone who always strives to help others when they are struggling, I was hurt and offended that no one tried to do the same for me in my 'hour of need'. It compounded my bad mood and caused me to question whether I could call any of these people 'friends', or whether they were just colleagues feigning friendship. These same colleagues were also the cause of another major concern weighing on my mind – an issue concerning job roles.

27/11/12: Feeling Like A Spare Part

I walk into the office and, to my surprise, I find Murphy standing in front of me. *'Is he meant to be in today?'* I think to myself, *'I'm sure today's his day off, my day in. This is the second consecutive time he's done this now; I hope it's not going to become a regular thing'*. I can feel my frustration building at his flagrant disregard for the timetable we collaboratively designed. I'm unsure if this is an intentional endeavour on his part, however, I'm keen to discontinue it.

The only real interaction with anyone else all day is when Derek comes to ask for one small job to be done, as Ian's doing something with Charlie. *'This really needs to change for the start of the season proper. I mean, Ian's going to have an awful lot of work to do and Murphy and myself will just be sitting in the next office feeling like spare parts.'*

I had my reservations as to whether this routine would change any time soon, as the coaches had become reliant on Ian. He had become their first

point of call for everything. At the same time, I felt Murphy was still in some way reluctant to take the step back that his PhD required. Did he see a change in his position within the department coming as a result? Had he been in that position before? With being totally reliant on Louise for lifts, I was at the mercy of her timetable and couldn't spend any extra time at the Club to try and influence the coach's opinions of me. While I was concentrating on this issue, I was side swiped out of the blue by possibly one of the most significant developments during my internship. Its scope would encompass the duration of my time at the Club. Despite not knowing it at the time, this would turn out to be one of the biggest setbacks in my internship; one that I would never recover from, despite my best efforts.

27/11/12: Feeling Like A Spare Part, Continued...

After challenging Murphy's presence on his 'day off' we both step into Charlie's office to look over this week's schedule and plan the remainder of the week, so as to remove any confusion. On entering, we see a list of ordered names on the board. *'Is that the planning for the Tenerife preseason training camp?'* I think to myself. 'Have you seen this?' I ask Murphy, pointing to the list. He seems as confused as I. The list contains the number of players travelling, as well as the accompanying staff members split into rooms. Despite Murphy arranging with Derek a few weeks ago that I was going on the trip, my name was missing from the list. In its place was the word 'IAN' and reading it made my blood boil. I was furious, a surge of intense heat rushing through my body. *'How could they do this to me? How could they just ignore the plan? Why does Ian get to go? He went to London last season!'* I'm left feeling like a spare part, the lowest of the low, the overlooked or forgotten member of the team.

It transpired that the coaches' reliance on Ian and him being their first point of call meant they'd just forgotten about the arrangements with Murphy. They'd just assumed Ian would go and booked his ticket without consulting us. I was devastated. I was looking forward to the trip, to using it to cheer myself up and change my negative outlook. Also, when I first arrived at the Club, Murphy had made it very clear that I would be going to Tenerife as he went on the

preseason training camp last year and Ian had, more recently, gone to London. I was looking forward to spending a week on my own with the team, to really cement my relationships with the coaches and get to know the players better on a personal level. I was convinced that one positive interaction like that would be all that was needed to change this run of bad fortunes. Though I still didn't begrudge Ian, I couldn't help thinking that he wasn't even meant to still be at the Club. The University wanted to keep him on to take the workload off Murphy and myself but he was more of an obstruction now than a help.

There was nothing I could have done about it, the tickets had been bought and the damage was done, but I was still smarting. I decided to make this known to Murphy and he was equally disappointed. We spoke to Derek and arranged a meeting to talk through the weekly analysis schedule and the departmental job roles for the coming season, to try to rectify the situation. I sought to alter the equilibrium of the department in my favour, to raise my position from nethermost, but desired to do so in a manner circumventing any possible detrimental implications for my colleagues. Murphy may have had a different idea though.

28/11/12: Do I Need To Watch My Back?

I arrive about ten minutes late, because Louise still isn't enjoying taxiing me around, to find the office open but empty. I immediately realise everyone must be setting up for this morning's video session and hurry into the stands. This morning, Murphy's letting Ian take the entire session as he feels Ian needs practice setting up if he's going to do it on his own in Tenerife. As I arrive, the last of the players are taking their seats and the coaches are ready to go but there's a problem with the projector, no vision. Ian and Murphy try to sort things out for around 15 minutes without success. I can see by Derek's expression he's not at all happy. *'I've seen that look before'* I think to myself, remembering the coaching box incident.

This is the first video presentation in the new room with the new equipment but today is what Derek and Charlie consider the most important presentation of the whole season; when they talk the players through the video playbook, describing each of our plays in defence and attack. *'What was Murphy thinking using the new*

podium? Today of all days.' Derek snapped at Ian to go and set up in another room, his disgust apparent. Murphy and I decide to stay and solve the problem while the video session continues upstairs. Over the next half an hour we try every different combination of cable and component, ascertaining that the computer, projector and podium all work individually, however the cable from the podium to the projector is faulty. On discovering this, I ask Murphy if he'd considered presenting without the podium, in the usual manner adopted all season, using just the laptop. To my surprise, he informs me he knew the computer alone worked with the projector, but wanted to make the podium work too. *'Now I'm paranoid... did he do this on purpose?'*

This admission astonished me. It was my understanding that he deliberately set Ian up to fail. I truly hadn't seen it coming and I suddenly felt nervous and vulnerable. Would he do this to me somewhere down the line? I felt I had to really watch my back. Maybe he didn't want to take that much of a step back after all. In retrospect, the signs this was coming were all there. Once it was confirmed that Ian was going to Tenerife, Murphy kept hinting that Ian knew nothing and that he would have to learn quickly. He was clearly trying to make the coaches see Ian's incompetence both now and while away in Tenerife. In considering my own place within the department, I had completely overlooked the intentions of others within it. Did we all want the same thing out of this internship?

28/11/12: Do I Need To Watch My Back? Continued...

Once back at the office we get together to discuss job roles for the coming season. Murphy and Derek take the focus of the meeting, with Ian and myself hardly able to get a word in. I want fair rotation of the weekly roles so that I can showcase my skills and interact with the coaches more than I am currently allowed. Murphy is clearly not on the same wavelength and Derek doesn't see my point. In short, the coaches are going to rely on Ian like they have started to do and Murphy is going to be doing the main stats during the game. This means I'm left yet again with the rubbish jobs and very little

interaction with the coaches. *'I feel shafted at missing out on doing the 'important' jobs yet again'* I think to myself. I can feel my palms clamming up as their grip on the chair arm tightens. I inhale deeply and relax their grasp. *'I can't let on that I'm disappointed though, I'll just look stupid if I do.'*

I knew I needed something big to change my fortunes for the better but I just couldn't see where it was going to come from. I was struggling with home life, with the long rehabilitation process of my elbow and now with my work too. The whole thing was just getting on top of me. I wondered if I'd make it to the end of the internship or if I'd give up before then. Is this what it is to work in professional sport? If so, was this what I wanted my life to be like for the next year and beyond? I seriously considered quitting. I thought back to my joy at starting my PhD and the internship, about getting married and going on honeymoon and having the time of my life. I thought back further still to before University, to travelling with Louise. I thought about all the fun we had and how I couldn't take any time off for the next six months to do anything like that again. The fun times felt like a distant memory to me and only added to the deepening depression I now recognised in myself. It was a battle to get out of bed each and every morning, trying to convince myself that the 'something big' I needed to change my fortunes was just around the corner. For the meantime, at least, this got me through but I just kept experiencing setback after further setback.

03/12/12: Where's My New Kit?

I arrive at the office and see Ian sitting at his desk. This in itself is nothing new, however the first thing I noticed was that he was wearing the new training kit. *'Oh, well where's my new kit?'* I think to myself *'Actually, more and more people have been showing up in it this week, the players on Monday, the coaches, conditioners and James (head of youth development) yesterday, and now Ian.'* Before I leave, Ian turns to ask me something and I notice that his new kit even has his initials on it. *'Wow, William (the kit man) must really like Ian. I hope when I get mine it comes with my initials on it. I doubt that Will even knows them though. Saying that, Ian's clearly had his, tried it on, given it back for initials and got it back and I've not even*

seen mine.' I speak to Murphy about it at lunch and he's not seen his either, *'I'm going to speak to Will when I see him.'*

I asked the question and the response I got was that the people going to Tenerife were the ones who had their kit. At the time, I was still hopeful that I would receive that same kit as everyone else after Tenerife, however that never happened. Instead, Murphy and I were given one t-shirt, one jacket and one hoody, all in extra large and at least a month after everyone else. I was fuming that nothing fitted and it was clearly the 'leftovers'. As it happened, the only new kit I had for the whole season was the hoody. It was embarrassing, I was ashamed. I felt I had to hide last year's t-shirt under it no matter how hot I was, just to avoid the certain ridicule that would inevitably result. I did get the odd comment every now and then like, 'it's grey t-shirts pre game mate' when I wore my old red one. This hurt me. I felt like I obviously wasn't important enough to get the same kit as others, but why hadn't they given it to me? I worked just as hard as anyone else, why wasn't I considered part of the team? I vowed to make a concerted effort to change my fortunes and asked Louise to drop me off a bit earlier the next week.

11/12/12: New Office Layout

I arrive at the office early and, after being let in, I find that the layout has yet again changed. Murphy had been in yesterday and put floor-to-ceiling dividers up in an attempt to create somewhere the players can watch their own clips. This just means that there is even less space for Murphy and I to work in and that we are completely obscured from the coach's office.

I couldn't help but feel that this was yet another example of Murphy trying to distance himself from the coaches. I'd noticed over the last few months that he was trying to do this, in defiance maybe, to change what was happening to him and me. He confided in me that he'd had enough, he knew his time at the Club was coming to an end and he was happy to remove himself. I saw this as another attempt to do this, however the reality was that I perceived it as simply another barrier, both physical and metaphorical between the coaches and myself. I felt I needed to distance myself from him, from the negative stigma I

felt that his actions were generating. With everything I'd witnessed over the last few months, I'd come to the conclusion the coaches judged me based on his actions, like we were the same because we were from the 'University'. This view didn't change over the course of my internship. Despite my best intentions, no matter what I did to improve the situation, another obstacle always seemed to materialise and knock me one step further back.

To this point, I'd been happy to let Murphy take the lead role in the department and the discussions with the University regarding its link with the Club. My view had now changed, now that it was directly relating to my job security and having a significant impact on my working relationships at the Club. I felt I needed to take action.

12/12/12: Seizing The Initiative Backfired

I'm the first to arrive at the office and decide to change my fortunes. *'Charlie won't be in today; we're meant to be going through my work on the next opponent so I'll set up in the main office today. Ian can sit in the other office.'* I plug my Mac into the television and start to go over my edits before Derek gets in. He soon enters and immediately asks 'where's Ian?'. I reply he will be in later and we start to go through my edits. Derek's pleased with my work but leaves after an hour to make a phone call and see what Ian's doing. I'm confident I'm finally making progress until I hear laughing coming from the other office. I walk through to find Derek sat with his feet up on the desk chatting to Ian.

With this, my plan of setting up in the office and taking a more central role had backfired. Derek spent the majority of the day in his office and whenever he wanted something he would either shout through to Ian or simply walk right past me to ask him in person. As Charlie wasn't in, I was left sitting on my own all day listening to the laughing coming from the main office. I felt isolated. I was in the 'hot seat', where I had longed to be, but the grass wasn't greener. I had tried my best to change my fortunes for the better, to stop the negatives in my life at that moment and counter the depression I was feeling about my injury, but it wasn't enough. What could I do about it? Would things have been different if I hadn't injured myself? Looking back, I doubt that they would have.

Back Burner

With everything that had gone on: the pain and distress of my dislocated elbow, my inability to alter the retrograde steps in my relationships at the Club, and the depression I was experiencing as a consequence of these factors, I found it extremely hard to focus on and produce the quality of work that my supervisors required of me. In short, I didn't have the mental or physical energy to complete my academic requirements. I was meant to be completing the first draft of my literature review, however I couldn't even keep up to date with my daily journal writing. I started to fall further and further behind with each passing week. I felt like a failure. I confided in Louise for support, which I received in abundance, but I didn't want anyone else to know how much I was struggling. I endeavoured to keep the scope of it from my supervisors; I didn't want them to think badly of me. I know now they would have supported me no end. However, at the time I felt like a disappointment. I felt like I was letting them down, like I wasn't good enough to be doing the work they required. I vowed to present the persona of a competent and strong individual, the image I hopefully had created over the course of my undergraduate studies with them. Just getting out of bed in the morning was hard enough. I was struggling to sleep with the pain and discomfort and the painkillers I was taking were severely impeding my short-term memory. I struggled to know what day it was, what I was supposed to do at any given time and more worryingly, what people had just told me.

14/12/12: Putting On A Brave Face

I get up early, 'I need to print out my preparation notes before this morning's meeting. I hope they like it. I stayed up till 11pm last night trying to hash something together that might hopefully pass for the work I was meant to do this month. I really hope they don't see right through it.' I hurriedly print it off, grab some breakfast and drive up to the University. I arrive, nerves jangling with trepidation. I can feel my heart pounding. *'Why did I think I could get away with this. It's going to be totally obvious, I can't just blag my way out of this.'* I enter the meeting room greeted by the customary friendly welcoming, but this time it did nothing to calm my nerves.

Despite my lack of work in the build up, I actually didn't disgrace myself. My supervisors were happy enough with the work I presented and I thought I spoke around the work well. I wasn't proud of my strategy, but on this occasion it paid off. It came at a price though. I'd worked myself into the ground in just two days. My energy resources were depleted. I couldn't keep this up much longer. It's safe to say this was the most difficult period I'd ever experienced in my life and one that wouldn't be rivalled any time soon.

4.4.2 Story 4: Wrestle

Wrestling For Standing

As a result of this period of negativity, I came to realise that in an effort to change people's perceptions of me, I had to give them a reason to change them. I'd seen the relationships with Ian grow through constant interaction and professional competency and I was confident that I could achieve this too. I also identified the senior players as an important group of people to impress and have good working and personal relationships with. I understood that even with the backing of the coaches and other significant stakeholders at the Club, if you didn't have the 'buy in' or respect of the players, then you didn't have a chance of influencing them or getting your opinion across. I felt that, to this point, I'd been able to maintain a good level of relationships with a number of the players that were here last year, but that I hadn't had enough time to develop any real kind of relationship with the new players.

So far, my interactions with the players, especially the new signings, had been restricted due to my limited time at the Club during closed- and pre-season. I felt that, as a result of having no previous playing or coaching experience, the only way for me to further my working relationships with the players was through providing interesting, inspiring and mishap free video sessions and informed statistical analyses. Alongside this, I felt that the time I spent interacting with the players on the coach or at meal times on away trips was very important for developing personal relationships with them outside the confines of our working roles. I placed considerable significance on developing strong personal *and* professional relationships with the players, as I considered this important in gaining their trust. Fortunately, I did not have long to wait for a significant breakthrough, which came during a video session, that I'd inserted myself into, during pre season.

08/01/2013: In the Spotlight

I arrive this morning to find Murphy heading over to the University first thing and Ian in Charlie's office going through this week's video with the coaches. *'Excellent,'* I think to myself, *'I'll be the only person in the office when the players come in to go through their individual clips. This is the perfect opportunity to help the new players get to*

grips with the software. I can sit and teach them one-to-one and get to know them a bit better.' After laying out my desk, I walk over to the video room with a real purpose. There are two scheduled video sessions today, one for the youngsters who played on Saturday and one straight after for the first teamers. *'I want to be in both'* I think to myself. Since the off-season, this is the first video session that's been held on a day I'm in. Despite not delivering it myself, I think *'It'll help the new players get used to me being there. It'll also remind last year's who I am!'*

The first session starts and Derek opens by stressing the importance of self-evaluation, underlining his expectation that the players need to view their own clips before the coaches' individual reviews with them. *'If you guys want to develop your own skills and really push for a place in the first team then you need to go through your clips every week. Go and see Craig [referring to me, actually using my name and pointing to where I'm sitting] in the office and he'll help you go through them before me and Charlie sit with you.'*

I'm shocked but delighted, a surge of excitement mixed with pride races through my body. I force a smile *'not too big, you want to look calm, approachable, and helpful – not over eager or embarrassed'*, as the room turns as one to look over to the dark corner where I'm sat. I feel like I'm spotlighted, though the lights are all out. *'They think I will get them into the first team. I have power, responsibility, and a title. I'm finally an important member of the coaching staff. Oh shit, this is amazing. I have a role.'* This is exactly what I've been waiting for. It's the perfect opportunity to further my relationships with the players.

I began to see the benefits of this introduction just minutes after the video session. Two players who had never really spoken to me before came into my office and asked for me by name. They said they'd come to find out how to use the new computer system responsible for them going through their individual clips. I wanted to portray myself in this instance as an approachable, friendly but ultimately competent analyst and person, who they felt comfortable in the presence of. In doing so, I aimed to positively affect my working relationships

with all the players, old and new, however I'd completely overlooked the potential harm that might come from this newfound responsibility. The first hint I got that everything was not going quite as I'd planned came the following week. The player's station computers were set up in the same manner as last week's, however the difference was that I hadn't put everything together myself.

15/01/2013: Just Don't Look Bad!

After the review, I race back to the office with a real spring in my step. I find two of the regular first team players, Brian and Darrel, sat at the computers. *'Great,'* I think, *'now's my chance.'* I know this interaction, if successfully negotiated without incident, could be the perfect chance to bond with these players. When I walk in, Brian leans back on his chair and shouts 'Oh Craig! Some of these clips are wrong!' Smiling at the use of my name, the affirmation of my identity, I calmly stroll over to see what the problem is. *'Don't look too smug you idiot, just play it cool. You've got this.'* I glance at the timeline and see that the clips aren't synced up. *'No problem, this is easy. Watch this boys. I'll just nudge the instances and fix it in a second,'* or so I thought.

As I lean in to do this Darrel pipes up 'hey Craig, some of mine are missing.' 'Which ones?' I retort, still calm and collected, thinking *'I'll fix that computer too.'* 'All my second half carries and tackles' comes his response. The penny drops. *'Ohhh dear... that's not right.'* I'm immediately torn between conflicting thoughts. *'I know what's happened! Oh god, how am I going to tell them? I have to get this sorted out and fast, or it's going to go badly. Whatever happens, don't look bad in front of the players!'* I told myself.

I was in a state of panic, searching the depths of my brain for a way out, a spontaneous reaction to the imminent threat that was now facing me. They were both looking at me for an answer, but I couldn't think of one. The seconds took an eternity to pass as I struggled to find a solution. I boldly said the first thing that came into my head, 'I deleted the second half last night. I'll have to redo it today. I'm really sorry, you'll have to come and do your clips tomorrow I'm afraid'. I take a breath. Inside I'm quietly pleased that

I've avoided taking the fall, but feel guilty that I've blamed Ian. '*To be fair, it was his fault, he had deleted it!*' I finish the conversation by apologising to the players and reiterating that I would have the game recoded ready for tomorrow. They're both happy enough with this and leave after giving Ian some banter.

I wasn't going to let this incident impact badly on me, it was nothing to do with me. In my guilt, I convinced myself that my actions would only have a fleeting detrimental effect on Ian but I was sure he would recover the lost ground. I'd convinced myself by reasoning that had I taken the fall, I would have permanently lost ground, because of my lower position within the department to start with. At the time, I felt that this was the only option for me in this situation – an instinctual reaction to a potentially damaging, imminent, and unavoidable threat rather than a premeditated and malicious attack. I consoled myself by arguing that I'd done my bit properly and didn't want this to affect me. Despite this, I was left with very mixed feelings. On the one hand, I was pleased that I had chosen to act for once. This is not a usual response for me. I'm not the kind of person who deliberately disparages or undermines others for my own benefit. On the other hand, I was mortified that I had put my own interests in front of my colleague's. In the heat of the moment, I hadn't considered his feelings. Would he see this as a direct attack and seek revenge? Would that be even worse than taking the hit in this instance? Only time would tell. I felt I would have to watch my back, make sure *my* work was done properly, and from this point on, double and triple check the players' station computers before the player arrived. Reflecting back on this now, from the end of my internship, I can see that this clearly had no lasting effect on Ian. In fact, I'm not sure it even really registered as an issue with him. His relationships with these players did not suffer as a result, there was no malice in the players' 'banter' towards him and all was forgotten soon enough. Similarly, I did not perceive him to hold any grudge, seek any revenge, or our relationship deteriorate as a result of this interaction. Maybe I should have just taken the hit.

Wrestling With Emotions

The following day, whilst working at my computer, I experienced another setback. This time, there was only myself to blame. I had nowhere to hide. I knew the chance of avoiding negative judgements was slim and that I had to act politically to minimise the damage.

16/01/2013: Trying Not To Lose Face

Charlie is sat at the players' station talking to one of the players (Kyle) about his clips. Two other senior players (Chris and Eden) are standing behind us watching and commenting. At this point everything is going well and I'm interacting quite freely with everyone. Charlie then starts to talk about how well Kyle is performing at the moment. '*Charlie hasn't yet seen this week's wrestle stats,*' I think to myself as I open them up on my computer. '*This could be the perfect opportunity to assist in player feedback. I know Kyle has a good win percentage too, so they will like that.*' I turn to Kyle and tell him he's well above Derek's 70% target in attack. Kyle and Charlie are impressed; I get contented nods. 'What did Kyle get in defence?' Charlie enquires. 'Only about 33%' I reply. We both know this is significantly under Derek's 50% target. 'Are you sure?' Charlie blurts, face turning harder, no nods here. 'That seems a bit harsh. How many wins and losses did you have him down for?' Despite being challenged for the information I'm still calm. I have the raw data in front of me and I'm confident that presentation of this will sufficiently convince them both that my initial statement was correct. I reply '6 wins, 12 losses.' 'Are you sure?' Charlie repeats, 'that can't be right! Let me see [turning to look through Kyle's clips]. Who's done the stats?' I'm still not flustered by the comments, I explain how Ian and myself had done them, one half each, based on criterion the conditioners (Ricky and Jim) had given us. I can tell by the faces looking back at me that neither Kyle nor Charlie is happy...

As the interaction began to unfold, I quickly realised that I needed to maintain my calm and professional exterior to avoid negative evaluations. With every 'loss' clip shown, Charlie made excuses for Kyle, who's expression made

it clear he agreed with each point. My feeling of being at-ease was quickly replaced by unease, however. I became acutely aware that Charlie's criticism of my statistics was undermining my good efforts to increase the players' respect for me over the past weeks and months. I feared this questioning of my technical skills and knowledge was directly challenging my knowledge of the game and competence as an analyst. I'd seen how senior players had reacted negatively to younger members of the team after direct criticism from the coaches and I didn't want that to happen to me. I started thinking the worst.

16/01/2013: Trying Not To Lose Face, Continued...

'These players aren't going to respect me if this persists. They're going to think I don't know what I'm on about, that these stats are rubbish and that all the rest of my stats are probably rubbish!' I suddenly become increasingly anxious; a lump appears in my throat. I don't show this anxiety. I'm convinced the players will see it as weakness, as not being able to stand up for myself. Rugby league is a very tough sport, the players are tough, the coaches are tough, and only the toughest survive.

I also don't want the players to see my statistics criticised by one of the coaches. They'll see this as someone with superior knowledge, power, and respect questioning *my* work. *'If they think Charlie doesn't see my work as credible, they'll not see it as credible either. I don't want to get into an argument with Charlie in front of them either. That would only end badly for me'* I thought. *'Charlie would never back down. He won't want to lose standing in front of the players, not to a lowly analyst anyway. It's a contest for credibility, one that I can't afford to lose. One angrily directed comment like 'well what do you know' or 'well I don't agree' would be catastrophic! Keep it together. Don't let them see your anger'* I threatened myself. *'Show them you're calm, collected, and in complete control.'*

Underneath I'm a mess. My heart is racing. I can hear it pounding in my ears as Charlie continues his barrage. With every comment I feel a twinge of what I now understand to be my calm feelings morphing into anger. It's like the players are pulling a thread of respect from my side and every remark is like a tiny knot that is tugged from my

side. As Charlie brings up each clip in turn, I'm frantically trying to find some justification for my decision based on the actions unfolding on the screen. With each justification comes a counter argument from Charlie. I can't win.

By this point we were about half way through Kyle's clips and I was in bad shape. I was sweating profusely. My side felt like the knotted thread was being constantly pulled and the pain was excruciating. My throat felt twice the size. My simmering anger must have started to show. I was suddenly aware of the silence that surrounded our interaction, its rapidly growing void waiting for me to fill it. I needed to end this before it went too far.

16/01/2013: Trying Not To Lose Face, Continued...

I've had enough! I've flipped. *'I'm not going to let this happen'* I think. *'I'm not going to let these comments continue to hurt me. I've got to stand my ground.'* I fight back the swelling in my throat and swallow it. *'I'm in control now and everyone's going to see I'm confident, competent, and capable,'* I try to convince myself. Deep down I'm shaking with rage but they don't need to know that. I stand up for the accuracy of my statistics. 'You're taking the statistics completely out of context' I say calmly but confidently. I continue 'Ricky and Jim want an accurate measure of the players' 'wrestle' ability each week in order to identify players who are under achieving and give them extra sessions. Ian and I spoke to them the other week and they gave us their criteria for a won or lost wrestle. They asked us to review every tackle looking only at wrestle.' I pause and take a breath.

After saying this first piece, I feel like I've suppressed the anger and bought myself a moment's breathing space. Charlie again challenges this with a very valid point and one that I'd made myself to Ricky and Jim. I quickly regurgitated the answer I was given at the time. At this point my anxiety mixed with anger is waning. I'm confident the players appreciate the defence of my statistics in a calm (or what I hope appears calm to them), confident, and informed manner. *'Ah!' I think, I've come up with the trump card!*

Without leaving time for a riposte, I back my point up with what I consider to be the most well-informed and analytical argument, one that simply has no comeback. Once I say this, I immediately start to feel much better. Charlie says nothing but his face betrays his disagreement. I know the players present feel hard done by and will side with Charlie. I can feel everything flaring up inside me again and I decide I can take no more. *'I don't want to sit and be criticised when all I've done is what I was asked, working from Ricky and Jim's criteria.'* I get up from the desk and walk back into Charlie's office to assess the damage.

As I left the office and the conversation between Charlie and Kyle went back to normal, I couldn't help but feel relieved. I was relieved that my gamble of standing up for myself had paid off. I was convinced that Charlie's open criticism of my work would lead to the players present also adopting this same criticism of my future work. I'd seen the senior players giggling and whispering after the coaches had criticised some of the younger players before. I was adamant that this was not going to happen to me despite the enormous potential consequences of my actions. In hindsight, I may consider these consequences more thoroughly next time, however the best course of action may be to limit the possibility of this happening in the first place. That said, I was relieved that I'd escaped the situation when I had and in the way I had. I felt like it could have gone on much longer and it would have only become worse for me.

I was also deeply frustrated it had happened in the first place and despairing about the possible consequences of this for my future relationships with these players. Despite Murphy's insistence that I bring this issue up with Derek, I didn't feel doing so would remedy the situation for me. I felt that the only real way for this to be rectified was for the coaches to publicly (i.e. in front of the players that were there at the time) apologise and praise my good work. Unfortunately, I didn't see this happening any time soon. As a result, for the next few days I didn't hang around at the Club any longer than I needed to. I made sure I did the jobs that were expected of me and I left soon after. I couldn't get the harrowing thoughts of this catastrophic incident out of my head. Just being around the Club brought them all flooding back: the initial excitement

of my newfound identity, the guilt of deflecting initial negative attention onto Ian, the simmering anger when criticised, and the despair of inaction. I couldn't live with the shame. This came as a massive disappointment and huge contradiction to how I wanted to act. The new role had initially sparked a feeling of inclusion and I'd felt that I'd finally started to build quality relationships with the coaches and players. I'd really been feeling part of the team for the first time. The thing that stung the most was the loss of this identity so soon after being given the role and responsibility for the player's station computers.

When I got home, I was quiet and reserved, not my usual self. I chose not to share this with my Wife, I didn't want to have to relive this traumatic experience all over again. I didn't like keeping secrets from her but I just didn't feel comfortable sharing it at the time. Maybe I would feel more comfortable a little further down the line. I didn't even want to think about it enough to write it in my diary, I just wanted to forget it had ever happened. Anyway, I had seen the darker side of professional sport, its fickle and ruthless nature. I'd seen the politics in action first hand and even became part of the environment's corporate politics when I acted as I did. I had experienced the sour taste of vulnerability and wanted to make sure that this *never* happened again.

4.4.3 Story 5: Mixed Feelings

On The Up

The negatives I'd been experiencing over the past weeks and months had dissipated. My outlook had changed somewhat: I no longer worried as much about looking and feeling different due to not having the same kit as everyone else, nor did I question the amount of time I was afforded to interact with the coaches and players. I had put in the hours, positioned myself intelligently and now I was starting to reap the rewards. Interactions were happening more freely as a result of me making the leap I'd hoped for all this time, I was interacting freely with others and really got the impression other considered me a valuable member of the team. It wasn't an instantaneous transition, though I believe its initiation can be traced back to a couple of turning point moments in my internship, which happened over a couple of weeks.

As outlined in the previous story, Derek's identification of me as someone who could help the players break into the first team was the initial step to gaining respect and standing with the players. I couldn't stress just how exciting this was for me, with everything that had happened since the start of my internship. This allowed me the time and space to interact with the players and 'get them on side'. I had also spent a considerable amount of time with the coaches, giving up days off to change their perceptions of me for the better, and had finally starting to feel part of the team. I had also started to notice little things, like the 'hellos' I received in the morning coming with my name attached, and the frequency of people entering the office to look specifically for me increased; it really made a difference when people knew and started using my name. I found I started to learn about some of the coaches and players on a personal level and was confident they had learnt things about me. This feeling of inclusion only increased over the two weeks that followed, despite a minor hitch along the way.

21/01/2013: Changing Fortunes

Today I arrive at the Club excited at the prospect of presenting my first video session of the new season. I've been rather impatiently awaiting this moment since returning to the Club after the off-season. *'Today is where I put myself on the line in front of the*

coaches and players, both new and old, and let them know who I am. I'm going to show them what I can do. Today is going to be the slickest, most professional video session they've ever seen. I've put the work in this week, given up my day off and now I'm going to reap the rewards.' I set up the video room with the usual Mac, projector, and screen but this time we're going to use the new smart board and we're going to get it right. *'Last time it was a shambles, not this time though.'* I finish setting up 30 minutes before we're due to start the session so that I can sit with Derek and practice how its all going to work; neither of us want this to go wrong.

We finish our practice run just as the players start to arrive, 'well done Craig, that looks the business' Derek says to me quietly as he takes his place at the front of the room. *'Yes, we've nailed it;'* I think to myself, *'before the session's even started, we've got it right'*. Sure enough, it goes exactly as we practiced it, slick and professional. Derek's so pleased with it all working that he can't help but express his delight as each segment in turn works as it should. 'Yes Craig, looking professional!' he exclaims for the room to hear, as we transition from one screen to another. I feel the pride swelling inside me. These comments, coming from the Head Coach's mouth, in front of the all the first players, are perfect for me building the profile of a competent analyst. I'm in my element. We finish the session and start to pack the room away as the players exit. Derek comes over to me, 'Thanks Craig' he exclaims loud enough for the players to hear, 'great session. Let's hope next week's will be as good. I think that smart board made it look really professional, it's just a good job we practiced it beforehand. Well done mate.' This is exactly what I want. I'm made up...

This video session was the catalyst for me finally feeling included at the Club. It came off the back of the first video session two weeks before but was so much more effective. I was in charge of the next video session that week too and it followed in much the same vein as this one, furthering my feelings of inclusion. To this point, Ian had taken the majority of the sessions this season with some minor mishaps, and those players who had been here last season

had almost forgotten who I was, not to mention the new players who had no idea. Now though, I'd come into the spot light, opened myself up through my 'performances', and come out the other side better off for it. I felt I'd finally showcased myself: the creative, accurate, technical, and professional me. I'd been the one to present the most professional and mishap free video session to date, which had to stand me in good stead going forward. I was proved right a couple of days later with in an interaction with one of the players.

25/01/2013: Finding Common Interests

I'm sitting at my desk bored out of my mind. All of the preparation and video work for this week's opposition is done. Derek and Ian are working on next week's opposition preview in Charlie's office, leaving me to get on with University work in the main office. I've taken a break and decided to watch the highlights of Samoa versus Tonga in the Rugby Union Pacific Nations Cup from the weekend. Sitting with my headphones in, I'm unaware that one of the senior first team players, Lopini, comes in and takes a seat next to me. He places his hand on my shoulder, 'Hey Craig, what you watching bro?' he asks with a smile. I take my earphones out and explain what it is. 'No way, awesome' comes the reply and, smiling wider, he moves his chair in to watch. He informs me he's a massive rugby union fan and some of his old friends back in Tonga are playing in this very game. We sit and watch the highlights, chatting freely about the action on screen. I ask about his home country and express my interest in visiting it at some point in the future.

We're really getting on and conversation is flowing freely when he remembers why he came in in the first place. 'Craig man, you know you did that motivational video last season?' he asks. 'Yeah sure' I reply, thinking back to the positive comments he gave me after it with a feeling of pride. 'Can you help me and Murray this season, like you did last year? We want to put some highlights of our own together. Can you get all of our best clips together each week for us and help put something together? 'Yeah sure, no problems. I'll get all your clips together each week and you can come in and go through them to pick out your best ones. I'll get all your preseason

clips ready tonight after work and we can go through them tomorrow if you like?’ I reply. Lopini shakes my hand, sincerely thanks me, arranges to come back in tomorrow and heads out of the office. I’m slightly stunned and once again, left to ponder what’s just happened...

This interaction was exactly what I’d wanted, it was the reason I’d entered professional sport: to help players become all they could be, but also to be seen as someone they could trust to help them in all aspects of my role. I desired to feel wanted. This, along with the positivity of the last two week’s video sessions helped me to forget all about the ‘Wrestle’ incident of last week. For some reason it just didn’t seem as important after my more recent triumphs. Had I read too much into it at the time? No, I don’t think I had but having time to reflect on it somewhat altered my interpretation of the incident. In the heat of the moment I perceived it to be malicious assault, despite understanding it may have been unintentional in nature. Now I simply saw it as Charlie not being aware of how his actions, words and criticism of my work could impact significantly on the players’ perception of my credibility.

