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Applying the concepts of orchestration and micropolitical literacy to a new context

Elite coaches' interactions with their superiors and assistants: Applying the concepts of orchestration and micropolitical literacy to a new context

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Abstract: While coaching research has always been concerned with how sports coaches interact with their players, far less attention has been paid to how coaches interact with superiors and staff members at their clubs. We argue that the way coaches handle this side of their profession can have a large impact on how well they are able to do their job. This paper attempts to shed a light on how expert football coaches interact with other people at their club in order to improve their working conditions and achieve their goals. This is done through qualitative interviews with three Norwegian coaches with an average of 25 years experience of high-level coaching. The interview data are subjected to a process of directed content analysis, building on a theoretical framework consisting of orchestration metaphor, the study of micropolitics and the three aspects of micropolitical literacy. The discussion chapter goes into detail on how the coaches handle the negotiation process before being hired by club, how they deal with their superiors, how they deal with the staff, and what happens when the team is going through periods of poor performances and results. Finally, suggestions are made for how other coaches can improve their ability to handle this aspect of the coaching profession. Implications for coach education are discussed.

Introduction

Being an elite football coach can be a very difficult and stressful job. When the team is winning, the coach is considered a genius. When the team is losing, the coach's competence may be questioned. Coaches are considered responsible for the way the team performs, and they know that even a short period of poor results can cost them their job. From the 1995 through the 2006 Norwegian Premier League (Tippeligaen) season, 119 managers or head coaches left their posts. 86 of these did so involuntarily (Arnulf, Mathisen & Hærem, 2012). Clearly, this is not an occupation that offers high job security.

Although elite-level coaches are primarily judged by their ability to get results, this is not the only important thing. In order to stay employed, a coach needs to gain, secure, and keep the approval of "contextual power brokers" (Jones, Wells, Peters & Johnson, 1993). The coach's ability to influence important people at the club and stay on their good side, will impact his working conditions and have an effect on how well he is able to do his job (Cruickshank & Collins, 2012a). Much has been written about how coaches should interact with their players. However, very few studies have looked at coaches' relationships with their superiors.

This study will gather data through qualitative interviews with Norwegian elite football coaches, and analyze them through a theoretical framework consisting of the orchestration metaphor, the study of micropolitics, and the three aspects of micropolitical literacy. The goal is to improve our understanding of how coaches interact with other people at their club in order to achieve their goals and create the best possible working conditions for themselves. In turn, this will hopefully help improve how the concept of orchestration is applied to sports coaching.

Theoretical framework: orchestration

The concept of orchestration was originally developed by Wallace and Pocklington (2002) as a way of understanding how school leaders manage complex educational change . It was presented as a flexible strategy for coping with the ambiguity and complexity of multi-organizational systems. During the past decade, it has been argued

that coaching is an equally complex and ambiguous activity (Jones & Wallace, 2005, 2006). Coaches' lack of complete awareness and control over what is going on at the club, as well as people having contrasting goals and values, have been mentioned as reasons for why coaching should not be considered a wholly rational activity (Jones & Wallace, 2005, 2006).

The literature on orchestration has criticized previous coaching literature for taking an "*overly rationalistic approach to the coaching process*" (Jones & Wallace, 2005, p. 122). The argument is that while we still do not possess a complete understanding of the coaching process, authors and researchers are attempting to create models for it, allowing prescription to precede comprehension (Bowes & Jones, 2006; Jones & Wallace, 2005). Such models often provide a very mechanistic and incomplete portrayal of the coaching reality, failing to take into account all the details and subtleties that contribute to the complexity of coaching. The literature on orchestration has called for more research targeting "knowledge-for-understanding" within coaching, as improving our understanding of the phenomenon will put us in a better position to come up with solutions for it (Bowes & Jones, 2006; Jones & Wallace, 2005; Wallace, 2003). Meanwhile, the orchestration metaphor is suggested as a strategy for coping with said ambiguity and complexity. Orchestration in coaching has been defined as follows:

> *«Coordinated activity within set parameters expressed by <u>coaches</u> to instigate, plan, organize, monitor and respond to evolving circumstances in order to bring about improvement in the individual and collective performance of those being coached»* (Jones & Wallace, 2005, p. 128).

When discussing orchestration in educational systems, Wallace (2003) presented three themes that were central to the concept: flexible planning and coordination; culture building and communication; and differentiated support. These three themes still apply, although more recent literature have expanded on them in order to make the concept more suitable to the coaching setting. Orchestration in sports involves accepting that there are limits to a coach's agency at a club, and attempting to direct one's agency to where it is most productive (Jones & Wallace, 2005, 2006). It involves steering, using rewards and creating incentives rather than controlling and commanding when attempting to influence other people's agency. Orchestration also involves keeping a

very close eye on what is going on in the team, trying to