After my more positive experiences and with a week to think it over, I began to question my original assessment of the situation. Did it really have that much of an impact? I hadn’t seen any evidence of this over the past week in my interactions with either the coaches or the players. In fact, when Charlie saw my wrestle stats this week he actively praised my work in front of a number of players. Had Derek had a word with him? No, I was convinced neither of them had thought that much into it. Furthermore, following the last two video sessions, I felt more of them knew and actively used my name, asked me direct questions, and enquired how I was. This lead me to question exactly what the players who were present there that day actually perceived to have happened? Was it all just in my head? Did I worry about nothing? On the face of it, two adults were having a very short conversation about the specifics of a statistical analysis of an individual player’s performance before one of them left the room. Both appeared calm and in control in their conversation with the exchange lasting no longer than about a minute, however long it felt to me.

With this new outlook on the incident, combined with my more recent positive experiences, I felt a previously unfelt positivity and connection with my

work at the Club. Maybe it wasn't always as bad as I first thought? How many other incidents had I over analysed? I wasn't prepared to waste any more thought on this matter, I was going to look more positively upon incidents from now on. I was confident that the Club was on the up, matching my fortunes and that the two things combined would finally result in me truly feeling like a valued and important member of the team and of the Club.

Conflicting Emotions

Despite feeling these new positives in my working life, things weren't so positive at home. As a family, we had received some really bad news. Although it didn't directly affect me, more my Wife, she relied heavily on my strength, support, and comfort through this particularly difficult time. I was her rock, her support, her crutch, as she used all of her own energy to support her mother through a divorce. She took over the role of head of the house to look after her sister and give her mother time to grieve, at the expense of her own mourning. She presented a front for the rest of the family, of strength and defiance, however I was privy to the real Louise, once the 'curtains had fallen'. I was the one she confided in. I was there to try to pick up the pieces, to rebuild the front after it crumbled each and every day but also to try and help her in her own heartbreak. Just rebuilding the strong front for the rest of the family would not help her in the long run. I had to try and help her come to terms with the loss.

03/01/2013: A Shoulder To Cry On

Louise and I are in the kitchen making tea for the family; she's a terrible cook but doesn't want her mum to have to do it. I put the meal in the oven as her mum enters, tears streaming down her face 'Louise!' she sobs, leaving again. We exchange glances and I tell her 'I've got tea covered, go and make sure she's ok'. I wait in the kitchen, keeping out of the way, till Louise returns. I can tell by the tears now adorning her cheek that it's not good news. I take a deep breath and slip seamlessly into 'shoulder to cry on' mode.

Everything had come to a head. She'd been fighting back her own emotions in front of the family but could do so no longer. I knew she couldn't keep this up for long, she needed respite, not more stress. This latest episode

had taken things to a new level. Her mum had received a phone call informing her that her financial situation resulting from the separation was not good and there was a potential we might have to consider moving. It raised a number of concerns about *our* future situation: if we had to move, would we find a house with her mother and sister again? Would we move out? If so, do we stay in our hometown or move closer to our studies and my work? At the time we had none of the answers to these or any other questions, something that made it even harder on the both of us. This was a very difficult time for us; I felt I was the strength, the glue holding the whole family together by supporting Louise. It wasn't easy, I was working hard at the Club to try and overcome the negatives of the off- and preseason, while striving to catch up on the University work I had neglected during this time. This wasn't the only pitfall I encountered though.

08/01/2013: In The Spotlight, Continued...

I start home after an amazing day at work. I'm buzzing with excitement after the developments of the day and can't wait to tell Louise all about it when I get home. *'This is the best thing that's happened to me since I started at the Club; Louise is going to be so happy for me. Finally, after all that's happened so far, I have something good to come home and talk about.'* The journey home is a quick one, with me contemplating the positive repercussions of today's events the whole way home. I arrive home and enter the house with a spring in my step but something's different. The house is quieter than normal, a strange air permeates the space. I quietly shut the door behind me, slide the satchel from my shoulder, placing it carefully on the chair behind the door, and step further into the house to see where everyone is.

I find Louise upstairs furiously organising something on the floor, a sign I've come to associate with extreme emotions of either anger or sorrow. It's in this instance I realise the negative effects that sharing my experiences would have on her right now: she doesn't need it. *'I can't tell her now. She clearly needs my help, my support, my comfort. She's had bad news and now's not the time to gloat to her about my positive experiences. I need to lock them away and help her get through this. I need to forget my feelings because she needs*

me more.' I take a deep breath, enter 'solace mode', quash the burning desire to share my inner joy at today's events, and enter the room to console my Wife.

The news was bad. Louise regaled the story to me and I did my best to comfort her. It was the latest development in the separation of her parents and it hit her hard. Her mother had received news from her solicitor that the house would have to be sold immediately. Understandably, Louise was distraught. This was her family home, the house she'd grown up in and now she would have to leave it behind. Besides the sentimental attachment to the house, as this was the place where Louise and I had held our wedding reception and had all our memories together, we knew there and then that things would never be the same. There would be no more having friends over for BBQ's, movies, and sleepovers or cheese, port, and poker nights that we had become famed for. More than that, we knew deep down that we would probably have to leave our hometown, our friends, our family and move closer to my work and our University commitments. We just couldn't afford to strike out on our own in our hometown and commute to work.

Personally, I really struggled with this: the conflict between the positive experiences and emotions in my working life and the extremely negative emotions I was now feeling at home. With not being able to speak about how well my work was going, after all the times I had come home and spoken about the negatives, I felt trapped in my own skin. I just wanted to blurt out my joy but knew I had to keep it in, to protect Louise. I didn't want to rub her face in my joy when she was so miserable, so I kept it hidden. I knew I would have to be mindful of this in the future, however I didn't know it would be so soon in reoccurring.

21/01/2013: Changing Fortunes, Continued...

I leave work tingling with excitement at my new fortunes. I get into my car and start home. I pull out of the car park and I'm immediately struck by an overwhelming realisation, an intense felling of dread. It hits me like a wall. *'How can I go home and tell Louise about this? She's at rock bottom with everything she's going through and so how can I come home and gloat about how well my day's been.'*

What am I going to do? I can't tell her, that's for sure, but what do I say if she asks? She's going to ask, she always asks! I'm going to have to lie, tell her nothing happened and just play it down.' I'm so wrapped up in my thoughts that I'm completely unaware of where I am. I take a minute to gather myself and realise I'm five minutes from home. *'How the hell did I get here? I've driven 45 miles and can't remember a single one of them! Look, just be calm. You got through this last time.'*

Before I know it, I'm pulling up outside my house, deeply breathing in the cold winter evening air to calm my nerves and slow my racing heart. I enter the house, say my usual greetings with a counterfeit smile festooned upon my face, and head to my room to change. Louise follows me up to see how my day's been. *'This is it. Deep breaths, you can get through it. I know it's lying but its for the best.'* 'How was your day?' she asks. 'Ahh you know, usual, nothing major.' I reply, hoping my face doesn't betray me. 'What did you do?' she presses. I know she's only asking out of genuine interest but I really don't want her to, not today. 'Just did some video, sat around a bit, bit boring really, anyway how did you get on with your essay?' I reply, tactfully changing the subject.

It works, she starts talking about her day and completely forgets all about mine. A wave of relief washes over me. I can feel my heart rate slow and my stress levels drop. I've successfully managed to negotiate the situation and avoid any unwanted harm but it's come at a cost. I'm physically and emotionally drained. I hate lying to Louise almost as much as I hate seeing her suffer but for now this is all I can do to help her through this difficult time.

After the jolting realisation last week that I couldn't bring my excitement home and share it with my Wife, I was better prepared on arriving home this time. I was able to actively formulate my thoughts and make a conscious effort to organise and prepare my responses to the types of questions Louise would ask. I didn't mean to deceive her in any way, more just tone down the excitement at the positive experiences I was having at work. This meant that I was able to go into the house, expecting her to be upset, rather than having to

act reactively, as I did last time. I performed my role of caring Husband and kept my thoughts to myself, unaware of the potential harm this may pose in future, in relation to my enjoyment of my future experiences.

25/01/2013: Finding Common Interests, Continued...

Lopini just left the room and I'm sitting alone in the main office contemplating the gravity of what's just happened. I'm dazed: one of the most senior first team players has just come into the office looking for me. He sought me out in person to help him with something he feels is highly important to him. This fills me with pride but at the same time dread. I don't get to fully revel in the joy of the situation as before he even leaves I feel a twinge of realisation. The moment is somewhat spoilt. I'm brought crashing back to the real world – my home life. I know I can't really enjoy this experience by sharing it with the people I love, my family, because of the struggle they are going through. I want to see her face reflecting my joy, as it always does when we share in my fortune. *'I wish things were better at home. Louise would love to hear about this but she just doesn't need it at the moment, she needs support. I don't like lying to her though, I wish I didn't have to.'* I shut my thoughts off; I don't want to ruin the situation. I want to enjoy it for now.

The difficulty I was having sharing these positive work experiences at home was now affecting how I experienced them as they happened. Even before this incredibly significant interaction had ended, I was already thinking of the real world consequences. As a result, I felt like I wasn't able to fully appreciate and engage with the situation at hand. I was worried about the potential outcome of telling Louise about it, which resulted in me spending more time thinking about how I was going to keep this to myself. It was like being the only one who knew an important and exciting secret and not being able to tell anyone about it. How could I keep something as important to me as this was from the person I share everything with? I wanted more than anything to go home and tell her, to have her share in my joy and excitement, as I knew she would. I yearned to be able to look into her eyes, filled with pride, and enjoy the experiences as couple, as I had grown used to doing over our seven years

together. In that time, we'd shared the ups and the downs, every last joy and despair together and grown stronger because of it. This was the first time I had experienced such an emotionally charged interaction and not shared it with her. As a result, I felt like I wasn't really experiencing it, like it wasn't complete because she didn't know about it.

I knew deep down it was for the best but it was the hardest thing I'd ever had to do and I hated myself for it. I questioned how long I'd have to keep the façade that everything was just normal. How long would it be until I could tell her that things were finally going well for me. The stress and emotional conflict made it hard to relax at home. I was constantly maintaining a front and consider how those around me might perceive my words or actions. I hoped there was light at the end of the tunnel, that something would come along and make things better for the whole family, so that collectively, we could share in my positive developments at work.

4.4.4 Story 6: *International Ambitions*

A Big Scalp

Things at work went from strength to strength. I was loved spending time at the Club, interacting with the players and staff. The positive experiences of the last few months had continued. We were well placed in the league and were experiencing a good run of form. The atmosphere at the Club was excellent, as we built up to possibly the most important game of the season so far: hosting the team in second place. The Club was confident; I'd even go so far as to say that we all expected to win.

16/03/2013: The Winning Song

I arrive at the Club around 1pm and head straight up to the coaching box. This is made so much easier this week because I finally received my official access-all-areas RFL pass, meaning I'm not stopped by security at every door. Murphy and I set everything up yesterday so there is little prep work to do. Instead we spend the time until kick off discussing our chances and the impact Cooper, our new halfback signing, will make on debut. The time seems to fly past and before we know it, kick off arrives. The coaches enter; we lock the doors and await the referees whistle.

The game is a thriller. Cooper is incredible, setting up two tries and scoring a third. Our opposition are exceptional, but for once we decide we can defend and hold them up on several occasions. We win the game, collecting a big scalp in the process. The coaches jump to their feet and frantically shake hands with Ian, Murphy, and I; 'well done boys, well done. Get in! That's a great win for the Club' Derek shouts.

We leave the packing up for tomorrow and all head down to the changing rooms to join in the celebrations. Our recent run of good form and my increased feelings of inclusion mean that I've learned the majority of the words to our winning song. I stand in the corner of the cramped dressing room with the players, backroom staff, and Club chairman clapping and singing along, thoroughly savouring the moment. It feels great.

This was one of the best experiences of my sporting life so far. I felt fully part of the team that day and revelled in the occasion. I spent the next hour chatting with the players after the game over some food and loved every minute. I even felt like the coaches truly meant their congratulations after the game – like the handshakes were sincere. I really started to consider my position within the Club at this time. I knew I was aiming for the top spot in the department and knew I was some way short of that, however I did feel like I had the respect of the players and now the coaches, for the moment at least. This was then further enhanced on Monday morning.

18/03/2013: Crisps And 'Footy'

I don't bother to sit in on this morning's video session; Derek only wants to show four clips from Saturday's win. I decided instead to link my Mac to the television in Charlie's office and get a live stream of the NRL game up ready for when everyone comes back from the video session. I've just managed to get a good stream when I hear Derek and Charlie chatting, as they approach the office. 'Oh, it's Manly v Newcastle today, I'd completely forgotten. Has there been any score yet Craig?' 'Yeah it's 6-0 Manly,' I reply, 'it's here on the television.' 'Perfect, well done mate.' We sit and watch the game and Derek brings out a multipack of crisps and offers me a bag. 'Thanks very much,' I say, helping myself and settling in for an easy morning.

This was pleasing for me, however I couldn't help but think that his good mood was only because we were doing well. I was convinced that tensions would have been more frayed if results ceased going in our favour. I couldn't put my finger on what it was exactly, however I sensed an unsettled underlying murmur. In fact, I got a massive reality check the very next morning when Murphy and I were summoned into a meeting with Derek – for what, we didn't know.

19/03/2013: Why Is It Always London?

We walk into Derek's office and exchange a look that articulates our ignorance as to the purpose of this impromptu meeting. 'Right,'

Derek opens, 'as you know, we are going to London this week. I've just had a meeting with Sean (the Club's Chairman) and he told me that we are cutting back on spending. As a result, because Ian will be travelling the day before the game with the under twenties, he's now going to stay on and do the first grade game as well. Now you're welcome to travel down with them, but you'll have to pay for your own accommodation, or you can just get the train down before the game and come back on the bus.' *'Is he serious?'* I think to myself. I'm flabbergasted. *'With everything Murphy and I do for the Club, for free I might add as they still haven't paid the University for our services yet, we're just cast aside when the moment fits.'* Neither Murphy nor I have anything to say really, we just accept the comment and leave the room.

On exiting Murphy asks if I want to go for lunch and I can tell he just wants to go somewhere private for a chat. I agree, grab my things and climb into Murphy's car, where he lets me know exactly how he feels. 'Bloody hell, how can they do that to us? I'm not going to pay for the train or a hotel if they don't want to, screw them.' *'You took the words right out of my mouth!'* I think to myself. 'I could see why they wanted to save money last season: it didn't matter, we were already out of the play-offs, but this game counts.' 'I know,' comes his reply, 'do you think they know something we don't? I reckon they have no intention of paying the University for last season, this season or anything going forward. It came from Sean too!' 'Do you think they're trying to get rid of us then?' I ask, 'do you think that's it for the University link? I bet that's why we don't have any kit when everyone else does, they know we're not staying.'

This was a massive body blow for me; I thought that things were finally on the up. Unfortunately, this shattered those illusions in one short, sharp blow. I felt I could separate my interaction into two specific groups with very different experiences. On the one hand were my wholly positive interactions with the players and on the other hand were those with the coaches and other important stakeholders at the Club, which were mixed. On the face of things, everything seemed to be going well. The atmosphere at the Club was positive. The

coaches and other important stakeholders seemed in good spirits and, as such, interactions came freely with them. We were eating crisps and watching the 'footy' just the other day. That was until this meeting. Now I was convinced that a line had been crossed, that all the good work I had done and the relationships I had forged were undone. Interestingly, I felt that this came from the top, like it was the Club's owners that didn't want anything to do with the University. I was livid. How could they just drop us like that? They clearly didn't value us.

I felt I'd invested considerable time and effort and was simply being cast aside. I was now torn. I was still having considerably more positive interactions with the players and even the coaches, however I knew that these were only superficial. These were only with specific individuals and reflected their good moods and the team's good performances. I knew that at the first chance, Murphy and I (or the University in general) would be cast out and forgotten. In my naivety, I still believed I could rectify the situation by simply refusing to be thrown away. Despite the lack of clearly defined job roles, my belief that the department was inefficient and my contradicting ideas on how it should be run, I clung onto the thread of hope I had and continued to pile hours and effort into changing their minds.

Exciting Prospects

It was this niggling underlying tension that made it hard to feel completely accepted at the Club. As mentioned above, I felt I had developed strong relationships with the players, however I knew that something was amiss with the others. I'd given them no reason, but somehow I just got the impression I was 'different'. Thinking about it, I knew full well it was because I represented an external organisation, one that the Club staff found difficult to trust. I think the bottom line was that they all feared academia. They feared for their job security, that they might be 'found out' as not knowing as much as the graduates coming in. As a result, they resented our presence, kept us at arm's length. I knew there would be a big question mark over whether the University would want to form a link with the Club for next season, however I still felt I wanted to be involved with the Club. I'd invested 12 months of my life and a considerable amount of myself into the players, the coaches, and everyone else involved. I'd formed emotional relationships with and attachments to the players, some of the staff as well as the Club more generally. The pronouns I

used when describing things relating to the Club had changed; I spoke of 'us' and 'we', when previously it was 'they' and 'their'. I felt like it was a part of me, despite the obvious shunning. I wanted 'us' to perform well and make the play-offs, because I knew that's what the staff and players wanted.

This was a far cry from my feelings at the end of last season, when I felt disconnected and wanted the season to be over. This season I wanted the best for the Club, however in the back of my mind was the niggling thought that the Club didn't fully appreciate me. As a result, I now felt that I also wanted to make sure I supported the University in all of its decisions, while clinging onto the faint hope that things would change at the Club for the better. For this reason, I found myself frequently attending meetings at the University during Club hours. At the outset, these meetings aimed to formulate some kind of understanding as to what would happen next season. With the season almost half way through, I thought it best to put forward my thoughts, feelings, and concerns on the issue, as I would be one of the main affected parties. It soon became clear that despite my initial unhappiness about potentially being removed from the Club at the end of the season, there were bigger and more exciting opportunities ahead.

25/03/2013: Not Wanting To Be Left Out

I make sure everything is ready for the tomorrow's video and hand the footage over to Ian. Murphy and I have a meeting at the University this afternoon so we pack up and get in his car. *'I'm so excited; I hope this meeting goes well.'* I'm caught up in these thoughts for the entirety of the journey to the University. I know Murphy's been talking but I've not been listening, simply replying on autopilot. We pull up and walk the short distance to our department building to meet with Tony, the Head of Department. In the meeting we put forward our idea to provide a support contract for one of the major teams in this year's Rugby League World Cup, initially thinking current Four Nations Champions Australia or reigning World Champions, New Zealand. Just the mention of the possibility of working with these teams gets me excited. I'm physically sitting on my hands to try and control my excitement but the meeting seems to be going well. Tony likes the idea and after Murphy fleshes it out by

detailing his friendship with some of the coaches and past experiences with them, Tony seems sold on it. The fact that it falls immediately after the current season and gives possibilities for future union between the University and an international team only help to persuade him.

The meeting went better than either of us could have imagined. We were asked to put a proposal document together and make contact with the various people at the other end before scheduling another meeting. I have to admit, I was very excited about this latest development but felt both torn and nervous at the same time. I was torn because I still vehemently believed I could change my fortunes at the Club and really wanted to continue to work there. At the same time, I was nervous that this new and exciting opportunity might pass me by. I didn't really have any experience or contacts that would help get this plan off the ground, so I was totally reliant on Murphy for that. I knew he would make it work but I wasn't sure of my level of involvement in the whole thing. As such, I decided to make sure I was present at all of the meetings, even if not explicitly invited, in order to add my opinion to proceedings and just make the University's decision makers aware of my interests.

I was glad I chose to do this, as my presence helped to convince Tony that the more we could do the greater was the possibility for future collaboration. I couldn't have asked for it to go better. The person in charge of the decision now thought that I was an integral part of the process. My plan had worked perfectly. I'd never intentionally acted so politically at the University before, but this was just too big an opportunity to miss. I wanted the University to come out of it looking good, but I also knew the potential an opportunity like this would produce. I'd dreamed about living and working in either Australia or New Zealand since leaving college and now saw this as my ticket to doing so. All I had to do was make sure the tournament was a success. Unfortunately, I didn't have long to ponder this before my meeting with Nick.

02/04/2013: Things Just Keep Getting Better!

I walk up the flight of stairs from Tony's room to Nick's, beaming from ear to ear and reliving the meeting all over again in my head. *'I did it. I made sure I wasn't left out. Tony loved the idea and backs it*

100%; it's really going to happen. We're going to work at the World Cup! It's only a short walk so I don't get to enjoy my thoughts for long. Nick's alone in his room when I arrive; I enter and take a seat. 'How's things?' comes his familiar greeting as I slip my bag from my shoulder. 'Good thanks, how are you?' I proceed to retell the contents of the meeting downstairs and my excitement at the opportunity. 'Oh good, that sounds very exciting,' comes his reply, 'well I have some good news too. Now this was just what I was thinking, and you can tell me what you think... don't feel obliged to say you will, but I was wondering if you would like to give me a hand with some elements of the Performance Analysis module next semester?' 'Yeah, sure, what can I help with?' I reply, shocked at the offer.

Nick went on to explain his proposal: that he wanted to use my practical knowledge of the software to help him rewrite and then mark the practical exam for the second year module. I was keen to gather as much experience as possible, as I had originally started my undergraduate degree with the intention of going into teaching. As such, I took little time to accept. I had now built up a wealth of practical experience in performance analysis that would stand me in good stead to get a job in the future. Unfortunately, with spending all my time at the Club since graduating, I had very little lecturing experience; something I was keen to rectify. This was the perfect opportunity for me to do so.

With this all coming at the same time, I didn't know what to do with myself. My initial disappointment at the thought of not being at the Club next year was quickly replaced by excitement at these new opportunities developing at the University. I could really see myself developing academically and felt like I wanted to spend more time at the University to do so. It's safe to say that this part of my life was dominating the others and I felt like the majority of my opportunities were here and wanted to maximise their potential.

Leaving Home

Unfortunately, these immense feelings of excitement and inclusion were not echoed in my home life. A date had been set to move out of our family home and it was drawing ever closer. Louise and I hadn't fully decided what we

were going to do, in terms of finding somewhere with her mother or striking out on our own. However, we knew we would have to make a decision fast.

16/03/2013: The Winning Song, Continued...

‘So, what are we going to do?’ Louise asks as we unload the dishwasher, ‘We only have a couple of months before we need to move out and we need to make a decision fast.’ ‘I don’t know, eeerrm...’ I reply, thoughts racing round my head. *‘I don’t really want to go back to living in one room again after having our own flat here, but we can’t really afford our own place and commute, not while we’re both at the University anyway.’*

These thoughts aren’t new, in fact we are having these conversations daily at the moment. ‘If I’m going to be totally honest,’ I say after a moment’s pause, ‘I think we’re going to have to start to look for somewhere to rent in the city for the moment. I know we don’t want to leave our friends and families, but I just think we need to do this for now.’ As I say the words, I hear them out loud for the first time. I try to sound confident and reassuring but I’m not sure that’s how I come across. ‘It can be a short term thing, just go until we finish our studies then come back and look for a house to buy back here. Anyway, I’m sure we can find a nice little one bed for a reasonable price; you have to take into account all the money we’re spending now commuting.’ I can see by the look on her face she feels the same as I do. Neither of us want to do this but we both know we really don’t have a choice.

This interaction was typical of our conversations over the last few weeks. We were caught up in this one issue as it dominated our thinking. We’d pretty much made up our minds by the end of this exchange and set too looking for places in the city, all the while trying to put a positive spin on it every time we spoke of it.

01/04/2014: House Hunting Trip 1: A Disaster!

I can’t decide if I’m actually excited today or that this façade of excitement that Louise and I have been showing when talking to

people about moving has actually started to work on me too. Anyway, as the Club's been knocked out of the Challenge Cup, we're using a free weekend to look at some flats Louise found within our estimated budget. On the face of things, they seem to be in a pleasant enough area with some trees, '*A luxury for a city*' I think to myself as we pull up outside the first property, nerves jangling. '*I really hope they're nice inside, we can't afford to go much higher on the rent than this.*' 'Doesn't look too bad out front,' I say as we exit the car, 'nice size off-road parking and we can look out over the park.' 'It looks like a big old Edwardian building, like our old house,' comes the reply. I can see somewhat of a smile on her face, '*Maybe this won't be too bad after all I think*' although it could just be the nerves skewing my thinking.

We were right to feel nervous. The inside was horrific, a joke in fact. It was so bad that we called up the estate agent and cancelled our other viewing for the day and drove straight home. We'd seen enough spending 30 minutes at that property, with its sloping floors, stained ceilings and broken windows, to put us off living in the city forever. What's more, on exiting I'm pretty sure we witnessed a drug deal take place on the street corner. We were mortified. We're not snobs by any stretch, we had just not seen anything like this before, so we're completely out of our comfort zone.

On the drive home, we reconsidered each and every option we had previously imagined, frantically trying to find something better than what we had just observed. Neither of us wanted to live there. We were angry that this was even a possibility for us now, but knew that no one had ever intended things this way. Despite this, we were powerless to change things and felt vulnerable. We decided, after many hours discussing things, that we needed to increase our budget. We knew Louise would finish her studies first and hopefully be able to find work. The plan was to get somewhere more expensive and hopefully nicer, despite not being able to afford it. We would eat up our savings until Louise found work and hopefully, by then, she would bring in enough to make us comfortable once again. It was a plan fraught with risk but we really couldn't formulate a better solution. We agreed that Louise would keep looking and we would view on my next free weekend in a fortnight.

08/04/2013: House Hunting Trip 2: A Success!

Today we try again, hopefully with greater success. Louise has done an amazing job searching for properties to let within our new extended budget and we're again driving to the city for viewings. We're more nervous than last time, acknowledging that if these properties are no better, we simply won't find anywhere. As we pull up at the first place I slide my hand over hers and reassuringly look into her eyes, 'These are going to be so much nicer. Look, new building, secure private parking, it's going to be great.' *'I hope it's as good as I've just made out, this really is our last prospect.'*

To our relief, both properties were better than imagined. We liked them equally and were pleased to have a good choice to make. Despite finally finding somewhere nice, we quickly realised that this was actually happening; it somehow made it more real. We were imminently going to have to leave our hometown, our friends and our families behind and strike out on our own. I realised I would have to give up coaching my local under 17s rugby team, after five amazing years with them. This thought was quickly replaced by the even more sobering thought that I would probably have to retire from playing myself and leave behind the banter and social life I had at my old club. Since taking up the sport at age twelve, I've never missed a season. I knew that as I got older and as the time I didn't play increased, my chances of ever playing again reduced.

Besides my own losses, Louise would have to move away from her whole family, something she'd find very hard. I would have to move away from mine too but I wasn't as close to mine as she was to hers. It would be difficult for both of us. These low feelings couldn't have been further from the excitement of the possibility of working at the World Cup or the fact that I was enjoying myself more and interacting more freely with the players and coaches at the Club. I'd experienced a weird shift over the past few months; my home life, typically so happy, was now a source of sadness and my work and University lives, characteristically a source of stress and frustration, were now more positive in nature. My only hope was that things would change for the better when we eventually moved into our new flat and the positives of my University and work lives continued to progress.

4.4.5 Story 7: Slump

Home Stresses

I had become increasingly aware over the past few months that was becoming crankier and irritable; short and irritated with my family, friends, and colleagues. I hadn't been getting much sleep. It should have been a relaxing fortnights preparation for next weekends opposition. Despite this, the coaches still wanted us in at eight o'clock on the Friday. I was still trying my best to gain their respect and wanted to show willing and be in all week. As my alarm went off at 6.15am though I lay for a minute and recalled the week just gone.

21/05/2013: Beginning To Drag

'Not now, please just five more minutes! Every day this week I've gone to work, done a full day, driven to the new flat, unloaded a car full of boxes, driven home, and packed up and loaded the car with another load of boxes ready for the following day. I just need a break. I can't keep this up much longer. I'm snapping at people and getting cranky. Something's got to give!'

I'd become accustomed to just getting on with commuting over the past 14 months but it wasn't getting any easier. In any typical week (based on Sunday to Sunday fixtures) we would be expected to be at the Club from 7am till 5pm on a Monday, 8am until 5pm Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday and then the game on Sunday. If this was an away game on the other side of the country, we would typically travel over early and spend a few hours in a hotel to let the players relax, stretch off, and take on their pre-game meal. This often meant meeting around 10am and not getting back until around 7pm. Factor in my three hours of commuting time and the result was some very long hours.

We also often had fixtures in the evenings, the worst of these being on the other side of the country for an 8pm kick off on a Friday. For this particular fixture we were expected to arrive at 8am and again travel over for a pre-game meal. After the fixture, we would eat at the ground before setting off, and wouldn't arrive back until around 1am. This meant that I wouldn't arrive home until 2am, having set off at 6:45am the previous morning and, on this specific occasion, I was expected to be in work at 7am the following day. The often

tortuous 100 mile round trip to work and back was a cause for real frustration and sometimes despair.

21/05/2013: Beginning To Drag, Continued...

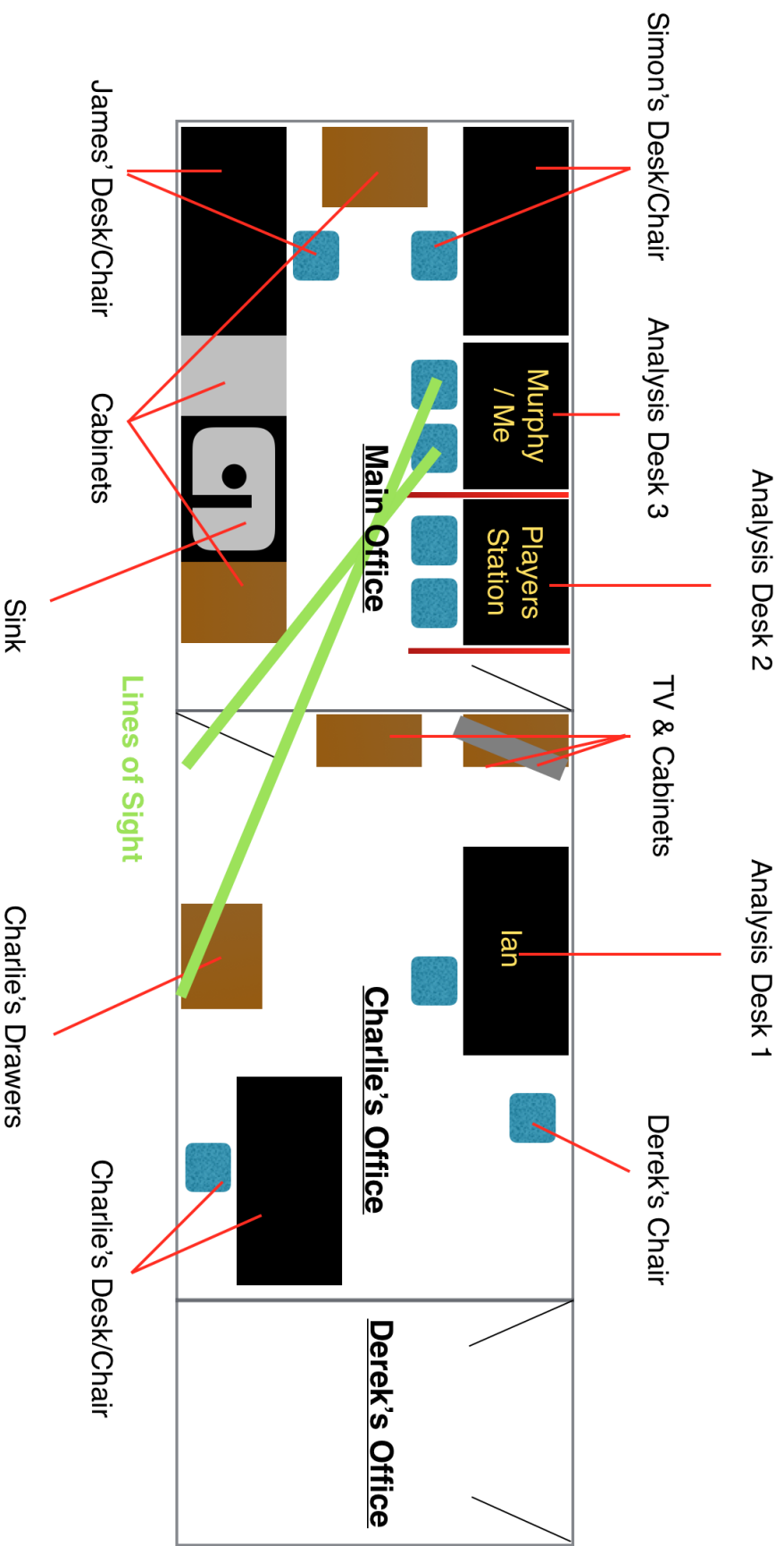
I roll over and quickly turn off my alarm before the second chime, I don't want to wake Louise up. I glance over to check she's still sleeping, '*phew*' she is. Without turning the bedroom light on I sneak over to the wardrobe and, hardly breathing, open it. Another nervous glance over my shoulder: '*good job, still sleeping*' I think to myself. As my eyes start to adjust to the dim light in the room, my clothes loom into view. I grab them and slope into the lounge to get ready. I eat a quick breakfast and brush my teeth. Catching the weary looking grey faced man in the mirror I pause, mid brush, the taste of mint lingering in my throat.

I start to think about the day ahead. '*Why do I have to be in this early? I'd love to go back to bed, hold my Wife and just doze a little longer. I'm working a lot of hours at the moment and the commute is really dragging. I'm not getting the amount of University work done I'd like to and I never feel I have time off. Louise knows this too. She just wants to spend more time together as a family; maybe go away for a weekend. I'd love that too! Is this really how I want to spend the rest of my life? There's got to be an easier way! I'm not looking forward to going and unloading another car-full of boxes at the new flat later either. I can't wait for next weekend when we can actually get everything moved in, it'll be such a relief! I'll still be in early at work but I won't have a 90-minute commute either side of the day. I'll be able to roll out of bed half an hour before work and still get there in time. I might even be able to cycle!*' I finish brushing and leave for work, still mulling all of this over and dreaming of life after the move, after the stress!

I knew things would be better after the move but I was so tired I struggled to see it. I was finding it difficult to keep up my University commitments and spend quality time at home, what with trying to change the coach's perception of me. It was a difficult balance to strike and, unfortunately, I wasn't managing it.

Politics, Roles And Slump

At the beginning of the season, Murphy decided to rearrange the offices to give him somewhere to work away from the coaches and offer me more opportunities to interact with the players and coaches. As it stood, Charlie's office was where the majority of the work happened. It contained the television on which all the match reviews and previews were done. This was where the coaches and the analyst who was on lead role that week worked. The main office consisted of two small desks side by side, one for the players to view their clips at and one other desk where one person could sit. The issue here was that there were three analysts and only two desk spaces. As a result, whoever was last in to the office had to set up at the player station desk and was subsequently forced to move for the players when they came in to do their individual videos. This got very annoying, as there was literally *nowhere* to work. When this happened, all you could do was stand around trying to be in some way helpful while the players went through their clips and wait for them to finish. I had wasted countless days doing this over the past weeks and months and, frankly, it was wearing very thin. At this point, I feel it is important to offer the reader a visual representation of this new office layout, which can be found on the following page.



21/05/2013: Beginning To Drag, Continued...

I arrive at the Club to find Murphy sat at the desk in the main office. 'Great!' I think to myself. *'Just what I need. Now I'm going to have to set up at the player's station and move when they come in to look at their clips.'* This really annoyed me, as I didn't have a problem with the original layout. *'Why did Murphy insist on moving the offices around in the first place? The now daily struggle for space in the office is beginning to bore and demotivate me.'*

The initial design of this layout was to afford me more time to interact with the players and aid them through the individual review process. This started out as the case, but I soon become lost in the battle to gain the seat at the desk next to the players' computers. This was only an issue for me in the weeks where Ian was on the lead role and occupied the seat in Charlie's office, meaning that Murphy and I were both vying for the last remaining place at the other desk. I felt that although Murphy was the senior member of staff within the performance analysis department, that didn't give him automatic rights to the desk. Anyway, he'd decided to rearrange the office layouts to make things 'better' for everyone in the first place. His thinking was that 'we', meaning Murphy and myself, wanted to spend less time in Charlie's office and more time on University work. For this reason, he decided to remove the desk, that seated two people, from Charlie's office and replaced it with one that only seated one. This may have suited Murphy but it didn't suit me at all. All it did was reduce the amount of time I had with the coaches and therefore affected both my personal and my relationships with them.

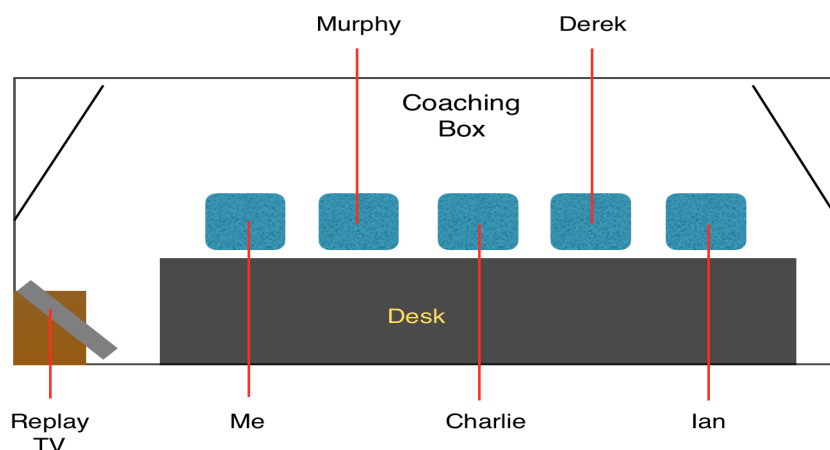
The fact that we were also in the midst of a poor run of form on the field also played into my sour mood. Our on-field slump had resulted in a bad atmosphere at the Club. Everyone was a bit down, moping around and seemingly afraid to be having fun. Maybe this all affected my feelings of lack of inclusion and my interpretation of my experiences; maybe I viewed things more negatively when we lost and more positively when we won. It definitely played into things. It's okay when we're winning because the players and coaches feel like they can have a laugh and a joke to lighten the mood but when we're losing that all stops. The coaches are on edge about their job security and the players too, about being included in the team each week and their future contracts.

Everyone was more tense and serious and I stopped enjoying myself. It would have been okay if I felt like I was contributing to the team performance during our live coding, but because of the coaching box set up and our match day job roles, I felt like I was not really having any effect on the outcome.

23/05/2013: Same Old Routine

I arrive at the Club 90 minutes before kick off. *'Plenty of time to set up,'* I think to myself. *'I just wish that sometimes I could do one of the more important jobs. I want to experience that interaction with the coaches during the heat of battle. That's when the relationships are cemented. When they know they can rely on you when your back's against the wall!'* Unfortunately, I don't get the privilege. I begrudgingly set up the coaching box in the same way as always and prepare myself for my usual live coding role. Unlike the other two analysts, I don't typically get asked questions during the game – questions aimed at gaining information to relay to the players or affect the play on the field. *'I just want to help influence what's going on out on the pitch! It's always the same old routine for home match days: we always set up in the same manner and we all have our same roles. Why do they never ask me for information during play? I feel detached from the coaches and the on-field action, I feel totally excluded.'*

At this point, it is perhaps important to offer the reader a visual representation of the coaching box. This characterises the general set up for most home games and where everyone sits. Although the space is small, I perceived that my positioning within this space limited my interactions with the coaches.



Uncertainty

The following week I was sat in the office coding the under 19s game, as I knew that their coaches, Simon and James, would need it the following day. I'd only progressed part way through this when Murphy came in and asked if I wanted to go and get lunch with him, as there was something that he needed to tell me. Despite my initial uncertainty about the topic of this meeting, I agreed.

26/05/2013: Possibly Going Into Administration?

We get into Murphy's car and he drives us the half mile to the local corner shop. The drive is short but neither of us speak. *'What does he want to talk about?'* I quietly contemplate. *'He seems quiet, it must be something important.'* As we pull into a parking space, I decide to cut through the silence and start up conversation about anything I can think of. The first thought that pops into my head is about an extract from the video session this morning. *'You missed something good in that video today.'* I reel off some technical comments about the game. It does the trick. He's not letting on his news but we are chatting now at least.

We buy our lunches and head back to the car. As we get in, Murphy announces *'the Club aren't going to sign the contract with the University. Yeah, they don't have any money and might be going into administration in the next few weeks.'* This comes as a massive shock. I'm completely lost for words but I don't have chance to digest this information because Murphy's not finished yet. *'Tony's going to be making a decision whether to remove us from the Club and, if they are, whether that's going to be tomorrow, next week, next month or at the end of the season,'* Murphy informs me. My head is immediately filled with hundreds of questions, *'what does this mean for all the University interns, Murphy, Mike, Ian, and me? What does this mean for my data collection? If we're pulled out, will we be going somewhere else? Where? Is my funding secure?'*

The questions don't stop there. These are just those that jump to the forefront of my mind in a split second. At this early stage, I obviously can't answer any of them. I'm left completely bewildered. All I can think is that my perfectly organised future now seems somewhat

hazy and ill defined. I finally form some rational thoughts and decide that Murphy and I should get in touch with someone at the University as soon as possible, to get some more information, and that we should speak to Derek immediately.

After the meeting with Derek, we decided that the best thing for Murphy and I to do was to go over to the University immediately and put pressure on them to keep us in, or at the very least to find out exactly what was happening. We met with Cory and Clive at the University who confirmed what was said in the meeting with Derek and what was happening about it. This meeting did nothing to stop me worrying, as things were said in it that contradicted each other. It was my impression that the University could either cover all of the costs of everything, or that they could refuse to continue funding anything. The latter of these options didn't sound too appealing to me and I was left worrying about what I would do next. I was scared that I had nothing to fall back on. I was angry that I had not been told the Club owed the University money for previous contracts as, honestly, I wouldn't have agreed to do it if I didn't think that I would be financially secure for the duration of the PhD. I was also angry that I'd turned down good opportunities in teaching for this position and might have burned bridges with the school that wanted to sponsor me and that I may now need to fall back on.

I was scared and unsure of what, if anything, to tell Louise, and in the back of my mind the whole time was the worry that we had just agreed a lease on our own place. I didn't feel secure now and, what with the news that our old house was already sold, I felt very vulnerable. I didn't know if I still had a job or an income, which would have a significant consequence on my decisions in the next few days and weeks. I went home none the wiser and simply waited for a verdict before the weekend. Either way, the only glimmer of hope was that this would be a definitive answer, that because we were now no longer waiting on the Club to sign the contract, the University was now in control and would either help us or not.

27/05/2013: An Anti-Intellectual Culture

To add to this building uncertainty, I've just had another meeting with my supervisors and they've asked me to have a first draft of my

literature review ready for our next meeting. I understand full well that I have to keep writing but with everything that's happened over the last month or so, I just don't need the extra pressure. After a long day at the Club and then factoring in commuting, I've been struggling enough as it is at the moment trying to keep on top of my diary entries, let alone adding in writing my literature review.

Despite there not being a lot of actual work to do at the Club, I've not been able to take any University work in. I don't want to have people looking over my shoulder as I write confidential information, potentially about some of the people in the office, in case any of the people I am writing about see any names on the page. I would love to be able to sit and write at the Club, as a lot of my day is spent just sitting around wasting time. I can't even read anything for fear of receiving comments from people about what I am doing. I remember back to when I tried to read a journal on the team coach once and the comments I got from the coaches. 'What you reading that for? Are we boring you?' *'I think everyone at the Club is quite anti-academia. I'm not sure if I'm going to get all my work done and I can't do any at the Club, I just need a break!'*

The Last Thing I Needed

The following week I got what I was after in terms of leading a video review session. I was in charge of the Monday morning session and I went over to the room to get started. I was already apprehensive as Derek and I had put together what I considered quite a negative video containing all our errors and tries conceded. I was scared that the players would think that this video was my doing, because I was leading it, and think negatively of me as a result.

28/05/2013: Sky Sports Preview

'Shit, I'm running late. Today of all days, I'm supposed to be leading my first video session this morning' I think to myself as I drive into work. *'Everything's got to go smoothly because the video is negative enough as it is! Why did Derek make me put in all the errors?'* I don't have long to think about this, as when I get there, the stadium manager tells me there's something going on in our usual room

today so I'll have to go upstairs and use a different room. *'No, not this, not now. I really don't need this.'* This immediately makes me very nervous.

My only other experience of this room was the year before, when Murphy tried to alter my screen resolution and computer background just minutes before I was meant to deliver a session. Although at the time I didn't think it deliberate, he left the proportions all wrong and the session was horrible. It looked rubbish because the screen was really small and the players could hardly see the video. I didn't want to have to do another session in there again, let alone without having time to make sure I got the settings right. As it happened, I didn't have any chance to sort this out before the players arrived.

28/05/2013: Sky Sports Preview, Continued...

I'm sat at the front, removed from everyone and feel very anxious. The players enter and Derek starts talking while I finish setting up. He turns to me and asks me to show them the tip sheet. I try to open it up but it doesn't work on the projector, the screen is blank. Everyone goes silent. *'No, no, no, no, no, don't do this to me! What am I going to do?'* I quickly search my brain for faint hint of a solution. *'Ah, just change the mirroring settings'* my brain shouts at last.

I go to do it but for some reason it won't let me. A harsher air of intent permeates the room. I immediately start to heat up, a twinge of discomfort forms in my stomach at the thought of everyone waiting for it to come up. I hurriedly open the system preferences and apologise to Derek for the delay, *'Ha, the computer's not working today'* I joke aloud. I'm smiling on the outside but I'm far from joyous on the inside. I can feel my mind wandering back to Charlie's comments about my 'wrestle' statistics, as my now clammy fingers desperately work the computer. I immediately close that avenue off, I fear the ending too much. The discomfort in my stomach builds. I give myself a bit of support: *'it's a good job I'm quick on the computer, I'll have this fixed in about 10 seconds. They won't even remember the blip once the video starts. I'll get away with it.'* I can

feel the players getting restless. *'I need to sort this out now: I have about five seconds left!'* When it finally opens I go to change the mirroring setting confident that it will all be fixed in a few seconds. Unfortunately, doing this cut the signal from the computer to the projector for a split second, but that was all it took.

In that split second the situation went from bad to awful. The projector, registering a lack of signal, started searching for another. It found the signal from the television, Sky Sports came on the projector and everyone started to jeer and comment. One voice cut through above the commotion.

28/05/2013: Sky Sports Preview, Continued...

'Is Ronaldo (the footballer) playing for our next opposition then?' someone shouted. Then another, even louder 'Oh where's Ian? Someone get Ian to help!' I'm sitting here getting increasingly anxious and trying my best to make it work. I can feel everyone's eyes on me and hear the noise in the room building. It's mainly jeering and whistling but some comments make it through the wall of noise and cut into me like a knife. I feel like I've immediately lost all my standing with every single person in the room. *'I can't let this ruin me! How did you get through it last time? How did you minimise the damage? Just keep a calm exterior, you can get through this.'* I fight with my facial muscles to produce a calm look; I even try a wry smile. I'm convinced it's not working. I must be blushing. With it, I grow increasingly hotter and start to sweat. I can feel anger and rage building up inside of me, my stomach is now turning somersaults. I'm angry because things have been taken out of my hands. I hadn't had chance to play around with the settings since Murphy messed with them last time and every time I try to fix the situation the projector switches to the television again.

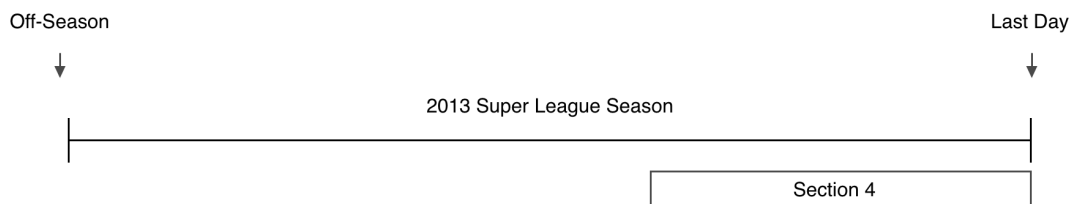
The whole episode lasted less than a minute but felt like an eternity. Even when I'd managed to get the tip sheet on the screen it was small and Derek's comments did little for my self confidence. This only hurt more because I was

totally powerless to alter the situation and I could feel the players' (and coaches') respect for me slipping through my fingers.

I managed to get to the end of the video session and just wanted to go home afterwards, or at least not see a single person for the rest of the day. This was a thousand times more damaging than the 'Wrestle' incident because the whole playing and coaching staff were present in this meeting. Also, the fact that it was the players this time 'sticking the knife in' made it all the more embarrassing. I was in an awful mood for the rest of the day and was keen to leave as soon as possible. I also didn't want to have to relive the experience again, so I didn't tell anyone about it. It was the last thing I needed with everything else that was going on both at the Club and away from it.

4.5 Changing Of Fortunes: A Positive Outlook

This fourth and final section relates to my experiences as my second season at the Club drew to an end (highlighted by the fourth portion of the timeline). During this time, I began to reflect on my previous experiences throughout my internship. Here, among other things, I came to realise the fickle nature of professional sport: how performances on the field ultimately shaped behaviours and experiences off the field. I also noticed a change in outlook towards my previous experiences, as I perceived a greater harmony between the different aspects of my life. These experiences will be presented in the form of a number of stories: *Story 8: Finding Form*, *Story 9: Play-Off Hopes*, and *Story 10: No Goodbyes*, which encompass the second half of my second season. This period of time was around six months, running from the beginning of May 2013 to the end of September 2013.



4.5.1 Story 8: Finding Form

Bike And Gym Time

01/07/2013: Batteries Recharged

I'm woken suddenly from a deep and energising sleep by the shrill tones of my alarm. On turning it off I smile to myself and roll over. *'I could get used to this,'* I think to myself. *'I got so little sleep last week, what with the away trip and moving into my new house, that I needed a good night's sleep to recharge my batteries. I'm so glad I can lie in this morning.'*

We'd done it. We'd moved into our wonderful new flat and the benefits were immediately evident. I could roll out of bed thirty minutes before I needed to arrive and still arrive at work on time. Things were going well and I was enjoying all aspects of my life more. It wasn't all plain sailing for Louise though, who had three months of commuting back home until she finished her placement. She would struggle but I was confident that I would now have the time and energy to make things easier for her. I would be able to come home and make our evening meal so that she could relax when she got back. I knew that being able to help out with these little things, as well as being around a bit more, would help her through it.

For me though, things couldn't have been better. I took this first week to relax and regain my energy and enjoy the quiet of alone time in the flat. I could sit and learn new songs on my guitar and relearn who *I* was. I'd forgotten over the course of the internship, but it was nice to be able to know *me* once again. After the first week, I decided to push on with my training and get into some sort of fitness regime with my new found time and energy. I decided to get up at the same time as Louise and go to the gym before work.

08/07/2013: Getting Fit!

We're both woken early by Louise's alarm, cutting through the still peaceful morning air like a knife. I'm excited for once. *'I'm going to get up early with Louise this morning. I'm going to seize the day and go to the gym before work.'* With this motivating thought, I get up,

grab a ripe banana, collect my gym kit and work clothes and head out.

I found this routine extremely beneficial. Not only did it provide me with a physical outlet for the stresses I was feeling, it also helped me to further my sense of self. I've always liked exercise but since injuring my elbow and moving, I've had to put my rugby career on hold. This was the perfect opportunity to get back on the exercise wagon without eating into any family time with Louise. I was getting up at the same time I did before the move, however, because I was doing something for myself, it didn't feel like a chore. In fact, where I should have felt more drained at the end of the week, I actually felt more energised and invigorated. It made me want to get up and go, to get on with my working day.

09/07/2013: Beating The Traffic And Getting Fitter!

I wake at the same time as yesterday, but I'm not planning on going to the gym. *'Nope, no gym today. It's a nice day so I'm going to cycle to work. I'm not sure how long it's going to take and I don't want to arrive all sweaty, so I'll give myself at least half an hour for the eight kilometre journey. That should be plenty of time.'* I make sure I have a good breakfast, kiss Louise goodbye and set off. The journey is swift and bracing. I scythe through the morning rush-hour traffic, music blearing from my headphones. I arrive in just under 25 minutes, thoroughly delighted at the journey, and change before everyone else arrives.

On the way home I decided to really open up and see how fast I could go. I managed to get home in 18 minutes, quicker than by car. I just couldn't get over how much free time I had. I was getting all my exercise done, saving time and money by not driving and, when I arrived home I could simply relax. I was in a really good place. It made my days seem shorter, even if they were the same length, and I had far fewer worries. I was interpreting my interactions much more positively due to my new rejuvenated and optimistic outlook and didn't perceive there to be as many tensions at the Club.

France

I reasoned that the good Club atmosphere resulted from a recent run of good on-field form, winning six out of the last seven games. I had come to realise over the course of my internship that winning was everything. All the stresses and tensions that develop as a product of losses, of people fearing for their job security, simply disappeared. All the negativity, all the backstabbing, the hushed conversations, and the segregation evaporated. An air of unity and inclusion pervaded the environment; everyone was high-spirited. This was the part of the job I'd come to love, to crave. It was during these periods when I felt most comfortable. I felt included, valuable, integral, and even liked. These feelings were only strengthened during our away trip to France, although there was an initial hurdle I had to overcome.

17/06/2013: Playing A Tactical Game

This week I've been in every day, I want to make sure that everyone knows that it's me who's going to France, not Ian. *'I don't want a repeat of the whole Tenerife fiasco, the annoyingly tacit understanding that Ian would go.'* I enter Charlie's office and, to my surprise, I find Ian's name on the list of travelling staff in place of my own. *'Oh look, what a surprise. I'm guessing Derek's failed to tell Charlie that I'm going. I'll have to make sure he knows that it's me, I'll just leave my passport on the desk where he can see it.'* Sure enough, this does the trick. I notice that my name's replaced Ian's when I come back after lunch.

I was disappointed that I felt forced to act in such a manner. Don't get me wrong, I was delighted to be going, however I couldn't help but feel some level of dissatisfaction from Charlie. He and Ian had developed a strong relationship over the course of the season and it was evident that Charlie would prefer Ian to go. Nonetheless, I had the backing of Derek and my ticket was now booked. I packed everything I thought I could possibly need, unaware of the positives that would come from the trip.

20/06/2013: 'Have You Played?'

I pull up in the hotel car park at 5.38pm, *'Good I'm early, we're not meant to be here till 5.45pm,'* I think to myself. As I wait for the coach to arrive, a surge of excitement, tinged with nerves waves over me. *'This is my first overseas trip with the team. I'm really excited at the prospect of the trip ahead, of traveling to a different country, of spending considerable time with the players and coaches and of the task ahead of the team. What if no one talks to me all trip? It'll be pretty miserable if I spend the whole trip sitting on my own!'* I calm my nerves by telling myself everything will be okay. The bus pulls into the car park and, suppressing my inner nerves, I collect my things from the boot of my car.

I couldn't stress enough my initial excitement; I'd spent almost 18 months longing for this moment. There I was, about to step onto the team coach, knowing full well exactly how long I'd waited to do so. I thought back to the disenfranchised feeling of missing out on both the Tenerife and the London trips; of how I resented the coaches for excluding me, how I questioned my position and standing within the coaching team after these incidents, and how I rued the missed opportunities to build my relationships with all those on the trip. The contrast to this current instance couldn't have been starker, despite knowing I wasn't the first choice. I didn't care. I was going and it was going to be amazing.

20/06/2013: 'Have You Played?', Continued...

The journey to the airport hotel passes quickly and without anything of any real note. Everyone's really chilled out, keeping themselves to themselves. I do the same. We arrive at the hotel and everyone lends a hand to unload all of our extra baggage: the kit, balls, tackle bags, the medical and analysis gear etc. I make sure I do my bit too, walking into the hotel lobby laden with four bags and dragging my case of equipment. As I enter I see all the players queuing at the reception; a sudden realisation dawns on me, *'who am I rooming with? Why don't I know?'* I have nothing to worry about, I've been put with Pierce, the Assistant physio. *'We get on pretty well, though*

we haven't spoken that often before.' We make polite small talk in the lift to our room. *'I can see we're going to get along just fine,'* I think to myself as we enter our room, *'this is actually going to go alright, this trip.'*

We've only just finished putting our bags in our room when there is a loud knocking at our door. 'Boom Boom Boom!' On opening the door, I find one of the senior players, Bruce, smiling in at me. 'Can I have a look at your television mate?' he asks. 'Sure,' I reply, 'what are you after?' he explains that the PlayStation he brought for all the players to use doesn't work on any of their televisions and wants to know if ours was any different. Unfortunately, on closer inspection it transpires that ours is no different. I can see the deflation in Bruce's face. I really want to help, so wrack my brain for a solution. 'If you give me five minutes to get changed I may have something that will help,' I reassure him. 'Oh really, that would be awesome. Thanks Craig, I'll just be in my room, you're a life saver' comes his reply as he leaves the room.

I was in shock. The trip had hardly even begun and I was presented with an incredible opportunity to strengthen my personal relationships with some of the senior players. I was convinced they would see my solving of their problem as reinforcement of my technical skills, as well as getting a glimpse into my personal character. I wanted to show them that I could not only help them out, but also that I was willing to go out of my way to do so. I hurried downstairs to gather what equipment I needed before returning to Bruce's room, heart racing with excitement.

20/06/2013: 'Have You Played?', Continued...

I knock on the door. 'It's open,' comes the familiar Australian accent, *'must be Bruce'*. I open the door and my initial observation is proven correct, though he's not alone. Two other senior players, Lopini and Eden are lounging on the room's twin beds looking dejected. I see their faces change as they see me enter, expecting good news. I relay the conversation I had with the receptionist, that there isn't a television in the hotel that will work and watch them instantly deflate.

Lopini pipes up, 'don't worry man, you tried your best. We'll just have to try when we get to France that's all.' I can see his eyes betray his true disappointment, but I'm prepared for this. '*I have a secret weapon*' I think to myself.

'I have an idea though...' I start. I can see the players' interest pique. 'Can I move this?' I ask Bruce, pointing to the unused circular coffee table in the corner of the room. They agree, curious as to my plan, but I don't let on just yet. I want to build the suspense, leave them questioning for a minute to maximise the surprise and delight when I get it working. I set up the PlayStation on the table and bring a large black box from my bag, a projector. I can't hide my plan any longer and a buzz of anticipation fills the room. 'Is that a projector?' Eden asks. 'Yes,' I reply, connecting the last cable and adjusting the leg. I turn it on, 'fingers crossed boys.' As the projector warms up I play around with the perspective and focus to reveal a perfect blue square on the wall, about half the size of the room. Bruce is standing next to me, eager for my plan to succeed: 'Shall I turn the PlayStation on?' 'Go for it,' I reply, crossing everything I have. '*I daren't look, I really hope this works. I can feel the players' excitement and anticipation.*' I inhale deeply and hold it. I'm giddy with anticipation, my pulse races. I can hear the fan spin up inside the machine but I don't dare breath. I want this to work so much.

Through half closed eyes I peek at the screen just as the picture changes to the familiar logo of my childhood: a 'P' standing over an 'S' as its shadow. '*It's only working... oh my word, I've done it!*' 'Yeah!' cheers of excitement fill the room. The three players, jumping and shouting, simultaneously embrace me. 'Fantastic, Craig. You legend!' praises Bruce, 'You get first game, it's Rugby 2007, you played?' '*Oh, I've played.*' 'Sure I've played before, it's been a while though, who am I taking down first?'

There's something childishly appealing about playing a rugby video game, enormously projected onto a hotel bedroom wall, into the early hours of the morning. This feeling was shared by myself and half the team. I was alone in a store cupboard when I realised it was possible and, as such, managed to

composed myself enough that I could act cool while setting up my 'secret' plan. I felt it wouldn't have had the same reaction had I not built the tension and played on their doubts in the first place. I was glad I'd chosen to do so. The reaction from the player's present was better than I had ever imagined. It instantly provided me with a massively positive interaction from which I was convinced the players would think better of me, both personally and professionally. This was immediately reinforced by Bruce's invitation for first play on the game, as I knew that my proficiency on their favourite game would only play into my favour. Guards were dropped, banter was prevalent, and conversation flowed freely. The original players present soon regaled more of the team with my achievements as various groups came and left throughout the evening. I felt this was the best possible introduction: a compliment on both professional and personal aspects from their own peers; the people they look up to. I felt welcome, part of the team.

The following morning, I sat on the plane thinking back on my initial nerves. I realised I had nothing to fear, as I'd had positive interactions with everyone on the trip at some point in the past and could think of many examples of them all actively initiating conversations with me. I could chat freely to any player or member of staff and, with the added bonus of the player inclusion I'd experienced the night before, felt like the players knew and respected me better than ever.

The next two days before the game were very positive. I mostly kept a low profile, giving the players and staff their own space, but each day brought new positive interactions that all lead to an overwhelming feeling of inclusion. Albeit they were simple interactions: a polite conversation over breakfast or an invitation to a video game 'rematch', they only helped my feelings of inclusion. I also took solace from the little things: rooming with the same person and getting to know him personally, being able to facilitate the team watching the British Lions versus Australia games through my projector, presenting the motivational video that Derek and I made in the previous week, and receiving a second invitation to the rugby video game tournament. I was feeling really good about myself going into match day. I felt a heightened sense of inclusion and truly wished for a good result for the team.

23/06/2013: A Man Of Many Talents

We arrive at the ground, the home of one of my favourite French Rugby Union teams, and I walk out onto the pitch to soak it all in. *'This is amazing,'* I think to myself, *'what a stadium. I can't believe I'm actually here. No time to waste, best find someone in charge and speak some French.'* I do exactly that, walking up to the back of the stands, to where I assume we will be sitting. I rehearse what I'm about to say. *'Bonjour, où sont les sièges des entraîneurs s'il vous plaît? Not bad. Aussi, je voudrais un angle de caméra grand s'il vous plaît. You've got this Craig. You had to do much worse than this on your travels.'* As I reach the back of the stands, I see the gantry and a tall bearded man operating a camera. I take a deep breath and approach with a smile.

My newfound confidence, emerging through my experiences on the trip, inspired me to perform my task expertly. Despite not speaking a word of English, he understood my questions and I got what the coaches wanted. I was delighted. I swelled with pride in my own accomplishments and wanted to show off my achievements to Derek and Charlie. Just as I finish setting up, Derek came running up the terrace to see where we would be sitting for the game. I was delighted to show off my endeavours.

23/06/2013: A Man Of Many Talents, Continued...

How's it looking Craig?' 'Good,' I reply, 'I've managed to set up one Mac with the tight camera angle you want and this Mac with the wide camera angle for video replays.' 'Really? How the hell did you do that? I thought we could only have one or the other' Derek says somewhat startled. 'I just went over to the camera man and asked for them both!' I reply calmly. 'Oh, did he speak English?' he asked. 'No,' I replied, 'not a word.' 'I didn't know you spoke French? You're a man of many talents aren't you? Good Work.'

Feeling confident I'd adequately impressed Derek, I ran down to the dressing room full of excitement. Despite never really spending much time in the dressing room before a game, I was keen to see what the atmosphere was

like. I was feeling so included and good about myself that I wanted to give everyone a 'good luck' pat on the back or a 'best wishes' handshake before the game. It didn't disappoint. I expected to just sit out of the way and soak in the atmosphere, however the players were really comfortable in my presence. Some of them even had the mental space to ask how I was and if everything was all set up ready for kick off. I considered this extremely thoughtful and it only helped to fuel my feelings of unity. I really wanted us to win. I left just moments before kick off and was quietly confident, the players were all really up for the game and the weather was perfect. What's more, there was an incredible atmosphere in the stadium, the likes of which I'd never known. There were 12,000 screaming fans and nearly 1,000 of them were our immensely loyal supporters, making a considerable racket!

23/06/2013: A Man Of Many Talents, Continued...

I'm sitting, surrounded by 11,000 rowdy French fans, trying my best to put the finishing touches to my coding window. As I'm the only analyst on the trip I'm going to have to do everything myself. I copy the codes from my 'Individual Stats' window onto Ian's 'Team Stats' and give it a quick test while the players finish their warm up. *'It's game time!'* I think to myself, tingling with excitement, *'Now's my chance to show the coaches I'm the best analyst in the department. If I can get through this match with no problems, doing two people's jobs, they'll have to be impressed.'*

The game kicked off and it was evident from the first minute that it was going to be a close and tense affair. Our fans were amazing. They made the occasion even more special and totally countered the noise of the French fans around us. I couldn't help but smile. The berating I received off the French fans when anyone scored only helped to further my feelings of inclusion. They thought me part of my team enough to jeer in my face. I loved it. I spent the duration of the game physically shaking with a mixture of excitement and tension, the whole occasion getting the better of me. Despite the most nail-biting finish to a game I'd ever witnessed, we came through it to win by a single point.

23/06/2013: A Man Of Many Talents, Continued...

The final whistle sounds. We've won. As one, Derek, Charlie, and I jump from our seats. Arms in the air we embrace, congratulating each other and shaking hands. I can't stop smiling. All the stress, tension, excitement, and drama of the past two hours have emotionally and physically drained me. In somewhat of a daze, I hurriedly stuff all my equipment into my case and rush down to the dressing room. *'I really don't want to miss the winning song, not this time!'* In the dressing room, the players are all embracing and shaking hands with each other, the staff, and the Club chairman (Sean). With a massive smile on my face, I join in. This time I know all the words and I sing at the top of my lungs. It's the most amazing experience of my professional career.

After the game, I helped put everything away and get some food and free wine, which was typically French. I knew it was going to be a special night, just sitting around the table with the players, coaches, and Sean. The fun didn't stop there. Sean announced that he would pay for one hour's free bar for all the players and staff. We had a fantastic evening sitting around and chatting for about two hours and drank the bar dry of all the different beers that they served. I was delighted that I had this opportunity, feeling proud that I bonded well with a lot of the players, as we sat around sharing drunken stories and laughing endlessly. This was by far and away my most positive experience over the course of my internship, the pinnacle, the reason I'd entered professional sport. I wanted it to continue, I wanted this to be the benchmark, the start of my new and brighter future. The whole trip, from start to finish had showed me exactly how good this life could be. I couldn't wait to go home and tell Louise all about it so that she could enjoy it with me. Life at home was better after the move: I had more time to go to the gym, cycle to work, and even progress my University work and now, finally, my work life had elevated to match these positives. I couldn't have been happier that each aspect of my life was so positive. In the weeks that immediately followed the trip, I noticed that everyone I'd been on it with was warmer and friendlier around the Club. I felt like I'd finally arrived.

4.5.2 Story 9: Play-Off Hopes

Tall Order

Following my recent experiences, I was really enjoying the atmosphere at the Club. My relationships with the players and staff members present on the France trip had progressed and I really felt part of the team. I considered myself a performance analyst at the Club both in title and in identity. There were three league games left and we could still make the play-offs. I could see that I had really started to invest myself into the Club and really wanted us to succeed. Despite this, we still had to play the current champions in an away match.

16/08/2013: Struggling To Focus

Today we travel to the reigning champions, needing just two points to secure our place in the play-offs. *'That's a tall order'* I thought. I remember how close the reverse fixture earlier in the season had been. *'No chance, they're easily favourites to win the Grand Final and we're far from our best!'* Thankfully the journey is a quick one; beating the Friday afternoon traffic we arrive at the pre-match hotel around 3pm. I find a quiet corner to read in, and lay out using a foam roller as a pillow.

Time passes quickly, it's time to eat. I sit at the table with the players and coaches but I'm not paying attention: present but absent at the same time; I'm not really listening to the conversation around me. I can't stay focused. I know this isn't 'real life' it's just a charade I play during the week, but I'm so excited. It's building up inside me as kick off draws closer. I can't concentrate. My mind meanders to where my real life friends are right now, *'kick off is in three hours. Are they there yet? What are they doing? I bet Jamie's wanting food. I hope they're excited.'*

Today's the first time in the two years at the Club that I've been given free tickets for a game. I'm bursting with excitement. In the week, Charlie came into the office looking for me to ask if I wanted tickets for the game. *'Of course I wanted free Super League tickets, who wouldn't? My mates would love them!'* I got four tickets, including VIP access into the post game bar. I'm desperate to meet

up with my mates when we arrive at the ground to give them their tickets; they're all so excited. None of them has been to a Super League game before and I want it to be special for them. *'I hope we play well. I don't want them to see us to get humiliated!'* I don't want the first time my mates come to see my team to be when they get thumped. All I want is for us to be in the contest and it to be an entertaining and engaging game. I can barely contain myself though; I'm a nerve-jangling mess.

I was so preoccupied with these thoughts that I didn't notice anything that was said during the team meeting. I just sat in my own little world, consumed by my excitement. By now, I guess I was happy enough with my feelings of unity. I felt I had finally arrived at the point I'd been striving to achieve all this time? I finally felt at ease with my position, I didn't need to pay it much attention because nothing was at stake. In any case, I was more concerned about the day my friends were having. After the meeting, I slipped back into the corner I had been reading in to pass the hour before we needed to leave.

16/08/2013: Struggling To Focus, Continued...

On arrival, I frantically help unload everything from the bus into the changing rooms, however I'm so absentminded with worrying that my friends are enjoying their day that it hampers my setting up. I finish it and rush over the dewy pitch to where Murphy is, to see if he needs a hand, but he's all done. 'I'm just off to give these tickets to my mates' I tell him, 'I'll be back in a few minutes'. I hurry to the gate where Norman said they were waiting, grinning from ear to ear; my right hand is caressing the envelope containing the tickets in my pocket the whole way, terrified that I might lose them. *'Calm down you halfwit, you've checked them like ten times already today. They're not going anywhere.'* I can't stop thinking about it. I feel like I'm offering my friends a glimpse into an exclusive world and I'm desperate for them to enjoy it. They've been jealous of my job since the beginning and I want to make them more jealous than ever today, by making sure this experience betters their every expectation.

I have my Rugby Football League 'access all areas' pass on so I walk out of the gates and start to scythe my way through the bustling crowd trying to enter the stadium and up on the street to where they are waiting. The distance is about 50 metres but I cover it in what feels like seconds. As I make the last few steps I can see my friends look like giddy school kids on a day trip, especially Dave. He's physically laughing as I approach but I try to calm the smile on my own face. *'I do this every day, nothing special'*. I want them to think that this carnival style experience is my normal day-to-day life, which it is.

Reaching them, I shake their hands. Adam says in his polite northern tones 'now then Craig how's things? We've had a decent day out so far, looking forward to the game.' There's a clamour of excited babble as the rest of them all simultaneously agree. I slide my hand into my right hand trouser pocket and feel the sharp corner of the envelope dig into my thumb. I'm overcome by a weird feeling; I can't put my finger on it. I hand out the tickets and the VIP passes to each of them in turn and watch as they grin like excited kids receiving Christmas presents. As I hand the ticket to each of my friends, I momentarily feel like Willy Wonka giving out golden tickets to a world of adventure. I can sense the excitement and I don't want to disappoint.

The image quickly passes, 'go through the turnstiles and I'll use my access all areas pass to get in the side gate and meet you on the other side', I instruct them. I leave them to it and hurry past security. I'm in before them and they are very impressed that I have a pass giving me such quick and easy access everywhere. I quickly show them around the place, where the bars are, where their seats are and where I will be with the coaches. Their excitement grows every step of the way, especially when I tell them it's a Sky game and they might even get on the television. At this point I say 'I'll have to leave you to it and get on with some work, I'll catch you after the game and show you where the VIP bar is', really meaning *'shit, I should go and make sure everything is ready. Everyone will be wondering where I am.'* I hot-foot it back to the coaching box buzzing,

thoroughly satisfied they're enjoying themselves, and perform my last minute checks.

We started the game okay but a handling error handed over possession and territory and we seemed to be under all sorts of pressure. Despite this, we defended well and seemed to be getting back into the game with a brief flurry into the oppositions half. This didn't last long and after another error handed the ball over in our half, one missed tackle was all it took for them to take a 6-0 lead.

16/08/2013: Struggling To Focus, Continued...

'NO!' comes the shout from the coaches. It makes me jump. Bruce misses a tackle and they score. *'Shit, this is going to be a long day if we keep missing easy tackles. I really hope we don't get humiliated... I wonder if my friends saw that try though? They must have seen it, it was right in front of them. They have really good seats. I wonder what they think of it? Concentrate man, you have a job to do!'*

One part of me was delighted this had all happened near where my friends were sitting but the other half of me was concerned for the impact of this early score on the team. Only 20 minutes had passed though, so we had plenty of time to pick ourselves back up, which we did. This score was the jolt we needed to really start to play.

16/08/2013: Struggling To Focus, Continued...

BOOM, we put in another crunching hit on the opposition fullback. *'That's five huge hits on him now,'* I think to myself, *'he's still down, they've 'killed' him. Well done lads'.* We're defending like never before. My mind wanders while I'm coding the game, *'I hope my friends can feel those hits. I can feel them from here and they're much closer than I am. The noise of the impact is immense! They have to be impressed by this. The atmosphere in the stadium is electric and we're really playing well. I hope they're supporting us!'*

I didn't have long to ponder this, as in the last ten minutes of the first half we really started to pressure the opposition, creating some good opportunities and scoring to level the game. I was praying for the scores to remain level going into the break, at least then if we lost, I could say that we went toe-to-toe for a half. I couldn't think too much about this as the game was still live and I had a job to do. We were attacking – our last set before half time. Bruce scored his try of the season and we took the lead; we needed the conversion to move two scores ahead.

16/08/2013: Struggling To Focus, Continued...

The opposition fans all sit down in shock and our fans, both right in front of us and scattered throughout the whole stadium, erupt with cheers. *'What an amazing try!'* The roar of the crowd is deafening. I can hardly hear myself think. I have a moment to compose myself while the conversion is taken, as I have nothing to code. My first thought is *'I hope my friends saw that, that was an amazing try!'* I quickly shut this line of thought off as I look towards the big television in the north stand. *'I still have a job to do, keep it together. We're leading but is it going to be enough? Are they going to come back at us? I've seen them win from this position before. Do we have enough to hold them out?'* My nerves are shot. My whole body is shaking with anticipation. I close my eyes and cross all my fingers and toes for the kick, like it might somehow make the difference.

We went into the break leading 16 - 6. The coaches didn't want anything showing at half time so I frantically searched my pockets for my phone. I had several messages from my mates saying how they were enjoying the game, the atmosphere, and the huge physical contacts. I was delighted. I felt a swelling of pride in my chest that I'd previously not experienced. Sure we'd played well and beaten some big opposition, however this was different. The presence of my closest friends made the whole thing more special for me. To have them sharing in my enjoyment only made it stronger for me. I didn't have as much time to savour this feeling as I would have liked; the players re-emerged from the dressing room and I was brought back to the present, to the stress and nerves of the occasion.

16/08/2013: Struggling To Focus, Continued...

The whistle blows and I can barely contain my nerves. I'm finding it almost impossible to drag my eyes away from the action long enough to find the correct buttons to press on my coding window. My mind-set has now changed from not wanting my friends to see *my* team humiliated, to wanting my friends to see *my* team beat the reigning champions in their own back yard. I wrestle my focus back to the task at hand. *'This is going exactly to plan, barring a miserable second half performance we're in with a chance of pulling off one of the Club's greatest ever victories!'*

The players put in a monumental effort and defended without touching the ball for 12 uninterrupted minutes; still we didn't yield. At this point I felt we were really hanging on by the skin of our teeth. Although we were clearly defending exceptionally, we had to be getting tired. I wanted to run onto the field and give everyone a pat on the back. Tell them 'well done' and 'you can do this boys'. I was so emotionally attached to the team; every fibre of me wanted us to win. Our defence was heroic and the collisions bone shattering. Once again, I found my mind wandering from my coding duties to my friends.

16/08/2013: Struggling To Focus, Continued...

We kick and set up a good chase. They catch the ball on half way and gave it to their biggest and best prop to run it in, hard! He comes steaming towards our defensive line, with a 20-metre run up and I'm sure the line's going to break. It doesn't. Chris just keeps coming out of it and meets their player front on. The collision is by far the biggest I've ever seen and it stops him in his tracks. It's like two trains going full steam ahead and coming together violently; the noise of the collision is deafening. I'm in awe. My mind again wanders to my friends, *'Did they see that hit? Are they as impressed as I am?'* I have to forget these thoughts as tempting as it is to dwell on them, I have coding I need to do.

This was the longest and most stressful ten minutes of my sporting life and I don't quite know how we came through it, but we did! Every player in the

squad stepped up and put in a Herculean effort that saw us win the game 16-12. We had secured our place in the play-offs with two games to spare. There was a wall of noise that was deafening. All our fans were on their feet and I couldn't help but join in. Cheering, I turned to Ian, who hugged me. Still cheering, Derek and Charlie lent over to shake my hand and we all congratulated each other. Ian and I hurriedly started to pack up. There wasn't much to put away so it didn't take long, although all of the directors (who had been sitting directly behind us all game) wanted to congratulate us and shake our hands, so it took a little longer.

We finally got away and went down to the changing room as the last of the players were coming in. All the players and staff were shaking hands, embracing, patting each other's backs and congratulating one another. Derek asked for quiet and said a few words before handing over Sean. We then opened the changing room door and sang the winner's song and once again I was able to sing it with real gusto. I wasn't afraid to hide my emotions: the tingling excitement, the rush of adrenaline, as everyone in the dressing room was experiencing the same feelings. It was a magical moment to be part of and one that I won't forget in a hurry. Unfortunately, I couldn't stand around and enjoy it for long.

16/08/2013: Struggling To Focus, Continued...

After the song, I race out of the changing room to find my friends. I've not checked my phone in the excitement of winning the game, rushing to pack up, and going into the sheds. I'm eager to see their reactions to such an amazing game and dramatic win for us. They're all buzzing when I see them and are really impressed by the game. I walk with them to the VIP bar, stories of favourite moments bouncing back and forth. I tell them to go mingle and that I'll be back after doing some more work. *'I wish I didn't have to. Why can't I just stay and chat?'* I left them in great spirits, still regaling their favourite moments from a memorable game. *'I don't want to go back and help clean the sheds. I want to sit and eat with the players, join in the celebrations. Actually, I don't even mind missing out on that. I've done that before. I want to get back to my friends.'*

It was really good seeing my friends there, it was the highlight of an amazing evening for me. On the way home, I got a text from one of them asking when our next game was. He'd enjoyed the game so much he wanted to come to our next match of his own accord. This really made my evening. I was so happy they had enjoyed themselves. Their comments and jealousy reaffirmed that I had a fairly special job. The coach ride home with the team was amazing too: we stopped to get some beers and the atmosphere was great. Everyone was upbeat. For once, the coaches were really happy. Not something that I'd been able to say too often during my time at the Club.

The significance of the win was more than us beating the title favourites in their own back yard, it meant that with two rounds of the regular season still to play we'd secured our place in the play-offs. I remembered back to the end of last season when we'd narrowly missed out on making the play-offs. I could distinctly remember the disappointment of everyone involved with the Club. The main difference for me was that I actually wanted us to progress this time, rather than last time when I'd just wanted the season to end. This change was as a result of my investment into and emotional attachment to the Club, the players, and the staff.

Uncertainty

Over the course of my internship, I'd endeavoured to be seen as a valued and integral member of the Club. This had been a feature of my journal keeping, my day-to-day existence from that very first day. Over the last two months or so, I felt there had been a significant change in my perspectives, my outlook, and my ambitions regarding my current internship, however there had been one nagging thought that I couldn't escape from. It was something that I wanted to ignore, as it directly contradicted the extreme positives of the last few months. It concerned the growing uncertainty of my future at the Club and had become an ever-increasing topic of conversation. There had been countless meetings, phone calls, and intimations that the existing link between the Club and the University would be coming to an end following the current season, however there had not yet been any decision made on this matter by anyone with any real authority.

Unfortunately for me, this meant that I didn't at present know whether I would be at the Club next year and this prompted me to question how much I

wanted to be there. Was this the best use of my time? Did the positives of being part of that team outweigh the negatives? I would certainly have more time to write my thesis if I were not at the Club. Would I be able to get some lecturing experience or even some time sitting in on exams? These were ultimately contested by similar arguments to remain. I loved working in professional sport. I yearned to keep the excitement and adrenaline rush of competition. I'd made massive progress over the last few months; did I really want to throw that all away?' I really had to question what I was doing it for: was I trying to get a job? Was that at this Club? Was I just using it for my PhD? What did I want to concentrate on more? Where did I see myself in the future? These questions and many more raced through my head and I could never truly answer any of them. I simply went from one to the next without forming a concrete decision and found myself back at the start again. The only thing I knew for any amount of certainty was that my supervisors were at least happy that I'd collected sufficient valuable data.

10/08/2013: Starting To Progress

I arrive at the University eager for my 'critical friends' meeting with my supervisors. It's the first meeting I've had in a few months and a lot's changed. *'Last time I saw them I was in a bad place, I was looking to move to the city and struggling with the politics and emotions of life at the Club. So much has changed since then.'* After the initial pleasantries, I jump straight into the content of my most recent journals. I regale them with the happenings in this period and await a response. Nick is first to respond: 'I'm glad that you feel things are starting to progress for you. You seem much more positive in yourself and that's pleasing.' Peter follows this up: 'I can sympathise with the troubles you've been through and I agree with Nick, you seem much happier. You look well.' 'Thank you,' I reply. 'I feel like I have so much more energy.'

During this interaction, I received some amazing feedback, it really affirmed my new positive outlook. My supervisors then brought up something I hadn't even considered, that come the end of the season, I would have been keeping a diary for 18 months. With all of the struggles I'd faced over this

period, they were convinced that, at this point, I would have more than enough data for my thesis. This was fantastic news. I was delighted to think I'd made a good start to my postgraduate studies and that my supervisors were impressed with the details within my journal entries.

My initial doubts and fears, outlined in 'Excited Beginnings', were quashed. I couldn't help but think I'd done it. I'd made the internship work for me in at least one of the ways I'd initially intended. I was still unsure of my exact career trajectory at this stage, however knew I had developed the knowledge and skill set such that I might hopefully one-day secure employment in performance analysis, if I so desired. Additionally, I was convinced that I'd also given myself the best possible start to my academic career, by collecting such significant data for my thesis. It was for this reason that I felt prepared for the future, whatever happened with the link between the Club and the University. This thought greatly reduced my stress levels and even helped to reduce some of the tension and conflict between my different identities.

4.5.3 Story 10: No Goodbyes

Thoughtful Encapsulation

14/09/2013: All Good Things Come To An End

Today is a massive day: the first round of the play-offs. More than that, today could be my last experience of Super League Rugby. *'It's not going to be my last experience of rugby. No, the University have signed a support contract with the New Zealand Kiwis for next month's Rugby League World Cup. I'm so excited about that. I get to work with some of the biggest names in world rugby, at the biggest competition in the sport; it's going to be the pinnacle of my career for sure.'* This aside, I couldn't escape the fact that a loss today would end my time at the Club. *'I really don't want this to be the end. Sure I've had some bad times, but they're all behind me now. I am part of the team for real now.'*

I'd reached the goal I set myself when initially embarking on my internship: I was part of the team. This was all I ever really wanted to achieve from my time at the Club: acceptance from the players, coaches and staff. The possible career in performance analysis and the data collection for my research always played second fiddle to my burning desire to be accepted at the Club. I respected everyone involved with professional sport, I even idolised some. My every wish was to gain the respect and acceptance of a mere few of these individuals, to flatter my ego develop my sense of self worth. A small part of me wanted to be someone people knew and recognised within the professional sporting world and this was my opportunity to realise that dream.

14/09/2013: All Good Things Come To An End, Continued...

I arrive at the hotel before the game, however today, I appreciate the moment more. Everything seems to happen slower and I can see it in a new, more sentimental light. I think back over all the times I've been to this very place since starting out at the Club, since that first time back in May last year, before the Magic Weekend. *'I arrived a nervous wreck. A timid twenty-something year old man who was offered a glimpse into a privileged and exciting new world. I could*

think of nothing more than trying to appear confident and not overwhelmed by the whole occasion, but that was far from the truth. I wasn't at all confident, I didn't have a clue what I was doing and the occasion was definitely overwhelming. How far I've come since then!

As I collect my things from my car boot, I ponder some more of my visits here. *'I've arrived late before. I've even missed the bus once. How embarrassing! I thought I'd ruined my chances of gaining the coaches' respect for sure that day, but no one ever mentioned it. People just forgot it had even happened. There's also been some good times too, none more so than the trip to France, which also started at this very hotel.'* The contrast between these examples couldn't be greater. My perception of the implications of each couldn't have been more different either. *'I was convinced missing the bus that time would ruin me professionally, but that going on the trip would make me better both personally and professionally.'* As I ascend the steps onto the coach, greeted warmly by the staff and players at the front, I truly appreciate my current position within the Club for the first time.

I knew I'd come a long way since my introduction to Derek and Charlie as the new joint head of the Performance Analysis department. I felt this title came with a level of expectation from the coaches, something I was always trying to live up to. I placed great significance on every interaction to further convince them of my developing knowledge. I also considered the delivery of polished video feedback sessions as an important facet of my integration and the best vehicle for showcasing my technical abilities. Ultimately, I didn't want anyone to think I was incompetent, because this would inevitably lead them to the conclusion that I was in fact a fraud; that I actually had very little knowledge or experience of either rugby league or performance analysis in general.

On the contrary, throughout the course of my internship, I highlighted various interactions with both players and coaches whereby I sought to further my personal relationships outside the confines of my professional role. I felt this would go some way to support the development of my professional identity with these individuals, as getting to know me on a personal level, they could see my

passion for the sport and the Club. This is exactly what the coach ride highlighted.

14/09/2013: All Good Things Come To An End, Continued...

I take up my usual seat. I look over to Derek and smiling, ask how he is. I get a positive response, he's clearly excited for the game but I can tell he's also incredibly nervous. *'This is his first Head Coach job and his first play-off game,'* I think to myself, *'He clearly wants it to go well.'* I take a brief look around to make sure no one's listening before leaning and reassuring him, 'I'm feeling good about today. We've beaten them three times already this season, twice away too!' This seems to do the job. 'Oh, I'd forgotten we beat them here in the Challenge Cup, yeah that's a positive, I'll have to remind the boys of that before kick off. Thanks for that Craig. Anyway, how's Louise, she enjoying the new flat?' 'Good, thanks,' I reply. *'Nice of him to remember I've moved and ask about my Wife by name. It really makes me feel included, like he values me enough to recall this information about me.'*

It was interactions like these that had become increasingly frequent over recent months. I felt people at the Club knew me better and I knew them better as a result. It did bring me to question when I had actually achieved this level of relationships. At the beginning of the internship, this was the very ambition I strived to achieve. I interpreted my interactions with these individuals from the perspective of someone who hadn't achieved it. I always wanted to utilise the positive experiences of these interactions to further develop my relationships towards the elevated object level. As such, I never recognised when I had actually obtained this level. Only recently had I stopped to question my relationships, judging them less against those between longer standing members of staff and more against my own relationships at the beginning of my internship. It was clear to me now that I'd reach this level some time ago, but couldn't see it for looking.

As I deliberated over all my experiences, I realised that the point at which I had achieved my goal had come some months previously. This caused me to question my interpretation of a number of incidents during this time: was I wrong

to perceive things the way I did? Knowing then what I knew now, would I have interpreted them differently? I think the answer to this would have been yes, I would have interpreted a lot of things differently. I may have placed less importance on certain interactions – if they were even important at all. I now understand that incidents / interpreted as possibly significant may not have even registered as incidents to the other people present.

14/09/2013: All Good Things Come To An End, Continued...

We arrive two hours before kick off and as we've worked here twice before, Murphy and I decided there is little point setting up this early. As I stride out onto the turf, one of the players, Chris catches my attention and beckons me over. 'I hear you're going to be working with the Kiwis at the World Cup next month.' 'Yeah I am, I can't wait. It's going to be amazing,' I reply. 'You going to be playing for Scotland?' 'Yeah I am. Can you try and get me some shorts off one of the Kiwi players? If we make the semi-finals, we'll end up playing you so I'll swap them for a pair of my Scotland ones then if you like?' I can tell Chris is genuinely excited about the prospect, he's such a nice, down-to-earth bloke. I tell him I'll see what I can do, but that at any rate, I'll try and get him into the changing rooms after the match should the two sides meet. *'I can't believe he wants me to get him something from one of the Kiwi players, that's incredible. I was going to ask if he could get me some shorts from one of his Scotland teammates, what a role reversal!'* I leave the pitch brimming with excitement and revelling in the joys of this interaction.

This interaction highlighted the questioning of my initial interpretation of certain incidents. Take Chris for example. Here is someone I have possibly built one of the strongest personal and professional relationships with. This person however, was present during one of the most emotionally challenging incidents that arose during my internship, outlined in the story 'Wrestle'. I perceived this interaction to be catastrophically damaging to my goal of achieving positive working and social relationships with all who were present, yet here I was interacting freely on a personal level. Here he was, seeking me out to ask for a personal favour. He clearly perceived me as being important enough to be able

to facilitate his ambition. How then had the 'Wrestle' incident been perceived by him? Could he even recall it?

How many other similar examples were there where I'd perceived something as catastrophically damaging, when, in actual fact, it wasn't even perceived as an incident by everyone else present. I questioned whether the jeering and abuse I received when the projector switched to Sky Sports in the 'Last Thing I Needed' section of my 'Slump' story was merely light hearted banter because the players felt comfortable enough with our relationships to do so? I know now from my experiences of the Club, as well as my old rugby club, that banter is a big part of team bonding: that the more comfortable people feel with you or the more they respect you, the more banter they are willing to have with you. Still questioning this, started to set up the gantry.

14/09/2013: All Good Things Come To An End, Continued...

After quickly ascending the familiar stairs, I find Murphy unpacking our equipment. 'Where's Ian?' I ask as I approach. 'He's gone to do something with Charlie I think' comes the reply. *'Funny that,' I muse, 'he always seems to find some excuse to hang around with Charlie. Those two have built some sort of special relationship recently. I guess that's why Charlie wanted Ian to go on all the away trips. I suppose this is his only career option, I have my University connections to fall back on. He doesn't, I suppose that's why he's putting all his effort into getting a full time position at the Club. Never mind, he's not here setting up so he can go where he's told and do the 'rubbish' job for a change. If this is going to be my last experience with the team, I want to do the best job for once.'* I help Murphy set everything up and tell him my plan. He's more than happy to help and we set up so that I'm closest to the coaches with the team stats template on my Mac and Ian is furthest away with my 'individuals' template on his.

This interaction was typical of something that I'd also come to realise about myself. Something that I wasn't particularly proud of, but had accepted was an integral part of the job; something no amount of practical knowledge or training could prepare me for. The realisation of the political nature of the Club

was something that I was slow to adopt. For the first half of my internship I simply took everything on face value, unaware of the agendas or schemes of others. It wasn't until I started to listen to the paranoia inside me that I started to develop an awareness of its ubiquity. This awareness increased as I became paranoid that others were performing politically driven actions to further their own ambitions. I started to internalise the processes and outcome of these acts within the given social contexts and, unbeknown to myself, found that I was subconsciously engaging more frequently in these actions myself.

The first example of this was in an impulsive reaction to a perceived detrimental effect on my position, detailed in the 'Wrestle' story. Amidst a perceived vulnerability and threat to my professional self-identity in this instant, I instinctively acted to avoid such repercussions without consideration of the possible negative consequences for others. I wasn't proud of it, it filled me with regret and sorrow. I was appalled that I had been put in the position in the first place, but more than that, I was horrified at the way I responded. It was so out of character. How had the coaching environment, which had seemed so friendly and inviting from the outside, forced me to act so maliciously? Was this what it was like to work in professional sport – all the backstabbing and 'one-upmanship'? Was this what it was going to be like for the rest of my career – always having to watch my back?

That was not why I got into performance analysis, however I soon came to realise that if I wanted my internship to be successful, I would at some point undoubtedly have to consciously engage in some political action myself. By helping Murphy set up in this present example, I was engaging in political action, to further my relationships with the coaches, at Ian's expense.

14/09/2013: All Good Things Come To An End, Continued...

The game is about to kick off and Ian arrives on the gantry with the coaches. I get a surge of guilt that manifests as a cramping sensation deep within my stomach. *'I don't want to be the one to tell him we've swapped all the jobs around.'* I drop my head, focusing on a small patch of floor, while Murphy tells Ian the plan. I sneak a sheepish glance over to where Ian is stood. His face speaks a thousand words. *'He's not happy with this at all and neither would I be in his position!'* I quickly look away so as not to catch his

attention, my mind caught by a gut wrenching flashback to a previous scheming action. *'I know it wasn't me who did it but I still felt horrific when Ian was made to look foolish in front of all the players and coaches. I can still remember the helpless look on his face when nothing worked, the coaches' anger, and the players' scornful glances.'*

With the harrowing images of this experience in my mind, I questioned my current decision. *'This isn't the same as that though. I haven't deliberately made someone look stupid in front of everyone they respect. I've simply manufactured a situation so I get a fair shot at interacting with the coaches. Anyway, he has much better relationships with them than I.'*

I felt ashamed at myself but I knew that if I didn't do it, I wouldn't have got to perform the more important job role all season. I never expected there to be so much political action in such a supposedly 'team' environment. On entering, I naively thought that everyone would be striving toward the same objective of successful team performances. I had no idea of the level of conflicting personal agendas, nor the lengths to which individuals would go to realise them. I justified my decision by telling myself that Ian would be at the Club next year regardless of the link with the University; Derek and Charlie had made that crystal clear over the last few weeks. They seemed happy enough to let the University link fail but fought tooth and nail to ensure Ian had a Club contract in place.

This got me thinking about the link between the Club and the University. Murphy was annoyed with the coaches' shunning of the University and, as such, started a one-man rebellion against them. I suppose this must have contributed to the fractious relationship between Murphy and the coaches. That's also why I tried for so long to distance myself from his actions, to separate myself from him and try to remove some of the stigma that the label of 'University' engendered. I think the main point was that the coaches and other Club officials deep down resented the University's involvement. They seemed much happier with the people they knew, with Ian, as he didn't represent the University. I felt like I could have taken full advantage of all the positive interactions in the world to change the coach's perceptions of me, but somehow

this would never have been enough. What was it about me, or what I stood for, that the coaches found fundamentally unlikeable? It made me question what the cause of this animosity was, or if there was anything I could have done differently to try and change this perception of me.

14/09/2013: All Good Things Come To An End, Continued...

The game kicks off and from the very beginning, I can sense something is different. The positive working relationships with the coaches that I've developed over the course of the last six months seem more awkward and uncomfortable. *'Maybe they just don't like change, not on the biggest occasion of the year anyway. They'll settle into it as the game goes on'* I think to myself. I continue to do the job as proficiently as Murphy or Ian would do it but there is still something I can't quite place. *'Is it the pressure of the occasion? Is it that we're not winning? There's still plenty of time left, we're only a few points behind!'* It doesn't change.

Once again I felt somewhat detached. Why were they acting this way? Was it because they knew something that I didn't? That the Club would ultimately not renew the contract with the University? I obviously didn't have the answers to these questions but I knew something was wrong. I convinced myself that it was yet another example of a trend that I had come to appreciate in recent months. It was my opinion that the surface interactions, the emotions and politics of Club personnel were inextricably interlinked with the deeper emotions and political actions pertaining to people's perceptions of their own job security. In essence, team performances determined the interactions I was experiencing. I'd come to appreciate that my positive experiences, in terms of relationship building and feelings of unity, were experienced during times of success. Conversely, my negative experiences were more often felt during tenser periods of poor results. I attributed this to the extra pressure placed on Club officials when the team was losing: people fearing for their job security. As humans, we are more likely to fight for something we cherish if we feel it is in jeopardy. We are more likely to engage in political action to better our personal position at the expense of others and this is precisely what I perceived to be happening.

This also made me question with whom I experienced these interactions and fluctuating relationships. Looking back over the course of my internship it became apparent that this perception of relationship fluctuation was a phenomenon pertaining to the coaches and other Club officials, rather than the players. I was confident that my relationships with the players had surpassed my initial ambition, that they would continue far beyond my time at that Club; a belief that received positive reinforcement moments later.

14/09/2013: All Good Things Come To An End, Continued...

At half time I leave the gantry, *'I need some head space, it's getting very tense up here.'* I end up in the tunnel, just outside the dressing room, head down. I sense another person in the tunnel and raise my head. In front of me are two players that left the Club at the end of last season. I can feel a smile break across my face. 'Hi Craig, how's it going mate? Good to see you,' one of them shouts. 'Hi guys, long time no see. I'm good thanks, how's the new Club?' I reply.

This interaction felt comfortable and relaxed, reaffirming my opinion that the relationships I'd made with the players would be long lasting. I'd not seen these particular players in nearly a year, yet they still thought well enough of me to chat easily for ten minutes. I was confident that the same would be said for the current players and dismayed that I hadn't achieved this level with the coaches. Maybe my initial assumption that the players were the most important group to impress was incorrect? Maybe that was just a case of me wanting to justify to myself that I needed their approval and acceptance to, in some way, define *me*.

I'd spent a lot of time over the past year trying to work out the real me, what with all the family issues I'd had to contend with. It was because of these issues that I'd also come to realise that I couldn't separate my experiences in one aspect from the other spheres of my life; they were all intricately interconnected. I found myself engaging in political actions at home and at the University and my frustrations and hardships in these areas affected my ability to form relationships at the Club. Ultimately, I didn't have the deep relationship with the coaches that I needed, despite the recent positive superficial

advancements. That said, I was still so emotionally engaged with the whole Club, that I wanted us to win the match.

14/09/2013: All Good Things Come To An End, Continued...

The full time whistle sounds, we've lost. The season is over, for us at least. There is a moment's calm on the gantry, no one speaks, we all just look at the floor. *'Well I guess this is it? This is the end of the road?'* After what feels like an eternity, Derek turns to us all, 'Thanks boys, thanks for all the support.' We shake hands and he leaves, closely followed by Charlie. Murphy, Ian, and I pack all our things away without saying a word to one another. I can see the players doing their final lap of honour. *'I still can't believe that's it!'*

After packing away, we head down to the changing rooms. The atmosphere is sombre. The players, coaches, backroom staff, and chairman are all in the room, hugging, shaking hands, and thanking one another. Some of the players and staff know this is their last match. There's a real sorrow in the air. Inside I'm conflicted. *'I wish I knew what was happening next year. I'm sure I won't be back but I can't be certain. I don't want to say final farewells to everyone if I'm staying. But if I'm not, I don't want to miss this opportunity.'* I decide to simply thank everyone for the season but say nothing of possibly leaving, quashing my inner desire to say my adieus.

My thoughts are cut short by Derek as he addresses the room. 'I'd like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you and farewell Kevin [Head Physio] who is leaving us after five long years at the Club. We want to wish you all the best for the future.' The room bursts into the applause and shouts of 'Good luck mate!' Kevin takes centre stage and says a rather emotional goodbye. Standing alone in my corner, I can feel a sense of anger and frustration welling inside as he speaks, an emptiness growing in my chest. *'Why don't I know what's happening next season? I want to be able to say my bit like Kevin is. I'm missing out on this opportunity. If I don't say it now, I won't get another chance. I'll get no goodbyes!'* I do nothing.

Because I truly had no idea that this was going to be the last time I saw a lot of these players and staff, I could say nothing. I had to stand in my corner feeling completely alone. No one could see my inner struggle, the sadness I was feeling at the possible loss of a goodbye. I felt helpless and abandoned. There was no struggle, no argument and no drama. I simply slipped away unnoticed. I got to say my goodbyes to some of the staff in the week that followed, after my exit was confirmed. This did little to console me; I'd already missed the opportunity.

I was sad to see it slip away like this without proper ceremony; however I knew that this moment marked a very significant time for me. I'd reach the point in my internship where my supervisors were happy that I'd collected more than sufficient data for my PhD. For this reason, I was happy enough that the off-season was finally upon us. I was due some quality time with my Wife before the next chapter of my life began, whatever that might be.

5.0 Discussion

5.1 Introduction

Within this chapter, I will provide a theoretical interpretation of my interactions and experiences over the course of my internship. Importantly, although significant themes have been separated for analytical reason, they should be considered as interconnected and collectively offer an insight into my experiences. My interpretation of my experiences will initially focus on the micro-political features relating to my performance analyst position. This interpretation is principally grounded in Kelchtermans and colleagues' (e.g. Kelchtermans & Ballett, 2002a, 2002b; Kelchtermans, 2005, 2009; Vanassche & Kelchtermans, 2014) theorising on the micro-politics of organisational life, as well as Goffman's (1959, 1969, 1971) dramaturgical theory.

Following this micro-political reading of my experiences, the discussion will focus on the emotional features of my internship, specifically utilising the emotional perspective presented by Hochschild (1979, 1983). The third section of this chapter will consider the structural vulnerability and stigma that I experienced during my internship (Goffman, 1963; Braithwaite, 1989; Kelchtermans & Ballett, 2002b). The fourth section of this chapter will consider my experiences of the different identities that I simultaneously enacted alongside my internship. My interpretation is principally grounded in Stryker's (1980) symbolic interaction and Burke and Stets' (2009) theorising of social identities. Finally, I will conclude this section by considering my emotional experiences within these other identities in relation to the theorising of both Goffman (1959, 1969, 1971) and Hochschild (1979, 1983).

5.2 *Surviving And Thriving In Performance Analysis: A Micro-Political Analysis*

The current subsection of this chapter aims to discuss my experiences and interactions in relation to my performance analyst intern role. With this in mind, discussion will initially focus on my expectations upon entering the coaching environment and my struggle to gain acceptance and standing throughout my internship. Following this, discussion will then consider how my initial experiences shaped my understanding of the contested and negotiated nature of the coaching context. The section will be concluded with a discussion

of how I implemented strategic action in order to protect and further my position, as well as the strategies I implemented and the emotional cost of this process.

5.2.1 Seen *'Doing A Good Job': Professional Self-Understanding*

A key feature outlined at the very beginning of my narrative was the desire to be seen to be doing a good job. I entered the Club hoping to show the coaches, the players, and my analysis colleagues that I was hard working, creative and professional. I wanted to prove to everyone that I could make a difference, viewing developing and maintaining this desired professional image as essential in obtaining buy-in from everyone at the Club. In return, I craved the recognition of significant others at the Club: I desired to be desired (Crossley, 2001). I recognised that how I judged the enactment of my performance analysis role, was largely dependent on how I perceived these significant others to have evaluated my performance.

My eagerness to impress was initially outlined within my *'Excited Beginnings'* story, the day I first received my Club kit. I recalled thinking to myself *'now you're going to look the part. The coaches, the players and everyone else are going to know you're part of the Club for sure!'*. This understanding of how the opinions of others influenced my self-evaluation was mirrored within my *'Not Part of the Team'* story. I recalled trying to prove I had the same level of technical skills as my analysis colleagues through leading the match day analysis support for the first time. Unfortunately, within this particular interaction a number of technical difficulties out of my control led me to perceive the coaches, through their body language and overt displeasure, as negatively evaluating my skill set and knowledge. Due to my failings in this interaction, as well as the fact there were others presented within my narrative, I perceived the coaches to consider my analysis colleagues as having greater knowledge and technical skills than myself, despite my having been brought in to jointly lead the department.

This negative interaction also directly contradicted the importance I placed on having my professional competency affirmed by the Head Coach and his Assistant, as outlined in my *'Excited Beginnings'* story. I recalled my eagerness to receive positive feedback from these coaches during my first one-to-one interaction with them. This was based on my understanding that these individuals had the largest influence on who they wanted (or not) within their

coaching team. I also expressed the desire to utilise this interaction to demonstrate to them my rapidly developing technical skills, in an effort to increase their opinion of me professionally.

It was at this time that I also expressed a desire to gain the trust and respect of another important group of individuals, the players. Indeed, within my 'Wrestle' story, I expressed an awareness that I entered the coaching environment with no previous playing or coaching experience of elite level sport. Despite having a good knowledge of rugby league and performance analysis more generally (though not at the level of my analysis colleagues), in addition to being highly computer literate and creative (aspects I consider fundamental for competent performance analysts); I realised that the players' perception of my status and achievements counted for very little. I understood that I needed to increase the number of interactions I was afforded with this important group of key stakeholders. In this regard, within my 'Mixed Feelings' story I recalled how I aimed to utilise an important video session as a vehicle to increase my visibility to the players and their opinion of me as a result.

When trying to make sense of my experiences I found it particularly useful to draw on Kelchtermans' (2009) discussion of *professional self-understanding*. As a component of Kelchtermans and Ballett's (2002b) *personal interpretive framework*, *professional self-understanding* considers an individual's contextual 'self' understanding (product) and how this 'product' results from ongoing sense-making of experiences. Kelchtermans (2009) developed this theoretical framework through the narrative reconstruction of beginning-teachers' experiences, with subject data collected over two decades of cyclical biographical interviews, including individuals in different positions within schools and at various stages of their teaching careers (Kelchtermans, 1993, 1999, 2005; Kelchtermans & Ballett, 2002a, 2002b). Through this work, Kelchtermans (2009) identified five different subcomponents of *professional self-understanding*: *self-image*, *self-esteem*, *task perception*, *job motivation*, and *future perspectives*.

Self-image offers an insight into how individuals typify themselves in a given situation or context and is to some degree based on self-perception, however it is to a larger degree based on what others (e.g. work colleagues, family members, and friends) mirror back to the individual (Kelchtermans, 2009).

Self-esteem is defined as an individual's appreciation for their actual job performance or the answer to the question 'how well am I doing?' (Vanassche & Kelchtermans, 2014, p. 118). Like *self-image*, external feedback is also particularly significant, however this is filtered and interpreted, with feedback from some considered more significant than from others (Nais, 1985). Importantly, this concept also takes emotions into consideration, understanding that positive *self-esteem* is crucial for individuals to experience job satisfaction and a sense of professional fulfilment and wellbeing (Bullough, 2008; Kelchtermans, 2009).

Task perception encompasses those responsibilities an individual believes they need to perform to justify their position, asking the question 'what do I consider as legitimate duties I have to perform?' (Vanassche & Kelchtermans, 2014). Kelchtermans (2009) suggested that positive evaluation by key stakeholders allows neophytes to feel justified within their position and develop professionally. These evaluations are, however, fragile, fluctuating in time, and require constant re-establishment (Kelchtermans, 1996, 1999, 2005).

Job motivation relates to the motives or drives responsible for entering professional sport in the first place (Vanassche & Kelchtermans, 2014). Interestingly, while this originates from a passion for the chosen subject matter, often teachers experience job satisfaction and positive *self-esteem* as a result of their pupils' evaluations of their support (Kelchtermans, 2009).

Future perspectives reveal an individual's expectations of their future job opportunities: how they see themselves professionally in years to come (Kelchtermans, 2009). This is not a static, fixed identity, but rather the product of an ongoing interactive process of sense making and construction based on personal experiences (Kelchtermans, 2009).

Collectively, these five components encapsulate the self-understanding individuals have for their practices, whilst simultaneously recognising the dynamic nature and contextual embeddedness of an individual's sense of 'self' (Kelchtermans, 2009).

When considering my early experiences in relation to this theorising, it could be argued that, on entering the coaching environment, I understood my actions were under constant evaluation from others (Kelchtermans, 2009). Even at this early stage in my internship, I was aware of existing important actors within the organisation, in this case the coaches, players, and my analysis

colleagues. I understood these individuals all had certain (and to a degree shared) normative ideas about how performance analysis should be done and the attributes of a good performance analyst (Gold, 1996). For this reason, complementing Kelchtermans and Ballett's (2002b) findings with beginning-teachers, throughout my first few months at the Club I proactively sought opportunities to demonstrate my competencies as a lead performance analyst and have them recognised by these significant others. Like these beginning-teachers then, I desired positive appraisals from these key stakeholders as a means of increasing *self-image* and *self-esteem* (Kelchtermans & Ballett, 2002b). In Crossley's (2001) terms, it could be suggested that in developing a consciousness for those around me, I desired to be desired by not only these important actors, but also the organisation as a whole. In this regard, my ideas about myself as an analyst were influenced by my perception of what others thought about me, with me internalising their judgement on my then-current capabilities and enactment as a performance analyst (Kelchtermans, 2009). This supports the findings of Kelchtermans and Ballett (2002b, p. 111), who identified that beginning-teachers expressed an acute awareness that their actions were 'perceived, interpreted and judged' by others and that what these 'others' perceived, or what the beginning-teachers believed them to perceive, determined their evaluation of themselves (Kelchtermans & Ballett, 2002b).

Considering the examples presented from my '*Wrestle*' and '*Mixed Feelings*' stories, it could be suggested that I wanted to utilise the delivery of important video sessions as a means of increasing my visibility to players and to present a positive *self-image* as a result (Kelchtermans & Ballett, 2002b; Kelchtermans, 2009). In this regard, I considered delivery of these sessions as high in my *task perception* and the positive consequences for *self-image* I experienced helped increase my *job motivation* (Kelchtermans & Ballett, 2002b; Kelchtermans, 2009). Kelchtermans and Ballett (2002b) reported beginning-teachers demonstrated an awareness of the importance of exhibiting technical knowledge or proficiency in front of key stakeholders in order to increase *self-image* and *future perspectives*.

Conversely, within the example presented from my '*Not Part of the Team*' story, it could be said that I saw my own failure to demonstrate my leadership capabilities within this interaction as irreparably damaging my chances of securing a future role at the Club, or affecting *future perspectives*

(Kelchtermans, 2009). I felt I had lost the trust and respect of the coaches that I had previously developed through my more positive interactions (such as that presented from my '*Excited Beginnings*' story) and, ultimately, thought they would not want me to remain in their coaching team (Kelchtermans & Ballett, 2002b; Kelchtermans, 2009). At the time, I believed the coaches' negative evaluations – of my ability to provide the required and expected level of analysis support – to detrimentally impact on my *self-image* (Kelchtermans & Ballett, 2002b). Importantly, it was not just the opinions of these significant others that informed my *self-image*, it was also in what Burkitt (2014) refers to as their emotional evaluative tones. My experiences of Club life were not just informed by the words or phrases of others, but also in my reading of the embodied manner in which others expressed these sentiments (Burkitt, 2014). Ultimately, as a result of these early interactions, I understood that how I judged the performance of my professional role was based on my interpretation of the actions, greetings, gestures, and innervations of key others at the Club (Burkitt, 2014).

My experiences in this regard support previous findings from the wider coaching literature (e.g. Potrac et al., 2013a; Thompson, Potrac & Jones, 2013) and, more recently, performance analysis literature (Huggan, Nelson & Potrac, 2015). The examples presented above provide further suggestions that individuals within an elite sports coaching environments, evaluate their professional *self-image* based on their interpretations of the evaluations of key stakeholders (Potrac et al., 2013a; Thompson, Potrac & Jones, 2013; Huggan, Nelson & Potrac, 2015). My early experiences of professional rugby league also suggest that these experiences are not limited to individuals (coaches and analysts) working within elite football, but may in fact be indicative of professional sport more generally. Interestingly, my experiences develop previous findings in this area by offering an insight into the different groups of key stakeholders (e.g. coaches, players, conditioners and analysts) with whom individuals may find it beneficial to develop positive relationships.

5.2.2 Everyone Has Their Own Agenda: Micro-Political Literacy

As a result of my interactions with the players, coaches and other backroom staff, during the first few months of my internship, I quickly realised that my somewhat apolitical, rationalistic, and naive conception of what it meant

to work in professional sport failed to appreciate the gritty and messy realities of the coaching environment. My naivety led me to believe, upon entering the coaching team, that the main prerogative of everyone involved was to help the team succeed. I quickly understood, however, that because of the conflicting agendas of everyone involved, the reality of the environment was very different. I witnessed the competition between individuals for status, ranking, and possible futures, hidden beneath the veil of cooperation, which comprised being part of the coaching 'team'.

My first experience of this can be seen within my '*Not Part of the Team*' story, when I initially consider the ongoing conflicts with my analysis colleague, Ian. I considered the actions of Ian to have undermined my position during my absence. Over the following months however, I also became paranoid that there was an increasing frequency of undermining and deliberately unhelpful actions within the coaching team towards one another. Indeed, within my '*Mixed Feelings*' story I detailed how this paranoia led me to perceive one of my colleagues as undermining another in front of the players and coaches during the most important video session of the year. In this example, I questioned whether this was intentional and was left wondering whether something like this might happen to me in the future. Unfortunately, I did not have to wonder for long, as in my '*Slump*' story I detailed how I found myself experiencing a similar problem. In this example, I perceived that I looked and felt foolish during a video session in front of all the players and coaches, because of my colleague's actions. The result of this was a humiliating experience that shattered my confidence and, at the time, left me perceiving everyone present as losing all respect for me.

In an effort to make sure this didn't happen again, I initially found myself instinctively reacting to potentially harmful situations, such as that presented in my '*Wrestle*' story. In this example, I recalled how the actions of Ian had resulted in a situation with the potential for those players present to lose respect for me. Without considering the consequences of my actions, I acted to avoid potential harm to my position, only later understanding my actions had negative implications for Ian. I continued to outline how later criticism of my work from the Assistant Coach, in front of a number of players, created a situation in which I perceived I would lose credibility. I decided to act politically in order to avoid further confrontation and reduce the likelihood of harm.

My experiences of these two incidents further opened my eyes to the cronied, tacit realities of the coaching context and, as a result, I began not only to recall my experiences over the course of my internship in a new and more cynical light, but also to increasingly look out for potentially harmful interactions. In my 'No Goodbyes' story I detailed how, when confronted with another potentially detrimental interaction, I drew on these experiences and acted in a calculated manner to avoid the potential discomfort I perceived. I recalled setting up the coaching position with Murphy and deliberately positioning myself next to where the coaches would stand so that I could perform the more important live team stats. As Ian did not help us set up, when he arrived with the coaches moments before kick off, he understood exactly what I had done. I had outmaneuvered him and given him no time to counter.

When trying to make sense of these experiences I found it particularly useful to draw upon Kelchtermans and Ballett's (2002a, 2002b) discussion of *micro-political literacy*. This concept was developed from narrative biographical accounts of beginning-teachers in Flanders, Belgium, with the intention of understanding how these individuals learnt how to deal with the micro-political realities of teaching (Kelchtermans & Ballett, 2002a, 2002b). They state that individuals learn to 'read' situations through a micro-political lens, understand them in terms of the different interests, and develop effective strategies to cope with them (Kelchtermans & Ballett, 2002b).

Kelchtermans and Ballett (2002a, 2002b) developed the earlier work of Kelchtermans and Vandenberghe (1996), who suggested that the micro-political workings of a context can be explained in terms of the *knowledge* and *operational aspects* of *micro-political literacy*. The *knowledge aspect* is widely understood as the information necessary to acknowledge (see), interpret, and understand (read) the micro-political character of a situation (Kelchtermans & Ballett, 2002a). In other words, the micro-politically literate teacher is capable of politically reading situations because they possess the necessary grammatical and lexical knowledge on processes of power and struggles of interest (Kelchtermans & Ballett, 2002b). This *knowledge aspect* also forms the basis for the second element of an individual's *personal interpretive framework*: the *subjective educational theory* (Kelchtermans & Ballett, 2002b). Adapting Kelchtermans' (2009) definition, *subjective educational theory* can be understood as a personal system of knowledge and beliefs that individuals use

when performing their job; encompassing their professional know-how and the foundation upon which they base their decisions for action. The content of an individual's *subjective education theory* is largely idiosyncratic and based entirely on personal experiences, with individuals 'using' or 'applying' this body of knowledge to judge or interpretively read a given situation and decide upon appropriate actions (Kelchtermans, 2009).

The application of an individual's *subjective education theory* relates to the *operational aspect of micro-political literacy*, or the repertoire of micro-political strategies and tactics an individual is able to effectively employ in order to maintain desirable *working conditions* (Kelchtermans & Ballett, 2002a, 2002b). Simply put, people engage in *micro-political actions* to establish, safeguard or restore *professional interests* when they are absent, threatened or destroyed (Kelchtermans, 2005). This is because the experience of being vulnerable triggers intense emotions within the individual, which often stems from detrimental interactions or interpersonal relationships (Kelchtermans, 2005). Despite appearing almost insignificant to outsiders, these interactions may have a devastating impact on an individual's professional identity (Kelchtermans, 1996, 1999, 2005).

When considering my experiences in relation to Kelchtermans and Ballett's (2002a, 2002b) theorising, it could be said that the experiences presented from my '*Excited Beginnings*', '*Mixed Feelings*' and '*Slump*' examples helped shape and develop the *knowledge aspect* of my *micro-political literacy*. The conflicting views and interests presented through the fourth section of my results '*Fighting For Acceptance: Power Struggles And Insecurity*' can be understood as a result of contradictory *professional interests*, in particular differing *future perspectives* (Kelchtermans, 2005). In essence, I came to understand that while I desperately wanted a career in professional sport, I also had academic opportunities to fall back on. Conversely, as Ian only had this one performance analysis career opportunity, all of his efforts were invested in securing a permanent contract with the Club. For this reason, while Murphy and I were factoring in time to complete our studies, Ian was utilising this time to win over the players and coaches and secure a permanent position.

This realisation, coupled with my perception of the negative video session evident in my '*Mixed Feelings*' and '*Slump*' examples, served to develop my *micro-political literacy* to the point that I understood I would have to act in some

way to avoid experiencing detrimental implications for my *self-image* and *self-esteem* in the future (Kelchtermans, 1996, 1999, 2005, 2009). This initially manifested in an instinctual reaction to the threat to my *self-image*, which I perceived during this first example from my '*Wrestle*' story. I perceived that the evaluation of my ability to produce these players' individual clips accurately and in a timely fashion was directly affecting my professional integrity and identity as a performance analyst (Kelchtermans & Ballett, 2002b). As a result, my *subjective educational theory* told me that simple acquiescence or conformity in this situation would not protect my *professional self-understanding* and that direct confrontation was not possible (as Ian was not present) (Kelchtermans & Ballett, 2002b). Instead, I decided to implement a passive-aggressive strategy to avoid the possible negative effects of this interaction and protect my self-interests, despite not fully considering the negative consequences for Ian (Kelchtermans & Ballett, 2002b).

My actions here came as somewhat of a surprise to me at the time but significantly shaped my understanding of the micro-political realities of the Club (Kelchtermans & Ballett, 2002b). My experiences, of interactions at the Club, like this one ultimately informed my decision-making when presented with potentially harmful future interactions – such as the second example from my '*Wrestle*' story. I perceived direct criticism of my professional artifacts as challenging my credibility as an analyst, countering my *self-image* and impacting my feelings of *self-esteem* and *task perception* (Kelchtermans & Ballett, 2002b; Kelchtermans, 2009). In this example, despite thoughtful consideration and detailed planning of the material I wished to present, I had not anticipated that my actions would convey any meaning other than that which I intended (Fenstermacher, 1990; Kelchtermans, 2005). I quickly learned that my decisions and their moral consequences could always be contested or disputed, in this case by the Assistant Coach's actions. As a result, I perceived my moral and professional integrity was being questioned and that those players present would lose respect for me (Kelchtermans, 1996; Kelchtermans, 2005).

Kelchtermans (2005, p. 998) suggested that within these ever changing politically charged environments, one often 'finds oneself in a situation' in which things 'can happen, or take place'. This was the case with the second example from my '*Wrestle*' story, in which I understood that I needed to draw upon my

ever growing *micro-political literacy* and implement action to change my fortunes. I resisted the urge to acquiesce or conform to the Assistant Coach's direct confrontation and, instead, implemented diplomatic *micro-political action* to resolve the conflict (Kelchtermans & Ballett, 2002a). Importantly, I also perceived that any direct confrontation from me in this instance as having the possibility to exacerbate the situation, due to the belief that challenging the dominant cultures of the coaching context, by direct confrontation with a superior, would result in conflict and derogation (Kelchtermans & Ballett, 2002b).

My experiences in these examples, of witnessing the highly contested and negotiated reality of professional sport, served to offer an insight into how vulnerable my position was to any well-conceived attack on my professional credibility (Kelchtermans & Ballett, 2002b; Purdy & Jones, 2009; Potrac et al., 2013a; Thompson, Potrac & Jones, 2013). As a result of witnessing and experiencing people undermining each other to meet their own ends, within my 'No Goodbyes' story, I outlined how I decided to take the opportunity to reciprocate. In this example, I implemented direct confrontation with Ian's chosen position as 'favourite' within the department, to increase my opportunity to interact with the coaches. By this stage of my internship I had ultimately come to realise that if others within the coaching 'team' were going to try and get 'one up' on me, I had to take every opportunity to do the same.

Interestingly, my experiences of this concept differ from that offered by much of the previous coaching literature in that unlike many of the experienced coaches presented within coaching literature, being a neophyte meant that I did not have a clearly developed sense of *micro-political literacy* upon entering the coaching environment (Potrac & Jones, 2009a; Potrac et al., 2013a). As a result, I did not enter the Club with the same awareness of the fact that my actions and behaviours were under constant surveillance and that I needed an appreciation for potentially conflicting individual interests (Potrac & Jones, 2009a). I had to witness and personally experience significant challenges during my internship to develop an understanding of the micro-political realities of the coaching context, to become 'more politically attuned to how 'life worked at the club' (Thompson, Potrac & Jones, 2013, p. 9).

Similarly, although each of my presented extracts are very different from each other (e.g. some show unthinking reaction to threats, some premeditated

actions on my part), they do offer support to previous research suggesting that individuals (coaches and performance analysts) develop an understanding of the micro-political realities of their organisation, before engaging in *micro-political action* to 'pull the trigger' and utilise the misfortune of others to benefit their own standing (Potrac et al., 2013a). My findings support those previously stated, suggesting that performance analysts in rugby league, like those in football (Huggan, Nelson & Potrac, 2015) and experienced coaches (Potrac & Jones, 2009a, 2009b), feel ashamed or humiliated as a result of this public criticism or damaging actions towards their position or standing, as they do not want to be seen as the 'weakest link' (Potrac et al., 2013a, p. 80).

That said, due to the current investigation documenting these interactions as I experienced them, it is possible to visually perceive my *micro-political literacy* developing. My experiences offer an insight into the chronology of this process by suggesting that individuals first witness or experience potentially harmful interactions. As their understanding develops, they become better at recognising potentially harmful interactions and act instinctively in the 'heat of the moment' to reduce the potential harm. Finally, once their understanding has developed sufficiently, they are able to see, plan for, effectively avoid and manipulate future interactions in order to maximise personal and professional gain. Unfortunately, my experiences also highlighted that this is not an unproblematic process in its self, but one fraught with conflict.

5.2.3 Acting The Part: Cognitive And Emotional Impression Management

As a result of the experiences outlined above, which contributed to my developing *micro-political literacy*, I began to appreciate how key stakeholders at the Club expected me to act, behave, and present myself. I understood others expected me to conduct myself in a professional manner at all times, with this professionalism stretching to the quality of the work I produced. I also understood that failure to maintain this professional *self-image* would have serious consequences for my *future perspectives*. In short, I began to consider different methods of negotiating interactions in order to alter perceptions of my *self-image*.

Within my 'Wrestle' story, I recalled one particular interaction when my professional *self-image* was questioned. I documented the internal struggle I encountered when striving to conceal my true thoughts in the face of significant

questioning of my professional competency by the Assistant Coach. Similarly, within my '*Slump*' story I also spoke of a desire to appear calm, skilled, in complete control and professional despite the technical difficulties I experienced during the presentations of an important team video session.

When trying to make sense of these experiences I found it useful to draw upon Goffman's (1959) discussion of *impression management*. Through observations of social interactions, Goffman (1959) developed a dramaturgical approach to 'the presentation of self', which considers how individuals create recognisable and convincing performances that provide others (the audience) with an impression congruent with their (the social actor) own desires or intentions (Barnhart, 1994; Williams, 1998). Goffman's portrayal considers individuals as 'actors' who perform in front of an 'audience'; suggesting that individuals manage their outward expression within social interactions as a means of sustaining a 'viable image' of themselves, through a process of 'self-work' (Goffman, 1971, p. 185). This concept of self-work implies that face-to-face social interactions are akin to a 'theatrical performance' where actors strive to portray a credible and convincing performance to their audience (Goffman, 1969). Goffman (1969, p. 10) also stated that when individuals enter social situations, they 'play a part' and desire observers to 'take seriously the impression that is fostered before them'. In furthering this concept, he suggested individuals do this through the construction and maintenance of a 'front', consistent with the role behaviours the individual wishes to fulfil (Goffman, 1959).

Goffman (1959) developed his notion of a 'front' by presenting two separate features of dramaturgy: frontstage and backstage. He defined the frontstage as 'that part of the individual's performance which regularly functions in a general and fixed fashion to define the social situation for those who observe performances' (Goffman, 1959, p. 22). Goffman (1959) noted that it is in the frontstage that individuals typically conceal behaviours, attitudes, and thoughts in order to meet cultural expectations for appropriate behaviours. Conversely, the less formal backstage area allows personal opinions and the possibility for individuals to violate these expected role behaviours (Goffman, 1959). There is a critical barrier existing between these two features, with individuals often using the backstage area to practice or rehearse performance before entering the frontstage (Goffman, 1959). Goffman (1959) further

elaborated this notion by suggesting that individuals may also prepare certain props or artifacts (to use Kelchtermans and Ballet's (2002b) definition from teaching) within the backstage, before implementing them in face-to-face interactions. Goffman (1959) suggested that a prop was an object present within an interaction that an individual may or may not use to aid the enactment of their role.

When considering my experiences in relation to this theorising, it could be argued that the events within these two examples caused the others present to question the validity of the professional front I wished to convey (Goffman, 1959). Indeed, within my '*Wrestle*' example, it could be argued that I considered my statistical analysis (which I had spent a considerable time on backstage, to ensure reliability) an important prop that I wished to implement within the frontstage of this interaction (Goffman, 1959). Despite my best efforts, however, the comments of the Assistant Coach brought this into question. Instead of appearing skilled and professional as intended, I perceived the players present to see me as quite the opposite. As a result, I saw these players lose respect for me, as well as any future statistical analysis (or professional artifacts) I produced (Goffman, 1959).

These beliefs were mirrored in the example presented from my '*Slump*' story, when being offered adequate preparation time to adjust the settings on my computer to work best with the projector. That preparation time could also be interpreted as an important prop I wished to utilise in order to present a convincing 'front' (Goffman, 1959). Importantly, I perceived this interaction as having potential to be of greater significance, due to the larger number of staff and players present. This came from my previous experience of watching the negative reaction I received after the video session outlined in my '*Mixed Feelings*' story. In an attempt to regain control of the current situation before it had a lasting effect on my capital, I implicitly consulted my *subjective educational theory* and utilised my knowledge of previous presentations as an athlete and student, as well as previous video experiences at the Club, to form an idea of how I should act in the present situation (Kelchtermans, 2009). My knowledge base told me that when technical issues arose, I had most respect for those individuals who remained calm and appeared to be in control of the situation.

Indeed, within both of these examples then, I attempted to live up to the idealised image of a performance analyst I had developed in my head and the image that I perceived the players and coaches present to also judge my performance against (Goffman, 1959). In this way, it could be said that I implemented a strategy to minimise the impact of these ‘deeply discrediting attributes’, which if not prevented could have lead to me being ‘disqualified from full social acceptance’ (Goffman, 1963; Potrac & Jones, 2009b). Ultimately, these two interactions, as well as many others from my narrative, highlighted my desire to present the impression of a competent and professional performance analyst to others at the Club, I also undertook other actions in order to maintain this outward expression.

My experiences of this concept mirror many of those documented within current coaching literature (e.g. Jones, 2006a; Potrac & Jones, 2009a, 2009b; Potrac et al., 2013a; Thompson, Potrac & Jones, 2013), suggesting that performance analysts also feel the need to actively manage their outward expression. In particular, my experiences offer a detailed insight into the specific elements of the ‘front’ I wished to present both throughout my internship as a whole and during specific interactions that I perceived as potentially harmful or advantageous to my professional credibility. Significantly, the example presented from my ‘*Wrestle*’ story highlights one area in particular where my experiences differ from much of those in the current coaching literature. I was not only trying to maintain my composure in the face of criticism from a superior, but also simultaneously striving to manage the impression the players present perceived of me in the face of this criticism. The presence of the Assistant Coach in this interaction altered the dynamic, as it was no longer a straightforward interaction between a member of staff (myself) and an athlete. Instead, the addition of criticism from a superior member of staff in front of those individuals I was trying to demonstrate expert knowledge to, altered my course of *micro-political action*. Ultimately, I felt I had no choice but to act as I did, as failure to act, as well as direct confrontation, would only have exacerbated the situation.

Interestingly, over the course of my internship I experienced a number of interactions that would counter some of Goffman’s (1956) theorising around performance teams and loyalty to team-mates. Here, a performance team consisted of a set of individuals who cooperate in staging a single collective

performance of symbolic communicative gestures towards an intended audience (Goffman, 1959; Blumer, 1969; Scott, 2015). This notion is further developed by the suggestion that the mutual dependence created by membership in a team is likely to cut across structural or social cleavages in establishments, providing a source of cohesion between members of different formal statuses (Goffman, 1959). He also posits that team-mates are forced to trust one another not to 'give the show away', because public disagreement among team-mates is a significant source of embarrassment with the potential to incapacitate a team's united action (Goffman, 1959, p 50). Specifically, Goffman (1956) suggested that when an individual commits a 'faux pas' or becomes flustered while engaging in an interaction and begins to blush, those others present will suppress their immediate desire to punish the offender, instead, waiting until the audience is no longer present. He also suggested that team-mates will often blush both with and for the individual, with tactful team-mates avoiding putting him in an embarrassing position. He argued that these others would, in fact, pretend not to notice this loss of composure and employ covering gestures to allow the interaction to continue and avoid embarrassment (Goffman, 1956). In essence, Goffman (1959, 1963) suggested that these others would avoid confronting 'incidents' that would 'cause a scene', or would engage in collective face work in order to maintain the performance team's 'strategic secrets' and allow the interaction to unfold smoothly.

While this may have been the case in polite society, when this concept was developed, based on my experiences of the political nature of current professional sport, I personally believe the opposite to be the case. I believe the 'insider's folly' notion, referring to the rose-tinted belief that everyone is on the same side in an interaction, to be of particular significance (Goffman, 1972; Burns, 1992). As previously mentioned, I entered the coaching environment truly believing that everyone was aiming for the same outcome; team and individual player success. Unfortunately, as my experience of the political nature of the environment developed, I became acutely aware of the conflicting interests of those different individuals involved (Kechtermans & Ballett, 2002b; Burke & Stets, 2009; Kelchtermans, 2009). I believe Bauman's (2007) view of contemporary society to be accurate, that it is characterised by a high degree of individualisation and uncertainty, with collaborative teamwork a temporary stratagem that is often terminated as soon as its benefits are exhausted.

I also understood that even within the obligatory coaching 'performance team' for the benefit of my Club's players, there were a number of different cliques of which, despite being of the same status level as other members, I was not a part (Goffman, 1959). Within my '*Tenerife*' story, I outlined my disappointment at being excluded from the preseason trip. I understood this to be a product of my exclusion from the clique that was Derek, Charlie, and Ian. I also perceived not being informed of their decision to take Ian over me, which excluded me from important information and withheld my full character from me (Goffman, 1959). Similarly, within my '*Wrestle*' story, I came to understand that individuals (in this case Charlie) could switch allegiances and chose cliques over performance teams. I perceived Charlie to side with Kyle, his friend, over myself. As a result, I found his comments and lack of loyalty left me dangerously excluded from the coaching performance team (Goffman, 1959). Ultimately, I realised that these cliques were based on friendship and were, therefore, stronger than the obligatory performance team that constituted the coaching team at the Club.

As a result, I came to understand that individuals within the coaching environment were not willing to 'paper over' the faux pas of others, evident in my '*Not Part Of The Team*' and '*Slump*' stories. In fact, I believed the individuals present in these examples, actually highlighted my ineffective self projections within the situations as a source of 'banter', but with a stronger underlying message that the faux pas had been spotted and would be remembered. Indeed, these experiences led me to understand that competition would be no less fierce between those with superficial loyalties or those obliged to conceal their personal opinions beneath a façade of team solidarity (Scott, 2015). This caused me to view my colleagues with increasing suspicion and mistrust, as I recognised that they may have been using my misfortune for their own personal gain (Scott, 2015). This banter then, were used as a sort of warning that my actions had consequences and this reaffirmed my understanding that there was always someone watching and judging my performance (Kechtermans & Ballett, 2002b; Kelchtermans, 2009; Burkitt, 2014).

I also believed that this banter was not only used to regulate my emotions or behaviours, as a subtle warning that next time the 'banter' may not be so friendly, but also an assertion of power by the deliverer, who ultimately had 'ammunition' for a future political 'attack', should they wish to do so. As such, I

understood that future cooperation with my colleagues would have to be pursued cautiously, to avoid being 'hoodwinked' by the superficially 'genuine' acts of sympathy that may in fact have been phony displays of surface, rather than deep acting on their part (Hochschild, 1983; Scott, 2015). In this regard, Scott (2015) suggests that cooperation is no longer about the collective pursuit of intersubjectivity or harmony between actors' authentic intentions, but a fitting together of their surface performance to create an aesthetically pleasing appearance; a well choreographed dance that collapses as soon as the music stops. Contrary to my belief that the coaching staff worked together to present a united front to the players, I now understood that individuals within the coaching 'team' enjoyed cracking the exteriors of others to discover the 'real' self behind the mask, as well as had their own cliques to which they were loyal (Scott, 2015). I would argue that 'trial by taunting' is a test not limited to young persons, but is also used on new members of professional sporting organisations (Goffman, 1956). In this respect, during interactions containing faux pas, individuals may become flustered not at the error itself, but at the long-range interests associated with the failure to competently perform their role (Goffman, 1956).

In these examples specifically, I perceived my colleagues as highlighting these performance shortcomings, if only as a source of banter. Unfortunately, however, I felt that this was an informal mechanism of social control (Braithwaite, 1989), or a subtle message to me that they had indeed seen the slipping of my 'front' (Goffman, 1959), and a warning that should it happen again, they may be less forgiving. In this respect, I agree with Goffman's (1956) notion that by the standards of the little society maintained through the interaction, the discreditor is just as guilty, or sometimes more so, as the person discredited. Where I again disagree however, is in Goffman's (1956) suggestion that the discreditor's image is also destroyed along with that of the discredited. Indeed, I believe that drawing attention to the shortcomings of another within the elite sports coaching context is a strategy utilised to increase one's own standing, whilst simultaneously discrediting another's. In this regard, within the first extract of my '*Wrestle*' story, it could be argued that I drew attention to Ian's faux pas to deflect negative attention or discrediting perceptions of my professional self onto him. As such, I would also argue that through drawing attention to the faux pas of others, individuals deflect attention from themselves

and their own failings. In short, this becomes an employable strategy to actively manipulate or manage the impression others have of our emotions within a given social context.

Although the theorising of Goffman (1959, 1969, 1971) has helped to develop an insightful interpretation of the face-to-face interactions I experienced during my internship, I do not feel this concept fully encapsulates the different ways I managed and concealed my inner feelings during these episodes. In short, while discussion to this point has considered the process of cognitive *impression management* that I engaged in during my internship, it has neglected to consider the specific emotions I experienced and processes of *emotional management* I also engaged in. Indeed, over the course of my internship I experienced a number of different emotions. As a result of the positive experiences within my '*Excited Beginnings*', '*Mixed Feelings*', and '*Finding Form*' stories, I recalled feeling joy, excitement, delight, inclusion, nervous tension, ecstasy, and pride. Conversely, as a result of the negative experiences within my '*Wrestle*', '*Slump*', and '*No Goodbyes*' stories, I recalled feeling anxiety, frustration, anger, rage, hurt, exclusion, isolation, powerlessness, and terror.

When trying to make sense of these experiences I found it useful to draw upon a number of theories on emotions, specifically those concerning dramaturgy and symbolic interaction (Turner & Stets, 2005). Importantly, these authors suggest the importance of first understanding the processes of emotions from a number of different standpoints. The first of these concerns the biological nature of emotions (James, 1884). Emotions are considered to stem from the brain's activation of a number of different systems, all of which interact to produce observable emotional responses (LeDoux, 1996; Turner, 2000). These noticeable bodily emotional responses to stimuli occur before the individual has time to even recognise and label the emotion being experienced (Turner & Stets, 2005).

The second standpoint takes into account the effect of socialisation upon emotions, suggesting that emotions are the result of a complex interplay between cultural, social structural, cognitive, and neurological forces (Turner & Stets, 2005). In this regard, it is suggested that what people feel is conditioned by socialisation into cultures and by participation in social structures (Turner & Stets, 2005). Gordon (1990) suggests that cultural ideologies, beliefs, and

norms, as they impinge on social structures, define what emotions are to be experienced and how these culturally defined emotions are to be expressed. In short, emotions emerge from social situations, with individuals learning how to categorise their biological inner feelings and which are appropriate emotions to display, through socialisation into a particular culture (Turner & Stets, 2005).

Within much of this literature is a consensus that emotions can be categorised into a number of different types (e.g. primary and secondary), though there is some minor disagreement as to exactly which emotions fall into which categories (Turner & Stets, 2005). There is, however, much consent that emotions such as happiness, fear, anger, and sadness are primary emotions and, as such, are hard wired into all humans (Ekman & Friesen, 1975; Turner & Stets, 2005). The primary emotions that humans experience and employ mobilise them to respond to situations and others people in different ways. Happiness for example, leads people to establish bonds with others, whereas anger drives individuals to be aggressive towards others within situations (Turner & Stets, 2005).

When considering this theorising in relation to my above presented experiences, it could be said that my understanding of the biological nature of my emotions was constantly shaped by my interpretation of the cultural expectations of emotions whilst at the Club (Turner & Stets, 2005). Through developing an understanding of the ideologies, beliefs, and norms at the Club, I was able to develop a detailed understanding of how I was meant to experience and display various emotions (Turner & Stets, 2005). Specifically considering the primary emotion of happiness, those experiences presented from my '*Finding Form*' story offered an insight into my perception of the bonds I had with everyone on the trip. I considered these ties to strengthen as a result of the happiness we shared together, following our win. As developing personal and professional relationships was something I considered important to accomplishing the goal of successful team integration, these experiences allowed me to strengthen bonds with those present and resulted in me experiencing positive emotions (Mandler, 1975). Conversely, the main incident from my '*Wrestle*' story highlighted the anger I felt at having my professional artifacts challenged (Kelchtermans & Ballett, 2002b; Turner & Stets, 2005). In this respect, I considered the comments of the Assistant Coach to be harmful to

my standing in the eyes of those players present and, as a result, I experienced negative emotions (Mandler, 1975).

Interestingly, during many of my experiences as part of my internship, a number of secondary emotions (derived from the mixing of primary emotions) emerged (Kemper, 1987). Within my '*Play-Off Hopes*' story for example, I spoke of yearning the excitement and adrenaline rush I experienced as a result of working in professional sport. Kemper (1987) would suggest that yearning is a secondary emotion, as it stems from the primary emotions of depression (at a reduced opportunity to experience) and happiness (resulting from positive experiences). Another important secondary emotion is that of empathy, which is responsible for the building of strong bonds between people (Turner & Stets, 2005). Shott (1979) suggests that empathy can either result from instances when the self and others actually experience the same emotions, or when the self and others achieve a cognitive understanding of how it would feel to be in the other's place. Within my '*Tenerife*' story, I recalled witnessing Ian struggle with a video session and recounted the negative comments I had received after similar failings. In this regard, Shott (1979) would suggest that by evoking memories of a similar situation, I was able to cognitively understand how Ian might be feeling and, as a result, share in his emotional experience.

According to Turner (2000), guilt is also an important secondary emotion and stems from disappointment or sadness (at the self) for failing to meet particular expectations, fear of the consequences (for the self), and anger (directed at the self). In the first extract presented from my '*Wrestle*' story (in which I blamed Ian instinctively to avoid losing face), I experienced a high level of guilt. Shott (1979) would suggest that this results from my negative evaluations of my actions towards Ian, as I perceived them to violate the moral codes of interaction. While this emotion resulted from negative evaluations of my actions and behaviours towards another, Shott (1979) argues it has strong links to feelings of shame, which stemmed from interpretations of deficient or inept performances of my own role. Within the extract from my '*Wrestle*' story, I evaluated my own performance as immoral. Among other feelings, I felt that the shame I experienced cut to the core of my general identity, as I felt I was not presenting an accurate version of myself (Shott, 1979). Interestingly, within this interaction, I also outlined my anxiety that everyone would lose respect for me as a result of the direct questioning of my professional competence by a

superior. Anxiety is considered a secondary emotion as it stems from a mixture of fear (for the consequences for the self) and depression (at not being able to live up to cultural expectations) (Kemper, 1987). This anxiety also resulted from embarrassment, or the fear of situational evaluations of my professional self (Shott, 1979). Importantly, Shott (1979) argues that embarrassment almost always includes shame, as when the general identity of the individual is attacked, so too are any active situational identities.

This concept also has remarkable similarities to the writings of Goffman (1956, 1959) on embarrassment. In this work, Goffman (1959) suggested that when individuals experienced discredited presentations of themselves, they may feel ashamed or embarrassed, while others may feel ill at ease, hostile or nonplussed. This is due to the elements of social encounters consisting of effective projected claims to an acceptable self and the confirmation of like claims on the part of others (Goffman, 1956). Goffman (1956) suggested that the interaction finds itself lodged in assumptions that no longer hold when an event throws doubt upon or discredits these claims, with the responses already made by individuals being choked back and the interaction reconstructed. In this respect, Gross and Stone (1964) suggest that a common cause of embarrassment is the discrediting of identity claims, through the failure to fulfil one's situational role requirements. They argue that this might involve a loss of control over symbolic communicative objects, such as the body, props or speech, which prevents the actor from playing the part the way they intended (Gross & Stone, 1964). Embarrassment feels like another, unintended identity (such as a clumsy person) has surfaced and is interfering with the intended impression (Scott, 2015). In these instances, individuals may display a variety of signs of emotional disturbances (e.g. blushing, fumbling and sweating) and subjective symptoms of embarrassment (e.g. a constriction of the diaphragm, a feeling of wobbliness, a dazed sensation, a dryness of the mouth, and tenseness of muscles) (Baldwin, 1906; Goffman, 1956).

Considering my experiences in relation to this theorising, it could be said that during interactions such as those from my '*Wrestle*' story, I felt considerable embarrassment as a result of not living up to the cultural expectations of appropriate role behaviours (Goffman, 1956). Specifically, in this example I experienced the subjective symptoms of muscle tensing and a constriction of the diaphragm, which resulted in feeling like the 'players are pulling a thread of

respect from my side and every remark is like a tiny knot is tugged from my side' (Goffman, 1956). I also recalled 'sweating profusely' (a sign of emotional disturbance) and actively trying to conceal this from those present (Goffman, 1956). In the words of Goffman (1956), I experienced the discomfort or embarrassment that arose from these sources and perceived the whole encounter to cause general feelings of unease.

As a result of experiencing the secondary emotions of guilt and embarrassment, I came to understand the difference between those emotions I could display (such as in my '*Finding Form*' and '*International Ambitions*' stories) and those I felt obliged to conceal (such as in my '*Mixed Feelings*' and '*Wrestle*' stories) to meet cultural expectations for behaviours. Once again, the two extracts presented above, from my '*Wrestle*' and '*Slump*' stories, detailed some of the emotional struggles I encountered during this time. In both of these examples, I presented my desire to portray that I was 'calm, collected, and in complete control', despite feeling anxious and angry on the inside.

When trying to make sense of my emotional experiences as part of my internship, I also found it useful to draw upon Hochschild's (1979, 1983) discussion of *emotional management* and, in particular, *emotional labour*. Through her investigations into students', flight attendants', and bill collectors' emotional perspectives, Hochschild (1979, 1983) sought to further the earlier work of Goffman (1956, 1959, 1961) and Freud (1911, 1915a, 1915b) and develop a concept of *impression management* that also encapsulated the emotional nature of the challenge facing actors within a social situation. She contended that while Goffman's actors actively managed their outer expressions, they did not actively manage their inner feelings, with these individuals only managing how they appeared to feel externally. Similarly, Hochschild (1979) also contended that Freud's ego defences lacked the required depth, as they focused solely on the unconscious and involuntary means of avoiding unpleasant encounters. In short, Hochschild (1983) aimed to develop insights into how people try or try not to feel in ways appropriate to a given situation, which incorporated the active and passive management of emotions.

Hochschild (1979, p. 561) developed the notion of 'emotion work', which is a conscious and intended try at changing in degree or quality an emotion or feeling. She suggested that individuals have to 'work on' an emotion or feeling

and identifies two broad types: evocation and suppression (Hochschild, 1979). Evocation occurs when the individual focuses on an absent yet desirable feeling or emotion and, conversely, suppression occurs when the individual cognitively focuses on an undesirable yet present emotion (Hochschild, 1979, p. 561). Hochschild (1979) also noted that emotion work can be done by the self upon the self, by the self upon others, and by the others upon the self; within each case, individuals are experiencing a discrepancy between desirable and actually experienced feelings. Through her investigation into American air stewardesses, Hochschild (1983) further developed this notion by suggesting that in a professional setting, individuals are required to manage the feelings of their clients and, in doing so, manage their own. This is the basic premise of what she termed *emotional labour*, or the salient work of evoking and suppressing feelings within ourselves and others, which is a commodity that is sold for a wage (Hocshchild, 1983; Theodosius, 2008).

In order to maintain a given outward appearance, people use one of two techniques of professional acting (Hocshchild, 1983). Surface acting refers to putting on an outward appearance or conforming to the social and emotional rules of a certain situation or context (Hocshchild, 1983). Emotion work relates to an individual's body language and aims to deceive others about how we are feeling without deceiving ourselves (Hocshchild, 1983). Conversely, deep acting refers to conscious mental work that evokes within oneself genuinely believed emotions to align with cultural expectations (Hocshchild, 1983). Hochschild (1983) suggested that individuals will often try to recall or imagine memories containing the desired emotional response and actively try to evoke these self-induced feelings through exhortations.

When considering my experiences in relation to this theorising it could be said that I actively worked on my inner feelings in order to present the impression to those others present that I was behaving in an appropriate manner (Hochschild, 1983). In doing so, I engaged in a process of deep *emotional labour*, with the intention of suppressing my true feelings (Hocshchild, 1979). I understood that I could not publicly display the anxiety, frustration, anger or other emotions that I experienced within these examples. Instead, convinced that those present would perceive this as weakness and that I would lose credibility and standing as a result, I engaged in cognitive emotion work to

suppress these emotions and, instead, evoke counter feelings of ease, control, and nonchalance to portray to the players and coaches present.

To date, there are few papers specifically interpreting coach's experiences in relation to this theorising (e.g. Potrac & Marshall, 2011; Nelson et al., 2013). My experiences of this concept add weight to these initial findings, supporting the notion that individuals within the elite sports coaching environment not only cognitively but also emotionally manage their outward impression (Potrac & Marshall, 2011; Nelson et al., 2013). Through interpretation of my face-to-face interactions in light of this theorising, the current investigation is able to further this body of literature by suggesting just some of the different emotions that individuals within this profession may experience and may feel driven to manage. I also made reference to the cultural expectations surrounding the displaying of emotion from the perspective of a neophyte performance analyst.

5.2.4 Winning Is Everything: Structural Vulnerability

Throughout my time at the Club, the various professional interactions and experiences documented above had both positive and negative implications for how I viewed myself professionally. Many of these more negative implications were as a consequence of striving for a heightened level of visibility to further others' perceptions of my professional identity. I understood that my experiences of feeling vulnerable resulted from failing to meet culturally expected norms for appropriate professional thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, often as a result of the criticisms or perceived judgements of others. Indeed, within my '*Wrestle*' and '*Slump*' stories for example, I concluded that these vulnerable experiences were caused by the comments from those coaches and players present.

Interestingly, towards the end of my internship, I began to understand that my experiences of the undermining behaviours of others and the struggle for valued working conditions followed a more organisational trend. Within my '*Finding Form*' story, I presented a developing understanding that my experiences of these struggles were less prevalent during the team's successful run of on-field performances, which lead to feelings of inclusion and friendship. In contrast, during the team's poorer on-field periods; I found the coaching environment to be more excluding, isolating, and contested. I recalled tracing my feelings of job security, or fearing for it, alongside the greater changes in the

organisation, based on results. I recalled feeling less anxious and placing less importance on my interactions with key stakeholders during times of team success and, conversely, felt the added pressures from those around me and placed greater emphasis on my interactions when the team struggled. Indeed, within my '*Slump*' story I recalled the sense of tension I felt before one video review, as Derek had insisted on a highly negative video. I spoke of the lack of control I had over content and the consequences I perceived this video would have on my relationships with the players. Similarly, within this same story, I also outlined an understanding that the coaches demanded live feedback from the analysis department in order to alter on-field performances and my frustration at not getting equal opportunity to provide this support.

When trying to make sense of these experiences I found it particularly useful to draw upon Kelchtermans and Ballett's (2002b) discussion of *vulnerability*. This concept can be understood as a 'multidimensional, multifaceted emotional experience that individuals can feel in an array of contexts' (Kelchtermans, 2005, p. 998). Kelchtermans (2005) suggested that *vulnerability* is a fluctuating and fluid state of being, with critical incidents acting as triggers to intensify or change an individual's perception of their current situation and how these interact with their identity, beliefs, values, and sense of competence. Through his investigation of teachers' experiences, Kelchtermans (1996, p. 319) posits 'the basic structure of *vulnerability* is always one of feeling that one's professional identity and moral integrity, as part of being 'a proper teacher', are questioned. This *vulnerability* often results from the heightened level of visibility individuals seek to increase others' perceptions of their professional identity (Kelchtermans, 2009). In this regard, Kelchtermans (1996) identified that all teachers and principals hold specific beliefs about what constitutes good teaching and those conditions that are necessary or desirable to perform their professional duties effectively. These are known as *working conditions* and operate as *professional interests* for the individual (Burke & Stets, 2009), which they are motivated to protect when threatened or lost (Ball, 1987; Kelchtermans, 2005). Indeed, the key finding of Kelchtermans and Ballett's (2002b) work related to the significance these teachers placed on their ability to utilise important *working conditions* in order to have their professional competencies recognised.

Kelchtermans and Ballett (2002b) further developed this concept by suggesting a structural element to *vulnerability*. *Structural vulnerability* recognises that when the professional context threatens an individual's *professional self-understanding*, self interests emerge that are concerned with the protection of professional integrity and identity (Nias, 1989; Bullough, 1997; Kelchtermans, 1999; Kelchtermans & Ballett, 2002b). According to Kelchtermans (1996), teachers' experiences of the micro-political reality of their job leads to intense feelings of discomfort, uncertainty and powerlessness that ultimately results in *vulnerability*. Indeed, Kelchtermans (2009) suggests that *vulnerability* comprises of three distinct, yet interconnected aspects: control, cause and effect, and decision-making. Control relates to the notion that teacher's working conditions are largely imposed upon them, with little room for personal input (Kelchtermans, 2009). With regards to cause and effect, Kelchtermans (2009) suggested that these teachers also perceived *vulnerability* to stem from the understanding that they could only to a limited degree prove their effectiveness as a teacher, based on their pupil's results. Kelchtermans (2009) also suggests that despite the numerous decisions teachers have to make about when and how to act in order to support their students' learning, they ultimately do not have a firm basis upon which to make these decisions. As a result, these teachers reported intense feelings of *vulnerability* and often implemented *micro-political action* to reduce the discomfort experienced (Kelchtermans & Ballett, 2002b).

During my internship, I actively sought opportunities to demonstrate my professional competencies to key contextual stakeholders as a means of furthering my *professional self-understanding* (Kelchtermans, 2009). To achieve this, I put my professional identity on the line by increasing my visibility to these others (Kelchtermans & Ballett, 2002b). Doing so often left me in a vulnerable position, which has been likened to living or working 'in a fishbowl' (Lortie, 1975; Blase, 1988). This notion reflects the relational and interactive nature of the coaching environment, with one's actions constantly being viewed, evaluated, and made sense of by others (Kelchtermans, 2009). The heightened *vulnerability* I experienced was not limited to my own performance, but also included artifacts like the aesthetics and reliability of the statistical document I produced, the professionalism (e.g. slick presentation and knowledgeable content) of my video sessions, and my knowledge and understanding of rugby

league more generally (Kelchtermans, 1993; Kelchtermans & Ballett, 2002a). In this regard, to adopt Kelchtermans' (1993) notion, I felt that efficient presentation, as well as the aesthetical merit and knowledgeable content of my work would result in positive appraisal and possibly some form of external praise from significant others.

When considering the experiences from my '*Slump*' story, it could also be argued that the coach-imposed conditions on video session content and duration acted as the control aspect of *vulnerability* (Kelchtermans, 2009). I felt that I was not able to control the content of the video session and understood that the overly negative content would cause the players to believe this was my work, as I was delivering the session. Similarly, the difficult experiences presented in my '*Wrestle*' story suggest that the choice to offer my analysis to those present could be considered the decision-making aspect of *vulnerability* (Kelchtermans, 2009). I was unaware that the Assistant Coach did not know the intended use of the statistics I was producing and, as such, would take them out of context. Due to my relatively limited *micro-political literacy* at the time, I was also unaware of the consequences that criticism from him could have on the players' perceptions of me. Interestingly, within my '*Slump*' example, the lack of *working conditions* that lead to such strong reductions in *self-image* and *self-esteem* could be considered synonymous with the cause and effect aspect of *vulnerability* (Kelchtermans, 2009). I did not feel that I was given adequate opportunity to provide the coaches with the information they needed in order to affect the course or outcome of a match. As a result, I felt the increased pressures for success emanating from Club officials would be reflected down to me, from the coaches, who demanded more information to influence our fortunes.

Finally, when considering this theorising in relation to my '*Slump*' example in particular, I understood that the technical issues I experienced would result in negative appraisal from those present (Kelchtermans & Ballett, 2002b). Indeed, within this example, a key artifact in my video session (the aesthetics of my presentation) was questioned by the players and coaches present, resulting in extreme feelings of *vulnerability* (Kelchtermans & Ballett, 2002b). In this one interaction, I felt I had lost all of the position and standing I had gained up to this point. To elaborate further, it could be said that getting adequate time to prepare for a particular aspect of my job was an important *working condition* I

was not afforded in this instance (Kelchtermans & Ballett, 2002b). Kelchtermans and Ballett (2002b) stated that beginning-teachers perceived that failure to accomplish a basic technical skill in front of a person of authority was tantamount to losing all credibility. As a result of not having sufficient *working conditions* to effectively carry out my job, I perceived that my chances of being allowed to present future video sessions, as well as the perceptions of the coaches and players present were threatened (Kelchtermans, 2005). Ultimately, although all of these examples are significantly different from one another, they together demonstrate how contextual constraints on my actions and behaviours ultimately left me feeling vulnerable at various times during my internship, I am also aware of how these more negative interactions were often experienced during the team's poorer periods of on-field performances (Kelchtermans & Ballett, 2002b).

My experiences support much of the recent coaching literature that has suggested that individuals will implement *micro-political action* in order to avoid feelings of *vulnerability* (Potrac et al., 2013b). Specifically, although tentative links have previously been made between the *vulnerability* of delivering video-based feedback and the consequences of failing to meet culturally accepted expectations for the quality of this delivery (Nelson, Potrac & Groom, 2014), little is known about how this impacts the deliverer's (either performance analysts or coach) sense of self. Importantly, while contextual factors (e.g. social environment, coaching/delivery philosophy, recipient qualities, presentation format, session design, and delivery process) have been taken into account (Groom, Cushion & Nelson, 2011), there has been little attention given to the thoughts and feelings of performance analysts (or coaches) when these sessions go wrong and how these individuals attempt to maintain their standing. In this respect, the current investigation furthers the belief that a lack of confidence or a 'weak' performance analysis presentation format will often lead to a lack of respect from the audience (Groom, Cushion & Nelson, 2011; Nelson, Potrac & Groom, 2014), but it also suggests that artifacts (such as the aesthetics and content of the session) are considered highly significant within this process. The current investigation also furthers the comments of Thompson, Potrac and Jones (2013), by suggesting that individuals require adequate rehearsal and preparation time (valued *working conditions*) in order to maintain their *self-image* and reduce *vulnerability*.

As a result of many of these vulnerable experiences, coupled with my increasing understanding of contextual influences, I began to notice a number of conflicts between elements of my *personal interpretive framework* and the tasks I was expected to perform. Within my '*International Ambitions*' story, I reflected back upon my internship and recalled my opinion that the Club, and the performance analysis department more specifically, was not as effective as I felt it could be. I expressed my frustration at the lack of clearly defined job roles and the duplication of work I experienced as a result of my disagreement with Ian about how the work should be done. I continued to state that these issues came in direct contrast to beliefs held within my *personal interpretive framework* on how the department, and the Club more generally, should function. These feelings were only exacerbated towards the end of my internship, as the team suffered yet another poor run of form and I perceived greater tension at the Club. It was at this point when I fully understood that these tensions had reached breaking point and that Murphy and myself, due to our affiliation to the University, were obvious scapegoats.

When striving to interpret my findings here, I found it useful to draw upon Kelchtermans and Ballett's (2002b) discussion of *organisational interests*. This concept relates to the various beliefs, interests or normative ideas held by an organisation or group of individuals within an organisation (Kelchtermans & Ballett, 2002b). Routine organisational life is set within a 'negotiated order' (Strauss, 1978) or patterned construct of contrasts, understandings, agreements, and 'rules' that provide the basis of collaboration (Ball, 1987). In this way, conflicts may remain subterranean, only bursting into full view (Lacey, 1977) as particular issues or events of significance occur (Ball, 1987).

Within the examples presented above, I felt that the normal routine life dictated by the organisation's culture was not congruent with the beliefs held within my *personal interpretive framework* (Kelchtermans & Ballett, 2002b). As a result, I implemented *micro-political action*, in the form of passive-aggressive resistance, as well as harder tactics, such as those presented in my '*No Goodbyes*' story, to reduce these conflicts (Kelchtermans, 2009). That said, later within my '*No Goodbyes*' story, I presented my thoughts on completion of my internship. I stated my perception was that certain individuals within the organisation were fundamentally against Murphy and myself, based on our association with the University. I concluded that as such, we were seen to have

too-great-a differing perspective for complete inclusion into the coaching 'team' and, as a result, saw these differing *organisational interests* as being responsible for the internships being terminated (Kelhtermans & Ballett, 2002b). As a result, we found ourselves constantly having our professional competencies questioned by the coaches, often in front of the players. This only increased our feelings of *vulnerability* and cemented the belief that our interests differed too greatly to be mediated.

To date, this notion has seen little application to coaching and performance analysis research, with the works of Thompson, Potrac and Jones (2013) and Huggan, Nelson and Potrac (2015) standing alone. The current investigation supports the notion that professional sports organisations are often burdened by an anti-intellectual culture (Gearing, 1999; Parker, 2000). My experiences offer support to the idea that previous playing experience is traditionally regarded as a prerequisite for positions within the coaching team, while academic qualifications are largely treated with suspicion and distrust (Kelly, 2008). Interestingly, I would add that despite subscribing to the shared organisational goal of improving the team and individual players, many coaches within these organisations are wary of the introduction of team and player development aids such as analysis. I believe that this results from a lack of understanding and fear for the coaches' own *future perspectives* (Thompson, Potrac & Jones, 2013). As a result, I perceived the coaches (on behalf of the Club officials) to engage in *micro-political action* of their own to protect their positions against a perceived threat, by denouncing me as an outsider. I felt that my degree qualification and performance analysis experience would not break these culturally embedded stereotypes and, consequently, my internship was doomed from the start.

When considering these experiences in greater detail, I found the work of Goffman (1963) on *stigma* to be particularly useful. Goffman (1963) acknowledged that society establishes the implicit or tacit means of categorising persons based on appearance and attributes. He contends that when individuals are faced with a person who possesses an attribute (typically of a less desirable kind) that makes them different from others within the social category, that person is reduced in the minds of the others (Goffman, 1963). Goffman (1963) argues that such an attribute is a *stigma* and constitutes a special discrepancy between virtual and actual social identity. A person with a

highly visible *stigma* is someone who has a 'spoiled identity', or someone who is incongruous with the stereotypical identity of those within a specific social category (Goffman, 1963). Goffman (1963) identified three different types of *stigma*: abominations of the body, blemishes of individual character, and tribal, each of which may lead to weariness, social discrimination, and a hesitance of interaction. Goffman (1963) suggests that those who interact with a stigmatised individual fail to accord them the same respect and regard for his social identity that they would offer non stigmatised individuals. He also suggested that during interactions with stigmatised individuals, people also often employ categorisations to them that do not fit and, in doing so, aim to further exclude them from their own social category (Goffman, 1963).

Interestingly, there are many parallels between Goffman's (1963) writings on *stigma* and those of Braithwaite (1989), who counters Shott's (1979) view that emotions are internal mechanisms of social control, instead contending that emotions are external mechanisms of social control. Braithwaite (1989) is primarily interested in how people respond to criminals and posits that emotions can be utilised as an instrument for reducing rates of reoffending. He states that in present-day societies, criminals are stigmatised through punitive imprisonment and as a result, have the negative label of 'criminal' placed on them (Braithwaite, 1989). Over time, the 'criminal' label becomes a master status that draws the individual into criminal subcultures where they are accepted and have their 'criminal' identity confirmed (Braithwaite, 1989). Once in the criminal subculture, individuals become outcasts by dividing society into 'criminals' and 'noncriminals' (Braithwaite, 1989). Through subsequently behaving in ways that confirm the 'criminal' label that has been applied to them, Braithwaite (1989) suggests that these individuals are stigmatised, or shamed, through a process of disintegrative shaming. The punitive punishment and associated labelling erect barriers between the offender and the punisher, thereby not only making shame an ineffective mechanism of social control, but also a mechanism that sustains criminal behaviours by driving them towards 'criminal' subcultures (Braithwaite, 1989).

When exploring these concepts in relation to my experiences, it could be argued that individuals at the Club saw my association with the University as a less desirable attribute (Goffman, 1963). Based on this association, I perceived these others to wrongly attribute qualities to me that conflicted with my true

personal and professional virtues (Goffman, 1959). As many who work in professional rugby league come from traditionally lower education backgrounds, these individuals may have felt ill-at-ease in the company of University graduates, due to fear for their jobs. The result of this was discrediting actions (such as the shunning outlined in my '*Not Part Of The Team*', '*International Ambitions*', and '*No Goodbyes*' stories) and stigmatisation of all associated with the University. As outlined within these stories, I recalled the perception that my opportunities were curtailed as a result my association to the University. I also recollected that, during this time, I experienced a greater number of positive interactions with individuals at the University. Braithwaite (1989) would suggest that stigmatisation from the Club resulted in me wanting to spend more time at the University in order to have my Academic identity confirmed. In doing so, he would argue, I legitimised the *stigma* of individuals at the Club and, with it, the barriers that existed between myself and those individuals (Braithwaite, 1989).

This area of research within coaching and performance analysis has received relatively little attention (Potrac & Jones, 2009a, 2009b). To date, the only papers considering Goffman's (1963) notion of *stigma* in relation to the experiences of individuals within the elite sports coaching context are those of Jones (2006a) and Thompson, Potrac and Jones (2013). My experiences support the findings presented in these works, as I too perceived key stakeholders at the Club to stigmatise me and, as a result, disqualify me from full acceptance. Interestingly, my experiences further develop these initial explorations by suggesting that as well as fitness coaches in elite football, performance analysts in elite rugby league also experience *stigma* in their working relationships. My experiences offer an insight into the structural nature of *stigma* present within professional sport. I perceived this *stigma* to be institutional and based on an association to an external organisation, not from the players and coaches, with whom I had developed significant relationships, with. In this respect, I did not perceive my shunning to stem from the players or coaches who were the 'face' of the *stigma*, but from the Club as a whole. I regarded this *stigma* to stem from important Club officials, who characterised the culture of rugby league and simply used the coaches to deliver the discrediting comments and actions.

5.3 What Makes A Performance Analyst: An Understanding Of Multiple Identity Construction And Maintenance

In the previous subsection of this chapter, discussion focused on my *professional self-understanding*, as a result of enacting my professional job role. With this in mind, the current subsection of this discussion aims to highlight how being a husband and a postgraduate student helped shape, and was in turn shaped by, my experiences of enacting my professional job role. Specifically, discussion within this subsection aims to demonstrate how striving to develop the *self-image* of a competent and effective performance analyst led to challenges, issues, and dilemmas in relation to these other important aspects of my life. The section will then present how trying to live up to expectations outside of the Club influenced my thoughts, feelings, choices, and behaviours whilst in the Club setting. Finally, the subsection will conclude with a discussion of the consequences of these conflicts between my identities, which led me to view some identities more favourably than others and, ultimately, change or withdraw from lower ranking identities.

5.3.1 Expectations: Structural Symbolic Interactionism And The Identity Process

Following the completion of my undergraduate studies and simultaneous to commencing my performance analysis internship at the Club, I got married and enrolled onto a postgraduate course. These different aspects of my life were completely new to me and each offered its own set of exciting and challenging prospects. Within my '*Excited Beginnings*' story, I spoke of how my partner and I were excited to '*draw a line under one chapter of our lives and begin our transition into the real world together*', following our graduation. I also suggested that my excitement at becoming a 'Husband' was linked to the meanings I attached to enacting this role. Within this extract, I also presented my feelings on commencing my postgraduate studies: of the excitement, mixed with nervousness. I was eager to prove to myself that I could achieve something truly special, yet nervous because I never really considered myself particularly academic.

When trying to make sense of my experiences, I found it particularly useful to draw upon the interconnected concepts of *structural symbolic interactionism* (Stryker, 1980) and *identity theory* (Burke & Stets, 2009). Stryker's (1980) *structural symbolic interactionism*, which stemmed from Kuhn's (1964) writings,

can be defined as a set of ideas about the nature of an individual and their relationship with society. This perspective asserts that human nature is a social state; that society is constituted by communication, social relationships, and interaction based on sociability and sympathy (Serpe & Stryker, 2011). From this perspective, society is composed of organised systems of interaction and role relationships with 'complex mosaics of differentiated groups, communities, and institutions, cross-cut by a variety of demarcations based on class, age, gender, ethnicity, religion, etc.' (Stryker, 2008, p. 19). Our very understanding of who we are is constantly changing and evolving, shaped by our experiences, relationships, and interactions (Scott, 2015).

This concept differs from the more traditional *symbolic interactionism*, presented by Blumer (1969), which presented the relatively 'fixed' nature of social structure in its analysis of social behaviour. *Structural symbolic interactionism*, however, suggests that social structure is in constant state of 'flux', as it is always in the process of being created and recreated through the interpretations, definitions, and actions of individuals (Stets & Burke, 2003). The social world is created by people interacting in routinised and orderly ways, while the meanings they attach to these experiences are shaped by those very patterns, in the form of socially constructed structures, institutions, and normative frameworks (Hewitt, 2007; Scott, 2015). Through interpretation of these, actors identify things particularly relevant to them, act on the basis of these interpretations, and attempt to align their actions within situations to accomplish their goals (Stets & Burke, 2003). Compared to the traditional view, the structural perspective leans more heavily on the impact of structure on these interactions, leaving open the possibility for subtle meanings that change social structure over time (Serpe & Stryker, 2011).

According to Burke and Stets (2009), the beginnings of *identity theory* can be traced back to *symbolic interactionism* as the basis for understanding how identities function. *Identity theory* can be understood as a set of meanings that define who one is when; one occupies a particular role in society, is a member of a particular group or claims particular characteristics that identify them as a unique person (Burke & Stets, 2009). This concept complements *structural symbolic interaction* through the understanding that an identity is not only the character and role that an individual creates for themselves as an occupant of a particular social position (McCall & Simmons, 1978), but also the identification

of holding this position by significant others (Stone, 1962). Identities only come into being through cultural and linguistic conventions, which are in turn a reflection of dominant systems of knowledge and power (Foucault, 1971; Scott, 2015). This supports James' (1980) statement that individuals possess as many different selves (identities) as there are different positions they hold in society and different others who respond to them. In short, *identity theory* seeks to explain the specific meanings that individuals hold for their multiple identities: how these identities relate to one another, how they influence the individual's behaviours, thoughts, feelings and emotions, and how these identities tie individuals to and are shaped by society (Burke & Stets, 2009).

Burke and Stets (2009) further developed their discussion of identities to consider the different types of identities individuals enact. Within this discussion, they detailed the difference between *role-based identities* and *social or group-based identities* (Burke & Stets, 2009). *Role-based identities* are those that encompass the character and responsibility that an individual devises for themselves as an occupant of a particular social position and describes the relationships and behaviours expected of them within that position (McCall & Simmons, 1978, Burke & Stets, 2009). The meanings encompassed within *role-based identities* are derived from cultural experiences (or socialisation) and the individual's own interpretations of the role in question (McCall & Simmons, 1978).

Group-based identities however, consist of social collectives that identify themselves as holding a common implied identification (Stets & Burke, 1999). From this perspective, individuals identify themselves as belonging to a social category or group, labelling themselves as 'in-group' members through self-categorisation and distinguishing themselves from 'out-group' members through self-comparison (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). Hogg (2006) identified the 'prototype' as the inter-related set of perceptions, attitudes, feelings, and behaviours that simultaneously capture similarities among in-group members and differences from out-group members. Indeed, Burke and Stets (2009) suggested that through interaction with others in a given social structure (or group), individuals learn how to identify, classify, divide, and name important aspects, such as positions and ongoing patterns of interaction. From this viewpoint, the groups (or structures) in which *identities* are embedded are relatively fixed, with people (*identities*) playing out the parts (roles) that are assigned to them (Burke &

Stets, 2009). Indeed, when an individual acquires a new social role, they engage in a set of behaviours seen by themselves and other group members as fulfilling that role (Mack & Gammage, 1998). These named positions have similar meanings to everyone within the social group and, as such, form the basis of expectations for the actions and behaviours of those occupying the position in question (Burke & Stets, 2009). Indeed, to paraphrase Stets and Burke (2003), individuals influence society through their actions and the creation of these groups and, reciprocally, society influences individuals through its shared language and meanings.

When considering my experiences in relation to this theorising, I found the distinct concepts of both *role-based* and *group-based identities* to be equally significant to my experiences. In this regard, the experiences presented within my '*Excited Beginnings*' story can be interpreted as developing three new *role-based identities*, Lead Performance Analyst, Post Graduate Student, and Husband. (McCall & Simmons, 1978; Hogg & Abrams, 1988). Initially, the socialisation aspect of my identity meaning structure for each of these new *identities* was extremely limited (Stryker, 1980). The result of this on my performance analyst identity was an increased feeling of anxiety, which resulted in a reliance on my past coaching and education experiences to direct my actions and behaviours. In contrast to this, although my Student and Husband *identities* were equally new to me, I had a greater level of socialisation experiences to complement my own interpretations of role expectations, which allowed me to feel more comfortable in these roles from the outset.

Unlike the *role-based identity* I acquired upon accepting the internship, I did not feel I immediately became part of the *group-based identity* that was the rugby Club, instead feeling that this was something I had to earn from other members. In contrast to this, upon starting my postgraduate studies, I immediately felt part of the postgraduate *group-based identity* at the University. Again, like my *role-based identities*, I had greater previous experiences of my Student group identity from completing my undergraduate degree with a number of my postgraduate colleagues. Based on these limited experiences, I still understood these positions and group associations held shared expectations about how I was to enact the roles and comport myself toward other group members more generally (Turner, 2013).

As my experiences of these newly acquired *identities* progressed, my understanding of the importance of others' perceptions of the shared expectations associated with these new *identities* also increased. Within my 'Mixed Feelings' story I discussed a developing consideration for my professional qualities as a performance analyst, concluding that I desired to be seen as creative, accurate, technical, and professional. As discussed in the previous subsection of this chapter, I desired to utilise this initial one-to-one interaction with the coaches as a means of having these traits affirmed. Within my 'Excited Beginnings' story, I outlined a similar desire to conform to the expectations placed upon my actions and behaviours as within my Student identity. Among other traits, I considered myself to be articulate, studious, and academic. Within this story, I outlined the desire to convey these traits to myself and significant others through reading academic texts, producing timely documents for supervisory meetings, and engaging in debates with fellow postgraduate students. Finally, within my 'Excited Beginnings' story I also outlined the desire for a greater number of opportunities to demonstrate those traits I regarded integral to the enactment of my newly acquired Husband identity. Within this story, I wrote of how I considered myself loyal, attentive, supportive, and fun and endeavoured to live up to these traits, having them affirmed by my Wife.

When striving to make sense of these experiences I found it particularly relevant to draw upon Burke and Stets' (2009) *identity process*, which outlines the components of an identity and their relationship with one another. The authors outlined a control system with four main components: an *input*, an *identity standard*, a *comparator*, and an *output* (Burke & Stets, 2009). The *input* is the perception an individual has of their immediate surroundings and interactions: their acknowledgement of the situation's *signs* and *symbols* (Burke & Stets, 2009). *Signs* refer to stimuli that are perceived to be connected with something else and occur in conjunction with that which they indicate (Burke & Stets, 2009). *Symbols*, on the other hand, have subsequently been defined as a special class of *signs* with shared meanings between all who share a particular culture (Burke & Stets, 2009). It is these perceptions that an individual endeavours to control (Burke & Stets, 2009). The *identity standard* is the intrinsic set of meanings that define the character of the identity and is unique not only to the individual, but also to the identity activated within a given social

interaction (Burke & Stets, 2009). It is the job of the *comparator* to compare these *input* perceptions of relevant meanings to those held within the *identity standard*, producing an 'error signal' if there is a discrepancy (Burke & Stets, 2009). This error signal triggers a behavioural response or *output* to reduce the discrepancy perceived, altering the environment to better align with meanings contained within the *identity standard* (Burke & Stets, 2009). Burke and Stets (2009) elaborated on their identity process model to suggest that through a process known as *identity verification*, individuals aim to match the perceived meanings of their identity to those contained within their *identity standard*, in order to confirm to the individual that they are in fact the person that the standard indicates (Burke & Stets, 2009). When an identity is verified and the individual's self-relevant perceptions are kept close to those within their *identity standard*, Cast and Burke (2002) suggest they are likely to experience an increase in *self-esteem*.

Within the examples presented above, from each of my newly acquired *identities*, I outlined a clear set of beliefs about what constituted the different aspects of my life (Burke & Stets, 2009). In short, these beliefs about how I see myself whilst enacting each of these different *identities*, develop from the meanings contained within the corresponding *identity standard* (Burke & Stets, 2009). Whilst operating within these *identities*, I aimed to comport myself accordingly to those present and receive positive evaluations from them. For example, whilst I have previously spoken of the desire to utilise my first one-to-one interaction with the coaches as a means of furthering my *self-image* and *self-esteem* (Kelchtermans, 2009), I also aimed to further improve their perception of my professional identity (Burke & Stets, 2009). Within this interaction in particular, the coaches' evaluations acted as *input signals*, which my *comparator* judged against those beliefs held within my *identity standard* (Burke & Stets, 2009). In this interaction, I perceived the evaluation of my performance by the coaches to reinforce the meanings contained within my *identity standard* (Burke & Stets, 2009) and I experienced positive *self-esteem*.

This was also the case for the examples presented from my Student and Husband *identities*, outlined in my '*Excited Beginnings*' story. Indeed, whilst striving to obtain positive evaluations within these *identities*, I also attended to those aspects of my University and home life that were particularly relevant to my own goals (Burke & Stets, 2009). Not only did I want to create and maintain

these *identities*, but I also desired to utilise the beliefs of significant others to help form my interpretation of what it meant to fulfil these roles. Importantly, Burke and Stets (2009) reasoned that when *identities* are performed in front of others (an audience), the others present evaluate the individual's identity performance and either confirm or disconfirm the performer's idiosyncratic imaginations of themselves. In essence, through this process I incorporated the actions and behaviours of a postgraduate student, from those displayed by my supervisors and fellow students, as well as the behaviours of a husband from my family and friends, into my understanding of what it was to fulfil these roles (Stets & Burke, 2003). In both of these *identities* then, as with my professional identity, I incorporated these actions into my understanding of what it meant to embody the identity in question, whilst also validating the opinions of others as to my identity (Burke & Stets, 2009).

As a result of these experiences, I developed an understanding that my appearance, as well as my actions and behaviours, acted as a means of conveying those traits I, as well as others, considered relevant to my different *identities*. In an attempt to develop and maintain my new professional *role-based* and *group-based identities*, I acknowledged the desire to be viewed equally with others at the Club by way of wearing the same kit as my colleagues. This understanding was initially explored at the beginning of my internship, evident within my '*Tenerife*' story, however it became a key feature in subsequent stories. Indeed, within my '*Mixed Feelings*' story, I presented my dissatisfaction after my colleagues had received their kit for the new season and I had not. In this regard, it could also be argued that I placed significant symbolic value on the 'kit', as not wearing it lead to considerable negative feelings (Serpe & Stryker, 2011). Similarly, within my '*Excited Beginnings*' story, I presented a developing understanding of the need to spend more time with my Wife, to demonstrate the attentive, supportive, and fun traits we both considered important aspects of my Husband identity. Again, like my professional identity, this also became a significant feature of my narrative, as seen in my '*Not Part of the Team*' and '*Slump*' stories.

When interpreting my experiences here, I found it particularly useful to consider Swann's (1983) discussion of *opportunity structure*. This concept takes into account the amount of energy that individuals are required to use in order to maintain desired situational meanings (Burke & Stets, 2009). Swann (1983)

suggests that individuals will gravitate towards situations or *opportunity structures* that support their self-conceptions and avoid particularly difficult interactions that require considerable energy to resolve. In developing this concept, Burke and Stets (2009) suggest that individuals act in this manner in order to facilitate the displaying of *signs* and *symbols* (as defined previously). This builds upon Stryker's (1980) *structural symbolic interactionism*, which in turn developed from the earlier writings of Blumer (1962, 1969) on traditional *symbolic interactionism*. In this work, Blumer (1962, 1969) furthered Mead's (1934) suggestion that the unique character of human interaction centres on the shared use of *symbols*. Indeed, Mead (1934) stated that interacting humans cooperate by manipulating significant *symbols* or gestures that have common meaning for all participants within the interaction. Burke and Stets (2009) suggested that interactions consist of the use of such *symbols*, inclusive of their implicit language and gestures, to convey, negotiate, manipulate, and otherwise control meanings.

Within the example presented from my '*Tenerife*' story, my desire to wear the same kit as my colleagues can be considered a *display signal* to which I attached significant symbolic value (Burke & Stets, 2009). This supports the work of Stone (1962) and Swann (1983), who both recognised the importance of appearance in communicating self-meanings to others, so that these others come to know exactly who we are. Similarly, Kane and Zink (2004) noted that kayakers attached significant symbolic value to sporting kit, particularly that which bears a logo or slogan, when communicating insider status. To quote Burke (2006, p. 94) '... by looking the part, we convey those meanings which define us for others as we wish to be defined and understood'. Stone (1962) elaborated that a person's appearance acts as a *symbol* by providing the identities, values and attitudes of the person and arousing in others the assignment of words and meanings congruent with who one appears to be. In this respect, I viewed the initials that Ian and the other coaching staff had on their Club kit to be an important tie signal that connected them as in-group members, or members of a performance team (Goffman, 1959, 1971). Subsequently, by not having the new Club kit, or my initials printed on it, I perceived others (the players, coaches, and backroom staff) to view me as an outsider, as differing from the prototype of the group by not having this important tie signal (Burke & Stets, 2009).

Similarly, when considering the experiences presented from my '*Excited Beginnings*' story it could be said that I utilised appropriate interactional strategies or *interpersonal prompts* during my interactions with my Wife (Burke & Stets, 2009). By considering myself as attentive and fun I was able to imprint these traits upon my Wife who mirrored them back to me. This is the basic premise of what Weinstein and Deutschberger (1963) called *altercasting*, which refers to the creation of an identity for another person within an interaction. In this example, by being attentive and spending more time with my Wife doing things we both considered fun, I effectively cast onto my Wife the traits of attentive and fun, whilst simultaneously facilitating my own *identity verification* by these meanings (Weinstein & Deutschberger, 1963). I implicitly created an *opportunity structure* through *interpersonal prompts* that resulted in the realisation and continued maintenance of my identity (Burke & Stets, 2009).

The concept of multiple simultaneous *identities* has yet to be applied to coaching or indeed performance analysis research and, as a result, it is difficult to compare my experiences to those of others. That said, despite not specifically considering their experiences of coaching in relation to current identity research, some of the reflections of Potrac et al. (2013a) hold individual significance to my story. Of particular interest was the first author's comment that wearing the kit was integral to his football coach identity creation and maintenance (Potrac et al., 2013a). In presenting this, Potrac et al. (2013a) could be said to be considering how his wearing of the club kit (an important *display signal*) (Burke & Stets, 2009) helped him to create and maintain his coaching identity. Unfortunately, as this was not explicitly detailed within the paper, an understanding of how this concept impacted his coach *role-based identity*, within the eyes of his athletes and colleagues, cannot be achieved (Potrac et al., 2013a). In this regard, this thesis stands alone in presenting how I aimed to maintain not only my professional identity at the Club, but also those important *identities* I had within my personal life. In particular, I outlined the belief that upon initiation of my Analyst and Student *role-based identities*, I felt that my previous student experiences and acquaintances allowed me to simultaneously acquire the corresponding *group-based* Student identity. Conversely, I expressed the belief that as I did not acquire this within my Analyst identity, more that I had to earn this from in-group members.

5.3.2 Too Little Time: Role Conflict And Role Strain

During the course of my internship, I developed an appreciation of the expectations that were placed upon me by each of my different *identities*, as well as the amount of time and energy required to have them verified. I came to realise that the vast amount of time spent striving for verifying feedback from my professional identity had significant implications for my Husband and Student *identities*. Within my '*Slump*' story, I presented my reasoning for committing these extra hours as a means of obtaining those *resources* I deemed significant. This point was later elaborated in my '*No Goodbyes*' story, when I suggested the need for greater opportunity to deliver more team video sessions, review more matches with the coaches and secure advantageous work space within the office and coaching box.

Within my '*Slump*' story, I also detailed the negative implications this had on my Husband identity in particular. I outlined how the amount of hours I was committing to the Club to change the coaches' perceptions of me left me feeling tired and wishing to spend more time with my Wife. I also outlined how she, in turn, had expressed, on numerous occasions, her desire for us to spend more time together as a family. In my downheartedness, I began to question whether I wanted to '*do this for the rest of my life*', as I began to understand the level of commitment I had to give my professional identity set against living up to the expectations my Wife and I placed upon my Husband identity.

Similarly, within my '*Tenerife*' story I detailed how the significant time pressures resulting from striving to verify my professional identity also resulted in non-verification of my Student identity. I discussed how I was not finding time to keep up with the level of academic reading, journal keeping, and preparation work for supervisory meetings that my supervisors and I expected. I spoke of the resulting stresses in the approach to one such supervisory meeting, of the dread and anticipation that my supervisors would be unhappy with my work.

Finally, within my '*International Ambitions*' story I suggested that due to the time pressures of Club life, mixed with the desire to verify my Husband and Student *identities*, I felt obliged to renounce my coaching position at my local rugby club. Despite my reluctance, I simply did not have the time to commit my evenings and weekends to the team I had developed for over five years. I spoke of the regret and sadness at this decision, however, at the time, it was my only option.

When trying to make sense of these experiences, I found it particularly useful to draw upon Kahn et al's (1964) discussion of *role conflict* or *role strain*. This concept considers what happens when the multiple *identities* of an individual come into struggle with one another (Burke & Stets, 2009). As individuals are typically embedded in numerous groups and therefore hold multiple roles or *identities*, these differing *identities* may reinforce one another but more often cause some level of conflict (Thoits, 1983; Reitzes & Mutran, 1995). Thoits (1983, 1986) suggested that multiple *identities* generate conflict, with obligatory *role-based identities* responsible for more of these conflicts than voluntary *identities*. He also stated that when conflicts arise, individuals are more likely to remove themselves from voluntary identities to ease strain and often experience feelings of stress when they cannot withdraw from obligatory *identities* (Thoits, 1983).

From this perspective, the experiences presented from my 'Slump' and 'Tenerife' stories are indicative of *role conflict* (Kahn et al., 1964). In striving to have my professional identity verified, due to the hours committed to changing my professional *self-image*, I was not afforded adequate opportunities to display to significant others the qualities contained within my *identity standard* for my Husband and Student *identities* (Burke & Stets, 2009). As a result, I was not able to receive the level of feedback I needed from these significant others in order to have these *identities* verified (Burke & Stets, 2009). In an effort to increase the amount of time I had to enact these *identities*, I felt I had no choice but to remove myself from some *voluntary identities*, despite my reluctance. One such identity was that of youth rugby coach at my local club, as presented in my 'International Ambitions' story. Due to the voluntary nature of this identity, I was forced to remove myself from it in order to offer myself greater opportunities to verify my compulsory Husband and Student *identities* (Thoits, 1986).

The strain or conflict I experienced during the course of my internship was not limited to a one-way transfer. Indeed, within my 'Tenerife' story I recalled the challenges and setbacks I faced within my professional identity as a result of factors outside of the Club. In this extract, I detailed how having my arm in cast after dislocating my elbow left me entirely reliant on my Wife for lifts to and from work. I subsequently found myself at the mercy of her schedule and was not able to start Club work early or stay back late. As a result, I struggled to retain

control of team video sessions, found my work duplicated or finished by Ian (who would inevitably lead the session), and perceived that I had lost my place within the performance analysis team to him.

Within my '*International Ambitions*' story, I also spoke of a developing understanding of how Club colleagues' perceptions of my Student identity variously impacted on my ability to receive verifying feedback within my professional identity. I discussed how the coaches and other backroom staffs at the Club became increasingly scornful and distrusting of Murphy and myself based on our association with the University. This understanding initially developed within my '*Tenerife*' story, when I spoke of the need to distance myself from the negative stigma I perceived Murphy to be attracting as a result of his ever-increasing rebellious actions. I did not want to be grouped or labelled in the same manner that I perceived individuals at the Club to be attributing to my colleague, based on his association with the University. This understanding was further developed within my '*International Ambitions*' story, when I presented my feelings after discovering that Murphy and myself would be the only backroom staff excluded from the Club's away trip to London. I thought it was again based on our association with the University and began to see more and more instances of this throughout my internship.

When trying to make sense of my experiences here, I found it particularly useful to consider Burke's (2004) sociological development of conflicting *identities* and continued links to *structural symbolic interactionism* (Stryker, 1980). Burke (2004) suggested that *identities* are tied to positions in social structures, with these positions defining social culture. In this way, people, as occupants of these structural social positions, apply themselves with names and associated meanings that define themselves and the goals to which their position strives (Burke, 2004). *Identity verification* for these individuals becomes the means through which the social structure is maintained, as roles link to other roles and group members link to other group members. Lyman and Scott (1970) argue that an identity is an aggregate of social roles that one plays across different situations, which together create the impression of something 'trans-situational', or greater than the sum of its parts (Scott, 2015). This links to the earlier theorising of Turner (1968), who posits that identities are a succession of 'situated selves' that we inhabit as we move between social settings, which are averaged out to create an overall sense of self. Lawler

(2008) suggests a central paradox of identity that combines notions of sameness and continuity with notions of difference and distinctiveness.

These patterns of individual and group behaviours are indicative of the larger social structures in which they operate. Indeed, Burke and Stets (2009) suggest that the person, acting as an agent for an identity, adjusts resources within a given situation (or *structure*) to align them with the dictates of their *identity standard* (Burke & Stets, 2009). In doing so, the person manipulates *symbols* to verify their identity, which is considered an important function of *identities* (Freese & Burke, 1994). For each role a person occupies, the identity dictates how resources are supposed to be used and the *agency* of the person makes it happen, to verify the identity (Freese & Burke, 1994). Burke and Stets (2009) stressed that if the *agency* (which involves an individual accomplishing their goals) is consistent with those of the social structure, they are reinforced not only for the individual but also for the social structure. Conversely, when the individual's goals are in opposition to social structural arrangements, interactions may on the one hand become destructive and destabilise the existing social structures, or on the other hand may become curtailed as the individual is prevented from obtaining their goals (Stets & Burke, 2003).

Upon entering the coaching environment, I was socially assigned, as well as assigned myself, the *role-based* identity of Lead Performance Analyst. By acting in accordance with this identity, I mutually verified my own identity, as well as those of others within the Club, thus maintaining the balance of this particular social structure (Burke, 2004). Unfortunately, when considering this theorising in relation to the experiences presented from my '*Tenerife*' story, it could be said that the injury I sustained outside of work did not allow me to fully enact my professional role (Burke, 2004). As a result, I was not able to assist in this mutual verification process and suffered detrimental effects to my *self-image* and *self-esteem* (Burke & Stets, 2009).

Similarly, when considering the extract presented from my '*International Ambitions*' story, it could be said that, due to the structural constraints on my role, I considered my goals to be in opposition to those of the Club. As a result, the non-verifying and structurally curtailed interactions I experienced during this time may have been destructive and destabilising (Stets & Burke, 2003). Indeed, I perceived these interactions to be indicative of rugby league in general and in direct contradiction to the beliefs held within both my Student

and Analyst *identities* (Stets & Serpe, 2013). I felt considerable pressure to conform to and not disrupt the social order of the Club, as the coaches viewed me as belonging to an external organisation. I understood that these individuals were linking my actions to the rebellious actions of Murphy and that the two of us were considered outsiders, as differing to the group prototype (Burke & Stets, 2009).

The concept of *role conflict*, or *role strain*, has seen limited application to coaching research, despite more recently being applied to teacher-coaches within United States physical education (O'Connor & Macdonald, 2002; Konukman et al., 2010). My experiences build upon this early application of conflicting *identities* by suggesting that individuals within a coaching context are also the incumbents of multiple roles (O'Connor & Macdonald, 2002). Indeed, my findings also add further weight to the comments of Konukman et al. (2010), who, in developing the work of Sage (1987), suggested that when individuals experience *role conflict* they should reduce the time demands of one or both of the conflicting roles. My experiences further develop those presented in previous papers by suggesting that although most enter into the elite sports coaching environment with the intention of developing individual and team performances, individual and structural differences in beliefs on how to achieve this can lead to considerable strain and conflict between roles.

To date, there has been little attention paid to the influences of *structure* and *agency*, as well as conflicting *identities*, within coaching and performance analysis literature. In this respect, it is difficult to draw conclusions on the effect of these concepts from past research to help understand my experiences. That said, the work of Tsang (2000) has applied the notion of structural constraints to athletic *identities*, and some comparisons can be drawn. My experiences of this concept offer support to the lead author's comments, as I too believed I was labelled as an outsider, as differing from the group prototype, based on a tenuous association to the behaviours and actions of others (Tsang, 2000). Similarly, I also felt that my Student identity and University associations stigmatised (Goffman, 1963; Braithwaite, 1989) me as being different from the group prototype, contending that my identity was being negotiated in relation to the symbolic meanings associated with the University (Tsang, 2000). In this regard, I again found myself driven to those aspects of my life that would confirm, or verify, my Academic identity (Braithwaite, 1989).

Despite the significant conflicts between these three main *identities*, during the course of my internship there was, at times, a high level of harmony between them. One such example of this can be seen in my '*Finding Form*' story, when I detailed my experiences following my Wife and me moving to live closer to work and University. I spoke of my delight at not having to commute 90 minutes to and from work each day. I was also able to take the strain off her by doing some things I had not previously had time to help her with, and I also had time to fit in going to the gym before work. Also, I was now able to cycle to and from work and found it particularly beneficial not only to my physical health but also to my mental wellbeing. During this time, I was able to keep up with my academic commitments, as well as committing sufficient hours at the Club to significantly alter my fortunes. It was during this period that I was also fortunate enough to travel with the team to Catalan, which I ultimately considered the most significant in my development of positive *self-image* and *self-esteem* across each of my *identities*.

When trying to make sense of my experiences here, I found it particularly useful to consider Burke and Stets' (2009) discussion of mutually verifying multiple *identities* within an individual. This notion suggests that such complex individuals are a product of the ever-increasing complexity of society (Stryker, 1980) and the degree to which an individual's different *identities* share common meanings (Burke & Stets, 2009). Recognising that individual *identities* each hold their own meanings, Burke and Stets (2009) suggest that in the postmodern era, individuals have a greater and more complex array of *identities*. In order to reduce tensions between these different *identities*, individuals are likely to assume positions within social structures that, as much as possible, share meanings (Burke & Stets, 2009). When the meanings contained within these different *identities* correspond (are simultaneously activated and verified), each activated identity is likely to be verified accordingly (Deaux, 1992). In this regard, the verification of traits within one identity leads to subsequent verification of other *identities* sharing those traits (Deaux, 1993).

Within my '*Finding Form*' story, I outlined how having more time meant that the traits of fun, relaxed, and hardworking were mutually verified across each of my *identities* (Burke & Stets, 2009). Simultaneously, each different identity was also receiving adequate verification during this time, as a result of displaying to significant others those traits mutually perceived as encompassing

the enactment of that particular identity (Burke & Stets, 2009). The result of this was *identity verification* for each of my *identities* both individually and mutually, which lead to increased *self-image* and *self-esteem*.

Unfortunately, to date, few papers have considered multiple *identities* within coaching and performance analysis research. That said, tentative links to the writings of Potrac et al. (2013a) can be made in regards to this concept. Despite this paper not expressly documenting the interplay of multiple *identities* nor interpreting its findings in relation to the theories presented above, during their autoethnographic narrative, the main author offered a glimpse into this notion (Potrac et al., 2013a). Potrac et al. (2013a) demonstrated consideration of their personal identity (e.g. an imagined conversation and reaction of their partner) whilst enacting their professional identity. Unfortunately, as this paper did not detail the specifics of this concept, it is not possible to draw significant comparisons to my experiences. In this regard, my findings stand alone in offering an insight into the conflicting nature of the multiple *identities* a performance analyst may possess. Specifically, my experiences highlight that the different *identities* of individuals can be, at times, complementary and, at other times, can cause considerable conflicts.

5.3.3 *Who Do I Want To Be?: Identity Hierarchy And Identity Change*

Despite the cooperation and mutual verification experienced between my Husband, Student, and Performance Analysis *identities* during times like those outlined above, the general trend of Club life was more conflicting. This concept was first outlined within my '*Excited Beginnings*' story, when I spoke of my feelings regarding initiating my three new *identities*. Even at this early stage, I recognised the importance of the high levels of intrinsic and extrinsic feedback, such as positive supervisory feedback, an enjoyable honeymoon, and positive developments in personal and professional working relationships at the Club. As my internship progressed, however, I began to consider how my professional relationships at the Club were not developing in either the number or the quality I expected. Within my '*Not Part of the Team*' story, I expressed concern both at the amount of energy I was expending in order to further these relationships and at the expense of enacting my other *identities* and the disproportionately limited advances I experienced. I spoke of my developing feelings of disenfranchisement and discussed how taking the time off for my

honeymoon had allowed others to further their position within the department and their relationships with the coaches, at my expense.

Within my '*Play-Off Hopes*' story I reflected on one particularly conflicting experience, when I was torn between my professional duties and socialising with my friends. My struggle was because I wanted to fully engage in the positive working experiences surrounding an excellent on-field performance, whilst feeling greater ties to my friends and wanting to ensure they enjoyed the occasion. Similarly, within my '*Not Part of the Team*' story I outlined similar conflicts, of wanting to spend time at the Club to further the number and quality of my professional relationships but finding or fabricating excuses to leave the Club to enact my academic and Husband *identities*. Within this example, I utilised my University affiliation in order to leave the Club on the premise of an important meeting, only to instead meet up with University colleagues or get home to my Wife early, and receive verifying feedback from those latter parties as a result.

Finally, within my '*Play-Off Hopes*' story I alluded to greater opportunities outside of my professional identity, concluding that I had other options, such as lecturing, if my internship did not lead to a full time position. In this regard, I was in some way prepared for a future without these Club connections, believing my Husband and Student identity connections to be strong enough. As a result of these conflicts, I found myself connecting with some *identities* more than others at different points throughout my internship and ultimately, this shaped my behaviours.

When trying to make sense of my experiences here, I found it particularly useful to consider McCall and Simmons' (1978) discussion of *identity hierarchy*. These authors suggest that individuals typically claim more than one role identity and arrange them according to an internal hierarchy (McCall & Simmons, 1978; Stryker, 1980). This hierarchical arrangement of *identities* has considerable links to *role conflict*, with individuals categorising themselves in particular ways to fulfil the need to feel valuable, worthy (the self-esteem motive), competent, and effective (the self-efficacy motive) (Cast, Stets & Burk, 1999). It has been argued that this internal ranking process is based on either *salience* or *prominence*, each leading to separate yet related theorising (Burke & Stets, 2009). *Prominence hierarchy* or *centrality* encompasses how individuals see themselves in terms of ideals, desires, and what is central or

important to them in a given role or group (McCall & Simmons, 1978). This method of arrangement is influenced by factors such as the individual's self support or support from others, their commitment to the identity and the level of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards received from the identity (McCall & Simmons, 1978; Burke & Stets, 2009).

Stryker (1980) defined a salient identity as one that is likely to be activated across different situations. In this respect, *salience hierarchy* differs from *prominence hierarchy* in that instead of reflecting the ideal self, it focuses on the situational aspects of the self: on how an individual will be likely to behave in a social situation (Stets & Burke, 2003). Importantly, while one's values or beliefs may or may not relate to how one behaves in a given interaction, there may be times when what one values may not be able to be expressed given situational constraints (Stryker & Serpe, 1982). In this regard, it is important to distinguish between identity *prominence* and identity *salience*, despite the two concepts both offering an insight into how individuals rank different *identities*. (Stets & Burke, 2003). Indeed, like *prominence hierarchy*, *salience hierarchy* has an element of commitment, which contains a quantitative and a qualitative aspect (Stryker & Serpe, 1982). The quantitative element of commitment in identity *salience* relates to the number of ties an individual has to a social structure, or the number of persons that one is tied to through an identity (Stets & Burke, 2003). Stets and Burke (2003) also suggested that the larger the number of persons an individual is connected to as a product of having a particular identity, the greater the commitment to that identity. Interestingly, the qualitative aspect of commitment suggests that the stronger or deeper the connections to others based on a particular identity, the higher the commitment to that identity (Stets & Burke, 2003). Similarly, Stryker (1968, 1980) suggests that the greater the commitment to an identity, the higher it is likely to be ranked within the *salience hierarchy*. Indeed, Serpe and Stryker's (1987) research on student identity concluded that individuals were more likely to join organisations and enter into activities related to a particular role identity, depending on the extent the identity is salient.

Considering the examples presented from my '*Excited Beginnings*' and '*Not Part of the Team*' stories in relation to this theorising, it could be said that, as my internship progressed, I clearly began to favour my Student and Husband *identities* (Burke & Stets, 2009). I favoured these *identities* as they offered

greater levels of support and extrinsic rewards from significant others (McCall & Simmons, 1978). As a result of this support, I felt higher levels of commitment to these *identities* and perceived greater intrinsic rewards from my interactions whilst enacting them (McCall & Simmons, 1978).

From this perspective, it could be said that I also had a greater number of ties outside of my professional identity and that I considered these ties to be stronger (McCall & Simmons, 1978). This is evident in my '*Play-Off Hopes*' story and supports McCall and Simmons' (1978) statement that salient *identities* require high levels of support (Burke & Stets, 2009). I realised I had very few ties regarding my Student identity, other than my supervisors, however I had strong connections to them, having worked with them throughout my undergraduate course. Within this identity, I also drew upon the support of Murphy, as I felt we had a strong tie due to our shared histories and academic motivations (McCall & Simmons, 1978). Similarly, within my Husband identity I only had the strong ties with my Wife and immediate family, however over the course of my internship I allowed this to grow to encompass my wider friends and family. This increased the number of strong connections I had outside of the Club and countered the large number of less strong ties I had within my Analyst identity (McCall & Simmons, 1978).

It could also be said that the experiences presented from my '*Slump*' and '*No Goodbyes*' stories suggested that my Husband and Student *identities* were often activated whilst I was enacting my Analyst identity (McCall & Simmons, 1978). In this regard, by thinking and talking about these *identities* and actively manipulating my professional identity in order to increase the opportunities I had to enact these other *identities*, I was seeking ways to have them verified as part of my professional identity (Burke & Stets, 2009). This can be linked to how prominent an individual considers a particular identity to be, with more prominent *identities* often ranking higher in their *salience hierarchy* (McCall & Simmons, 1978). Similarly, McCall and Simmons (1978) would suggest that I perceived greater profit or *opportunity structure* within my Student and Husband *identities*, as I believed I would have greater career and life opportunities outside of the Club environment. The result of this was the recognition that my Husband and Student *identities* ranked higher in both *salience* and *prominence hierarchies* (Burke & Stets, 2009; McCall & Simmons, 1978).

As my internship progressed, the strength of the connections to my Club colleagues developed at different rates. Within my narrative it is evident that I separated my feelings on this subject into three categories: my relationships with the players, my relationships with my performance analysis colleagues, and my relationships with the coaches. Within my 'No Goodbyes' story I mentioned feeling strongly committed to the players as my connection to them as a whole, though some more than others, had developed gradually over the course of the internship.

In contrast, my relationship with Ian significantly deteriorated over the course of my internship, as I began to consider him one of the main reasons for my *identity non-verification*, as seen in my 'Tenerife' story. As my internship progressed I understood this to be a product of our different *identity standard* meanings for our Analyst *identities*. I also understood that this had been a persistent problem evident throughout my narrative, though conceding that he was merely trying to obtain a full time position at the Club. Importantly, in my 'No Goodbyes' story, I recalled how this was Ian's only career option and, as such, he was going to do whatever it took to achieve it. Interestingly, this also suggested that my *identity standard* meanings for this identity may have differed to his because I had my Student identity to fall back on.

In this regard, within my 'Slump' story I also suggested that as my Student identity grew in hierarchy, my Student and Performance Analysis *identities* were, increasingly, activated simultaneously. In this example, I detailed how I felt the need to curtail the important Student identity characteristics of articulate and studious, based on the comments of the Head Coach. The coach expressed disdain for my academic work and I began to comprehend rugby league's larger cultural aversion to academia. Unfortunately, due to the Club's anti-academia culture, where my Analyst identity received verifying feedback, my Student identity received non-verifying feedback.

This can be understood in relation to Burke's (2006) writings on *identity change*, which is a change in the self-meanings that define who one is. Indeed, Burke (2006) identified two general sources of systematic *identity change*: persistent problems with verification and multiple conflicting *identities*. Concerning the former, Burke (2006) suggested that a prolonged discrepancy over time between situationally self-relevant meanings and those meanings contained within an individual's *identity standard* will lead to a gradual process

of *identity change*. This occurs when the individual slowly changes the meaning contained within their *identity standard* to match their perceptions of self-relevant situational meanings and, as a result, reduce the discomfort experienced (Burke, 2006). With regard to the latter, Burke and Stets (2009) suggested that when an individual has multiple *identities* that are often activated at the same time, it may not be possible to verify both *identities* simultaneously. In this situation, the individual acts to control self-relevant situational meanings to match the standard for one identity and, in doing so, creates a discrepancy with the meanings contained within the standard of the other identity (Burke, 2004). To reduce this discrepancy, the meanings contained within each standard will gradually shift over time towards each other in a 'compromise' position (Burke, 2006).

In these examples then, as well as others from my narrative, it is clear that I was experiencing considerable conflict between multiple situationally activated *identities* (Burke, 2006). In order to have important traits within my professional identity verified, I had to shift the conflicting meanings within my Student *identity standard* closer in line (Burke, 2006). This moved them away from those contained within my Student *identity standard* and resulted in non-verification of this identity. It was also clear that I was experiencing a prolonged discrepancy between what I perceived to be acceptable behaviours congruent with my *role-based* identity and what others within the Club thought appropriate (Burke, 2006). The actions of Ian in these examples also offer support to the findings of Burke (2004), who suggested that expectations for behaviours change as groups grow and new counter-roles are created. In this regard, the retention of Ian to ease the workload on Murphy and myself acted to alter the expectations that key stakeholders had for appropriate performance analysis behaviors (Burke, 2004). His actions and behaviours, in an attempt to retain his position, led to an expectation of dramatically increased working hours for everyone and a reliance on him, which diverted verifying feedback from Murphy and myself.

Within my narrative, I developed my understanding of these conflicting *identities* by way of considering those personal traits I desired to convey whilst enacting each of these different *identities*. I outlined key personal characteristics such as kind, helpful, and efficient, which I consider significant and consistent across my different *identities*. I also detailed how I perceived my experiences at the Club to be in direct contrast to these core personal values. I

reflected that many of my colleagues were scheming and deliberately unhelpful, whilst simultaneously considering the continual and perpetual inefficiency of the coaching environment to be a significant contributing factor in my *identity non-verification* and *role conflict*. This ultimately caused me to reconsider the placement of my professional identity within my *identity hierarchy* (Burke, 2006). I ultimately, perceived my Husband, Student, and person *identities* to rank higher in *prominence*, *commitment*, and *salience* (Burke, 2004). As a result, I found that my perceptions of relevant performance analysis meanings changed to accommodate the verification of my other *identities*, which altered less significantly in return (Burke, 2006).

When trying to make sense of these experiences I found it particularly useful to draw upon Burke's (2004) discussion of the *person identity*. It has been suggested that the *person identity* is a master identity and, as such, generally rates higher than *role-based* or *group-based identities* in an individual's hierarchical arrangement (Burke, 2004). This is due to the *person identity* usually being relevant across groups, roles, and situations, as it figures into all interactions and social behaviours (Burke, 2004). Indeed, the extent to which each *identity standard* may change depends on the level of *commitment*, *salience*, and *prominence* the individual has to each identity (Stryker & Serpe, 1982; Burke & Stets, 1999; Burke, 2004). According to *identity theory*, less prominent and less salient *identities* will be more likely to change than more prominent and more salient *identities* (Stets & Serpe, 2013). It has also been suggested that the *person identity* is less likely to be modified than *role-based* or *group-based identities* just below it (Burke, 2004; Stets & Carter, 2006). These lower level identity meanings tend to become consistent with those of the *person identity* and, when this process is hampered, conflict arises (Burke & Stets, 2009). This is due to both *identities* striving for verification and when this is not achieved, the meanings contained within the less salient *identity standards* will shift to the aforementioned 'compromise' position to allow both *identities* to be verified (Burke & Stets, 2009). Indeed, Burke and Cast (1997) suggest that when the meanings in an individual's *person identity* are not initially congruent with those of the group or role in which they find themselves, the *person identity* cannot be verified. As a result, the individual's *person identity standard* will undergo dynamic adjustment over time so that they come to match the existing meanings of the role or group (Burk & Cast, 1997).

With Burke's (2004) theorising in mind, it could be said that, throughout my narrative, I outlined a growing understanding that the traits others considered important to my Analyst identity were in direct contradiction to those held within my *person identity*. In contrast, I understood that the traits contained within my Husband and Student *identities* mirrored those within my *person identity* (Burke, 2004). In this regard, I considered these latter *identities* to be still higher than my professional identity in *commitment*, *salience* and *prominence* (Burke & Stets, 2009; McCall & Simmons, 1978). As a result, the changes I perceived in my *identity standard* meanings for these *identities* shifted less than those of my Analyst identity and subsequently, those internal core beliefs held within my *person identity* shifted the least (Burke, 2004).

Unfortunately, however, this concept fails to consider what happens when the individual does not want to change the meanings of their *person identity* but finds them in conflict with the culturally contrived meanings of their obligatory *role-based* or *group-based identities*. Through a process of self-appraisal, individuals come to define themselves differently over time, based on changes in their location within the social structure and the actions of significant others within this structure (Serpe & Stryker, 2011). When these social structures remain 'closed' and rigid rather than 'open' and flexible, they constrain individuals' actions, behaviours, and *identities*, imposing limits on face-to-face interactions and offering little room for individuals to choose which *identities* to enact (Serpe & Stryker, 1987, 1993, 2011; Turner, 2013). I entered the coaching environment with a particular set of meanings contained within my person identity, including qualities such as kind, helpful, and efficient. I ultimately came to realise that these were in direct contradiction to the culturally perceived meanings of my *role-based* or *group-based identities*. I was left questioning whether or not to change, albeit temporarily, my ethical values and beliefs based on the pressures I faced to conform to my *role-based* or *group-based identities*, a point supported by the findings of Mills (2015).

Despite this identity ranking low in my *prominence* and *salience hierarchies*, due to its obligatory nature, I could not simply remove myself from it to reduce the conflict I was experiencing. This supports the writings of Konukman et al. (2010) on teacher-coach *role conflict*, who stated that withdrawal of one of the positions responsible for the perceived conflict was a frequently preferred strategy, however one that was rarely presented to physical

education teachers (Sage, 1987). This finding supports the earlier work of O'Connor and Macdonald (2002) who also reported that tension and *role conflict* were primary reasons for United States physical education teachers abandoning their profession.

While this concept has not yet been discussed within current coaching or performance analysis literature, tentative links can be made to the narrative account presented in Potrac et al. (2013a). The lead author presents their account of elite football coaching and, in particular, their resignation from one particular position (Potrac et al., 2013a). In this extract, the author writes of their feelings of shame, selfishness, and egotistical uncaring, resulting from the perceived cultural expectations of appropriate behaviours (Potrac et al., 2013a). Like me, it appears that the author ultimately withdrew from their position, their professional identity, as a result of the conflict between role and person identity meanings, rejecting further change to their more prominent and salient *person identity* (Potrac et al., 2013a). Unfortunately, as Potrac et al. (2013a) did not interpret this narrative account in relation to specific *identity theory*, it is not possible to gain a further insight, and ultimately, compare in greater detail with my experiences. Interestingly, my experiences offer not only an insight into the conflicting *identities* performance analysts enact but also show how I ultimately refused to change my beliefs or values in order to better align with the cultural expectations of professional rugby league.

5.3.4 *Playing Multiple Parts: Emotional Labour And Management*

The significant conflict I experienced between these different *identities* resulted in considerable tensions and emotional strains. At various points throughout my internship, I recalled feeling sad, anxious, guilty, frustrated, angry, and annoyed as a result of these conflicts. Based on my experiences and developing *micro-political literacy* however, I came to understand that publically displaying these emotions had the potential to harm my chances of verifying my different *identities*. For example, within my 'Tenerife' story I detailed my experiences following dislocating my elbow, the dejection and depression I initially felt. I outlined feeling hopeless and guilty for having to rely on my Wife for lifts, as well as my anger, frustration, and despair at not being able to alter my fortunes at the Club. Later within the same story I also outlined my anxiety as I tried to 'blag' my way through an important supervisory meeting

having not adequately prepared. Similarly, within my '*Mixed Feelings*' story I recalled the guilt I felt arriving home after a fantastic day at work, only to realise that my Wife's sadness at her parental separation meant I had to curtail my excitement. Despite experiencing all of these emotions, I knew that I had to curtail them while in the presence of others, so as not to receive non-verifying feedback for these *identities*.

When trying to make sense of these experiences, I once again found it useful to consider the interconnected theories of cognitive (Goffman, 1959) and emotional (Hochschild, 1979, 1983) *impression management*. In addition to these concepts, I felt Hochschild's (1979) discussion of *emotional management* was also of particular relevance. This concept relates to how individuals try to feel in certain situations, rather than how they try to appear to feel (as for Goffman, 1956, 1959, 1961), or their instinctive reactions to specific emotions (as for Freud, 1911, 1915a, 1915b). Rather, this perspective focuses on the conscious and deliberate mental efforts individuals engage in to evoke, shape, control or suppress feelings in themselves (Hochschild, 1979). Hochschild (1979) further elaborated this concept by suggest that, unlike *emotional labour* (which takes place at work), *emotional management* occurs in the private spheres of life and consists of three different types of emotion work: cognitive, bodily, and expressive.

When considering my experiences in relation to this theorising it could be argued that I engaged in a level of *emotional labour* in both my professional and Student *identities* (as I was paid a wage by both) and *emotional management* during my interactions with my Wife (Hochschild, 1979). With regards to the former, the experiences presented from my '*Tenerife*' story highlight that I understood which emotions it was culturally acceptable to display within both of these settings and knew that my true feelings contradicted these (Hochschild, 1979). I knew that I could not display my feelings of despair and frustration at work and instead, through a process of deep *emotional labour*, I strove to evoke and express upbeat and positive emotions instead (Hochschild, 1979). Conversely, when considering the experiences presented from my '*Mixed Feelings*' story, it could be argued that I found myself engaging in a process of surface *emotional management* to avoid hurting my Wife's feelings. I did not wish to actively change my inner excitement and joy, but merely subdue my outward expression so as not to fully portray these inner feelings to her, which I

achieved through the presentation of a calm 'front' (Goffman, 1959). I did this as her true feelings were in such contrast to my own that I perceived my excitement and joy would only make her feelings worse.

Interestingly, Hochschild furthered her own notion of *emotional labour* within her writings in *The Second Shift* (Hochschild & Machung, 1989). Hochschild and Machung (1989) interviewed 50 married couples, in which both partners worked full time jobs and also cared for young children, with the intention of ascertaining their views on parental responsibilities. Within this work, they discovered that men and women enter into marriage with either similar or conflicting ideologies, identifying three main feeling rules for how they should feel about their work and gender identities inside and outside the home (Hochschild & Machung, 1989). The three main gender ideologies are: (1) the traditional, in which both men and women think that the women's place is in the home and the man's place is outside of the home; (2) the egalitarian, in which both men and women believe the husband's wives should share both paid and unpaid work; and (3) the transitional, in which both men and women support a mixture of the traditional and egalitarian by way of both the man and the women believing it is good for the wife to work outside of the home and also be responsible for the majority of work inside the home (Hochschild & Machung, 1989).

Hochschild and Machung (1989) also stated that feelings rules support these gender ideologies. They suggested that traditional men and women feel that the wife should identify primarily with her role at home and the husband should chiefly identify with his role at work (Hochschild & Machung, 1989). In this instance, when the wife is also working outside the home and the husband is also working inside the home, Hochschild and Machung (1989) posit that each is bestowing upon the other a 'favour' by doing 'more' than is expected of them. When considering the egalitarian ideology, Hochschild and Machung (1989) observed that both men and women view each other's work inside and outside the home as equally important. These authors also noted that transitional men and women thought men and women could take on similar roles and negative emotions should not emerge if one decides not to help with a role that is not, by traditional norms, his or hers to take on (Hochschild & Machung, 1989). Importantly, Hochschild and Machung (1989) identified that people's feelings rules often undermined gender ideologies rather than

reinforcing them. In this regard, they stated that the husband may resent his wife for not caring for the home and children as much as he thinks she should, despite believing her career is as important as his (Hochschild & Machung, 1989). Similarly, the woman might feel guilty for not spending enough time with her children (Hochschild & Machung, 1989). In these examples, both partners would perceive their surface egalitarian beliefs conflict with their underlying traditional feeling rules (Hochschild & Machung, 1989). In this respect, Hochschild and Machung (1989) stated that individuals are likely to either actively evoke or suppress certain feelings or engage in actions to change their feelings to better fit how they should feel, or how they wish their partner to perceive them to be feeling.

When considering my experiences in relation to this theorising, I would say that my Wife and I each entered into our marriage with egalitarian beliefs, that we both have promising careers outside of the home and should share equally the work inside the home (Hochschild & Machung, 1989). Unfortunately, my experiences throughout my internship, the demands placed both upon me by the Club (e.g. having to cut my honeymoon short in my '*Excited Beginnings*' story) and by myself in order to change my fortunes at the Club (e.g. recalling how tired I was due to the number of hours I was committing to the Club in my '*International Ambitions*' story), did not afford me the amount of time necessary to complete my share of the work at home. In this regard, it could be said that due to her having substantially more time at home, my Wife was doing a far greater share of the work at home than expected (Hochschild & Machung, 1989). In doing so, I perceived that she resented the lack of support from me and I also felt a high degree of guilt for not being able to contribute to the work at home and, more importantly, spend some quality time with her (Hochschild & Machung, 1989). I perceived that the pressures of trying to live up to cultural expectations at the Club created the conditions for my gender ideologies to be undermined, rather than reinforced (Hochschild & Machung, 1989).

Interestingly, the guilt I experienced resulted from my disappointment at failing to meet the gender ideologies surrounding my work at home, fear of upsetting my Wife, and anger at the possibility thereof (Turner, 2000). Shott (1979) would also suggest that the guilt or shame I was experiencing here stemmed from the perceived negative evaluations of my inability to support my Wife in the work at home. In this regard, I was not presenting an accurate

version of myself, and the shame I experienced cut to the core of my general identity (Shott, 1979). Again, links between this notion and the above described concept of embarrassment (Goffman, 1959) are evident. The discredited presentation of myself I experienced as a result of failing to live up to the expectations placed upon sharing the work at home left me feeling embarrassed and ashamed (Goffman, 1959). Indeed, within subsequent encounters with my Wife, I endeavoured to hide any signs of emotional disturbances (e.g. blushing, fumbling, and sweating), in order to maintain these interactions (Baldwin, 1906; Goffman, 1956). In this regard, it could be argued that I endeavoured to fulfil my role requirements within these interactions, as failure to do so is considered a common cause of embarrassment (Gross & Stone, 1964). I was trying to avoid giving off a subsidiary identity and the wrong impression to my Wife (Gross & Stone, 1964).

To date, these interconnected concepts have not yet been applied to coaching or performance analysis literature more specifically. As a result, it is not possible to draw comparisons to any previous findings. In this regard, the current paper stands alone in documenting the emotional cost of enacting multiple conflicting identities and the process of *impression management* that individuals have to go through in order to live up to cultural expectations for emotional behaviours in their personal and professional lives. This paper also offers an initial insight into some of the different emotions these individuals might experience on a day-to-day basis, as well as which emotions they feel able to display and some of the different strategies used to conceal emotions.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to conclude this thesis. Following this brief introduction, a review of the key research findings from this study will be provided. Specifically, I detail what I consider to be the major empirical and theoretical contributions this work could have on the current understanding of practicing performance analysis. Following this, I will detail what I believe to be the limitations of this study, before providing suggestions for future avenues of critical investigation into performance analysis. Particular attention is given to the ways in which the various theorising of Denzin (1994) Burke and Stets (2009) and Goffman (1959) may be productively applied to exploring the everyday realities of practicing performance analysts within the elite sports coaching environment. Following this, I also suggest that future investigative inquiry might consider the relational and networked nature of the *identities* performance analysts possess, as well as how they base their interpretations of these *identities* on the evaluations of significant others (Crossley, 2001, 2010, 2011; Burkitt 2012, 2014).

6.2 Summary Of Key Findings

This thesis sought to present some initial findings into the micro-political, identity, and emotional challenges faced by a neophyte performance analyst, as they transitioned into an elite rugby league coaching team. Specifically, this doctoral investigation has focused on some of the everyday demands, dilemmas, and interactions that I experienced during my internship at the Club. When critically reflecting upon these experiences, I would argue that, from the outset, I placed considerable importance on being accepted into the coaching team. I considered my interpretations of the evaluations of my professional role by the coaches, the players, and my analysis colleagues as paramount to this objective. In this respect, upon entering the coaching environment, I understood that my actions were constantly being evaluated by significant others (Kelchtermans, 2009). The understanding I subsequently developed for my professional 'self' was based upon these evaluations and these impacted upon my *self-image*, *self-esteem*, *task perceptions*, *job motivation*, and *future perspectives* (Kelchtermans, 2009).

Such findings provide an initial exploratory insight into how neophyte analysts initially judge the performance of their professional role when entering an organisation. In doing so, this investigation gives further credence to the growing bodies of research into coaching (Potrac et al., 2013a; Thompson, Potrac & Jones, 2013) and, more generally, micro-politics (Kelchtermans & Ballett, 2002a, 2002b; Kelchtermans, 2009; Vanassche & Kelchtermans, 2014) and that individuals construct their understanding of their professional selves based on the evaluations of their actions and behaviour by significant others. Importantly, these findings also support and develop the tentative links previously made in relation to practicing performance analysts within a football context (Huggan, Nelson & Potrac, 2015), suggesting that these findings are not limited to this context but may also be indicative of what happens in other professional sports.

Despite believing that simply presenting myself positively to these significant others would adequately further my *professional self-understanding* (Kelchtermans, 2009), I came to realise that others within the organisation each had their own conflicting interests. I understood that in the pursuit of their own interests, those individuals that I thought would act cooperatively to further the team's performances, were actually trying to get 'one up' on each other. In this respect, as a result of witnessing and experiencing these acts first hand, I developed an understanding of the micro-political realities of working in the elite sports coaching context, inclusive of how to position myself to avoid potentially detrimental incidents and how to implement strategies to further my own position (Kelchtermans & Ballett, 2002a, 2002b; Kelchtermans, 2009; Vanassche & Kelchtermans, 2014).

My findings in this regard support the notion that coaches often use *micro-political action* to further their own position or standing at the expense of others (Potrac et al., 2013a; Thompson, Potrac & Jones, 2013). Interestingly, unlike many of the coaches documented to date and due to this internship being my first glimpse of professional sport, I did not have a clearly developed sense of *micro-political literacy* (Potrac & Jones, 2009a; Potrac et al., 2013a; Huggan, Nelson & Potrac, 2015). In this respect, I had to witness and personally experience significant challenges during my internship to develop an understanding of the micro-political realities of the coaching context, to become 'more politically attuned to how 'life worked at the club' (Thompson, Potrac &

Jones, 2013, p. 9). Because I documented my interactions, as I experienced them, it is possible to visually perceive my *micro-political literacy* developing over the course of my internship. My experiences offer an initial insight into the chronology of this process by suggesting that: individuals first witness or experience potentially harmful interactions, then act instinctively in the 'heat of the moment' as a defense, before finally (once their understanding has developed sufficiently) they are able to see and plan for, effectively avoiding and manipulating future interactions in order to maximise personal and professional gain.

In an effort to deal with these personal attacks to my *professional self-understanding*, I endeavored to control the perception key others had of my actions and behaviours. In doing so, I actively managed my thoughts and outward displays during interactions at the Club, to impress key stakeholders. I knew how others expected me to act or behave; in short, I knew how to present myself professionally whilst at the Club. I also understood the consequences of acting in a way that was contrary to these expectations and strove to present the correct 'front' at all times (Goffman, 1959). This notion supports the findings from much of the coaching research to date (Potrac, Jones & Armour, 2002; Jones, 2009; Potrac & Jones, 2009a, 2009b; Potrac et al., 2013a; Thompson, Potrac & Jones, 2013) and further extends the initial observation that performance analysts are also required to manage expectations for appropriate behaviours (Huggan, Nelson & Potrac, 2015). In particular, my experiences offer a detailed insight into the specific elements of the 'front' I wished to present both throughout my internship as a whole and during specific interactions I perceived as potentially harmful to my professional credibility. I presented how I engaged in a number of different strategies in order to maintain my desired front and allow interactions to continue with minimal disruption to this preferred image.

As a result of these interactions, I realised that the act of *impression management* was not just a cognitive one (Goffman, 1959), but also contained an emotional dimension. I understood that whilst trying to meet culturally expected actions and behaviours during these interactions, those individuals present also had expectations for appropriate emotional responses. I engaged in cognitive emotion work, through surface acting, to suppress my true emotions and evoke counter feelings to portray in order to maintain my professional *self-*

image (Hochschild, 1979, 1983). This notion adds new insights into the tentative exploration of this concept within coaching (Potrac & Marshall, 2011), suggesting that it is not just coaches who engage in significant levels of *emotional labour* during their everyday practices but also performance analysts (Hochschild, 1979, 1983). In this respect, the current investigation provides a novel insight into the specific nuances of this process from the perspective of a neophyte performance analyst.

The combination of all of these experiences over the course of my internship allowed me to develop an understanding of the cultural and contextual constraints with which individuals working within an elite sports coaching environment have to contend. I was left feeling extremely vulnerable at various times throughout my internship, as a result of conflicting interests and constraints on my thoughts, feelings, and behaviours (Kelchtermans & Ballett, 2002a, 2002b; Kelchtermans, 2009). In this respect, I recalled tracing my experiences of joy and vulnerability with the larger organisational patterns of success and failure. I recognised that external pressures on players and coaching staff during poor periods of on-field performances resulted in greater levels of conflict, undermining actions, and general distrust of outsiders. I also spoke of the stigma that I perceived to result from association to an external organisation (the University) and how this negatively impacted on my inclusion into the coaching team (Goffman, 1963; Braithwaite, 1989). In this regard, my findings significantly develop current understanding of the cultural and contextual constraints that performance analysts may face during their everyday practice (Thompson, Potrac & Jones, 2013; Huggan, Nelson & Potrac, 2015). My experiences offer support to the organisationally driven anti-intellectual culture (Gearing, 1999; Parker, 2000) that dominates professional sports coaching, as well as the idea that previous playing experience is a prerequisite for coaching positions and that academic qualifications are largely treated with suspicion and distrust (Kelly, 2008). Specifically, my experiences offer a critical initial insight into some of the undermining and unhelpful acts that performance analysts might face when coming from an academic background.

Interestingly, parallel to the experiences responsible for my developing *micro-political* understanding, I also encountered a number of significant challenges outside of the Club setting that had sizeable implications for how I thought, felt and behaved whilst at the Club. Similarly, I came to realise that the

above issues within my professional identity also had significant consequences for my thoughts, feelings and actions whilst outside of the Club setting. I acknowledge that I had a number of important elements of my life that at times complemented, contradicted and conflicted one another (James, 1980; Burke & Stets, 2009). I outlined a number of different *role-based* and *group-based identities* that I enacted over the course of my internship (e.g. Lead Performance Analyst, Husband and Student), alongside the expectations placed upon my actions, thought and feelings within each of these identities and the various ways I sought to have them affirmed by significant others (McCall & Simmons, 1978; Stryker, 1980; Burke & Stets, 2009). I outlined the conflicts that resulted from striving to have each of these identities verified and how I came to value the enactment of some identities more than others (McCall & Simmons, 1978; Stets & Burke, 2003; Burke & Stets, 2009; Serpe & Stryker, 2011). Finally, I spoke of how the considerable conflict between my different identities caused me to question the traits held within my core person identity, concluding that I wanted to remove myself from my professional identity because it was in conflict with these (Burke & Stets, 2009). To date, this area of research has not yet been explored within performance analysis or coaching literature. As such, my findings offer a valuable initial insight into the conflicting nature of the multiple *identities* a performance analyst (and indeed other within the coaching contexts) may possess.

Ultimately, as with my experiences within my professional identity, I also came to understand that the significant conflict I experienced between these different *identities* resulted in considerable tensions and emotional strains within my other *identities*. I experienced a vast array of both positive and negative emotions as a result of the complementary, contradictory, and conflicting nature of my different *identities*, however I understood that displaying all of these would have negative implications for one or more of my *identities*. I understood that I engaged in *emotional management* when enacting my Husband identity and *emotional labour* when enacting my Student and Performance Analysis *identities*, to suppress my true feelings and evoke counter feelings (Hochschild, 1979, 1983). I did this in order to live up to the expectations key stakeholders within each of these *identities* had for appropriate emotional response. To date, this concept has not yet been applied to coaching literature or performance analysis literature more specifically. As a result, the current paper offers an

initial insight into the emotional cost of enacting multiple conflicting *identities* and the process of *impression management* that performance analysts have to go through in order to live up to cultural expectations for emotional behaviours.

Finally, as this work only presents the experiences of one individual working in a highly specific context, some would suggest that these findings could not be generalised (Denzin, 1983; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Denzin, 2014). That said, the aim of this investigation was not to portray every performance analyst's early career experiences. Instead, the intention was to share my experiences with the reader in order to offer them a better insight into some of the potential issues others might face when entering a similar environment. As such, generalisation of these findings could be considered possible, desirable, and even inevitable (Williams, 2000). Importantly, generalisation of qualitative research requires sufficient detail of the 'character being studied and crucially, on the similarities of the research site to the sites to which generalisation is to be attempted' (Williams, 2000). In this respect, although the current investigation only presents my interpretation of my experiences, I believe that the richness in description of the micro-political, identity, and emotional aspects of my everyday practices, as they happened, could be utilised as a resource for further critical reflection (Gearity, 2014; Huggan, Nelson & Potrac, 2015). I agree with the concluding remarks of Huggan, Nelson and Potrac (2015), that educators should devote some curriculum time to helping performance analysts develop a critical understanding of how to manage the micro-political and emotional aspects of their working and personal lives. In this respect, although the technical aspects of the job should not be underestimated (Huggan, Nelson & Potrac, 2015), I believe the current investigation offers these individuals an insight into the socio-political realities of working in the field. As such, I would urge those aiming for a career in professional sports coaching to engage with narrative resources (Smith & Sparkes, 2009) detailing these experiences, in order to better equip them for their chosen career. I, like others before me, encourage educators to devote curriculum time to help performance analysts, as well as others wishing to pursue a career in sports coaching, to better understand the micro-political and emotional aspects of their work (Huggan, Nelson & Potrac, 2015). I believe that highlighting some of these features, alongside the important technical features of the role, will help these individuals

to obtain a more reality grounded appreciation for the sociocultural environments they may be required to operate in.

6.3 Suggestions For Future Research

The main limiting factors in the current investigation relate to the size of sample and the method of data presentation. With regards to the former, critics contend that a single case only tells one story, or one interpretation of a story (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Denzin, 2014). As such, they contend that narrative inquiry is not scientific enough (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Denzin, 2014). As mentioned above, the limited sample size of this investigation leaves it vulnerable to criticisms regarding the generalisability of its findings (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Denzin, 2014). Similarly, critiques of autoethnography often contend these forms of representation are self-indulgent, introspective, individualised or narcissistic (Sparkes, 2002; Holt, 2008). Autoethnography has also been criticised for being too artful (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011), not scientific, lacking theory, concepts, and hypotheses (Denzin, 2014). Indeed, critics argue that autoethnographers do too little fieldwork and offer verisimilitude based on small samples, biased data collection, and self-absorbed text without analytical insights (Denzin, 2014).

Finally, it has also been suggested that due to autoethnographies focusing on a single author, they lack the analytical or social elements of other social science research designs (Gearity, 2014). I, however, believe that this form of inquiry allows researchers to obtain thicker, richer accounts of the area under investigation, by virtue of being closer to it as it unfolds (Denzin, 1989a; Anderson, Knowles & Gilbourne, 2004). I also believe that by writing about my experiences in this manner, others can relate to my interpretation of my interactions (Denzin, 2013). In this regard, I feel that my work offers the opportunity for readers to reflect on their own experiences, be it in sport, a new friendship group or a new job. As a result, I would argue that further research of this nature is needed to develop current understanding of the everyday realities of practicing performance analysts.

I believe that the findings of this investigation offer a useful starting point for future research into performance analysis, specifically the everyday realities of practicing performance analysis and transitioning into the elite sports coaching context for the first time. I feel the autoethnographic approach of this

investigation was specifically useful in terms of allowing me the opportunity to retrospectively access the meanings I attached to the interactions and emotions I experienced during my time at the Club. That said, I do not, however, believe that this approach represents the 'best', or indeed, the 'only' means of developing our empirical and theoretical understanding of the everyday realities of neophyte performance analysts. I believe this work should be supplemented by interviews and observations, to obtain a complete account, rather than a one-sided relational picture.

I believe that the findings of this investigation can stimulate further rewarding possibilities for future inquiry. Indeed, more empirical research is needed to deepen our understanding of the everyday realities of practicing performance analysis. Specifically, I believe that further qualitative research could provide a more in-depth understanding of how performance analysts experience and interpret their interactions within the coaching environment. Through the employment of different methodological approaches, future research could focus on the experiences of neophyte and experienced performance analysts in a variety of different sporting contexts, at various different competition levels. Through further narrative-biographical, ethnographic, and autoethnographic research, a more contextually sensitive and dynamic account of the everyday realities of practicing performance analysis, in different sports and at different levels, could be obtained. Of particular interest would be investigating the perspectives of other individuals within the coaching context at different hierarchy levels (e.g. players, coaches, other backroom staff, and directors) to further understand the actions, interaction, behaviours, philosophies, opinions, and values of all of those involved (Nelson et al., 2013; Huggan, Nelson & Potrac, 2015). The advantage of this avenue of inquiry would be to gain more than one account of the same interaction or event, to further investigate whether the perceived interpretations one person has of their evaluations by others reflect the actual opinion of these others.

Furthermore, due to the social nature of my interactions both inside and outside of the Club, I would argue that future investigation into the experiences of performance analysts, as well as others within the coaching environment, should consider the concept of relational sociology. This notion originally stems from the writings of Emirbayer (1997), referring to the pursuit of understanding

the social life of individuals in terms of their relationships with and interconnections to one another (Crossley, 2011). This concept is based on the premise that social actors are always enmeshed in relations of interdependency with others and, as such, cannot be understood separately from their relational contexts (Powell & Dépelteau, 2013). Relational researchers seek to overcome the dualism of individual-society and agency-structure by viewing both individuals and the larger formations in which they participate as belonging to the same relational order of reality (Powell & Dépelteau, 2013). From this perspective, individuals and society are clearly identifiable, however they are ultimately inextricably interconnected features of social life (Crossley, 2011). Due to this interconnected focus, Potrac, Nelson and O’Gorman (2015) suggest this form of inquiry might offer a fruitful understanding of the similarly enmeshed and relational nature of coaching and performance analysis.

In light of this, I believe Crossley’s (2010, 2011) theorising could have particular relevance to the investigation of performance analyst’s experiences. In particular, I believe the social network analysis he derived from symbolic interactionism to be of particular interest (Crossley, 2010). His relational theory states that individuals are ‘agents in relation’ to various social networks (e.g. family, friends, work etc) (Crossley, 2011). Crossley (2010) argues that research can never truly separate or investigate individuals without attending to their network of interaction. This theory also offers a symbolic interactionist-inspired research perspective with new ways of thinking about social structures. I posit that such a research perspective could yield a valuable and nuanced understanding of how performance analysts experience their interactions with a network of others within the coaching environment.

In developing this notion, I also believe that the work of Burkitt (1999, 2014) could add a further, deeper level of understanding of the relational nature of practicing performance analysts. Specifically, I believe his writings on the relational nature of identity and emotions to be of particular significance (Burkitt, 2012, 2014). With regards to the former, Burkitt (1999) suggests that individuals are the incumbent of a number of different identities, that are only activated during interactions with various others. In developing this position, Burkitt (1999) counters the Cartesian view of Descartes, stating that embodied persons become identified within the multiple relations in which they are located and as

agents, change through their mutual interactions. Importantly, Burkitt (1999) also stated that the identities of individuals reside in their network of others.

In his later works, Burkitt (2014) developed his notion of relational identities to incorporate emotions. Burkitt (2014, p. 1) counters traditional views on emotions by stating that these are not 'things in themselves' that exist inside of us and can be traced through their roots to a causal origin (Bateson, 1973), but are, in fact, social and embodied experiences felt in relation to other people, places, and things. Burkitt (2014) suggested that when an individual experiences and expresses an emotion (e.g. love) they speak not only of the bodily feelings that are evoked, but also of the special nature of the relationship to this other. This perspective supports the earlier comments of Crossley (2011), that relations and emotions are centred on interaction and, as such, are dynamic, unpredictable and under a process of continual change. I believe that understanding such an approach could yield a valuable understanding of how performance analysts experience their emotions in relation to the network of others associated with their different identities.

6.4 Epilogue

02/12/2013: Starting A New Chapter

I'm sitting in my new office, the aroma of coffee strong in the air. I can hear the hustle and bustle of the boys training in the gym next door but I can't make sense of it right now. It's just a blur of muffled noises. My mind is still racing from the hectic two months I've just had. *'I only finished at the Club at the end of September!'* I think to myself. *'I'm still disappointed I only got to say my goodbyes to the staff, not the players. Never mind, I met up with the New Zealand Kiwis for the World Cup just a few days later. What an incredible experience that was, travelling the length and breadth of the country with them, the week away in France, and the week in London too. I was exhausted but it truly was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. It was good to see some of the old players from the Club too. I'd truly gained their trust, respect and friendship. I can't believe Chris asked me to get him into the Kiwi's changing room after the semi-final!'*

'Now look at me' I think, taking in my new surroundings. *'Just two days after losing in the final, I've started my new job proper. I'm the*

Lead Performance Analyst at a Premier League Football Academy. I have my own department to build from scratch and a new group of colleagues to work with.' Although I'd briefly met most people prior to the World Cup, this is my first full week at the Academy. I can already sense that the atmosphere is so different from that at the Club. When I arrived I was greeted by the new Gaffer with a warm and sincere handshake. He introduced me to all of the staff who greeted me in the same manner. *'I'm going to enjoy it here, I can tell.'* The Gaffer then showed me to my own work space, offered me a hot drink and we proceed to chat about my job role for half an hour.

I can barely take it all in. *'Look calm'* was the only thought running through my head. If there is anything my internship has taught me, it is that first impressions matter. I recall my first meetings at the Club, with Derek, Charlie, Ian and Murphy. I remember how naive I was. How I thought we would all get along and help each other out. In a flash I'm reliving instances from my time there, the good and the bad. It's an emotional roller-coaster that lasts only for a moment: the joy and pride of inclusion and unity after winning, or my trip to France, spliced with the anxiety, frustration and anger of public ridicule and exclusion from the London trip. *'You're a much more rounded person now'* I console myself. *'You feel more confident, competent, and comfortable in your own skin as an analyst and as a person. Just make a good first impression with everyone, keep your head down for a few months, and don't put anyone's nose out of line.'*

I was truly thankful for my internship. Despite the ups and downs I experienced along the way, I could honestly say I had grown as a person and as an analyst. I realise now just how much I over-read situations, thought them more significant than they actually were. I can see from my reading of micro-politics that I tended to instinctively reflect negatively to interactions and became paranoid. I was always looking for the 'big win' to get noticed rather than just doing the little things. This time round, things would be different. Sure, there were the same expectations for professionalism, however there was not

the same 'banter' culture or pressure for results. The academy was more centred around player development than results and harboured a more supportive atmosphere. Everyone was looking out for each other. I still wanted to positively influence key stakeholders but I was happy enough doing the little things well and letting my reputation as a quite, head down worker who could solve problems and get things done, develop over time. I didn't put myself on show as often and when I did, I placed less significance on the minor issues that I experienced and often took a step back to evaluate where I was in terms of 'fitting in'. Through reflecting on my time at the Club, I was more aware of where I stood in the 'team' and could critically reflect on the impact of events and interactions afterwards. I could see them for what they really were, rather than react in the moment. I understood the contradictory nature of social life in elite sport and recognised the individualised features of the profession, whilst ultimately striving to belong to the organisation as a whole. My internship taught me that I had, in fact, achieved a level of team inclusion a long time prior to realising it and did not need to continue to evaluate my own position from the perspective of an outsider. This only increased my feelings of ease and inclusion in my new role and allowed me to understand that I was fitting in nicely. I also had a better understanding of how to comport myself around my new colleagues and identify and manage potentially difficult situations before they had an impact on my standing. For once, I was happy and enjoying my work. The result: I was happy in all other aspects of my life too, without the stress of not 'fitting in' to worry about.

7.0 References

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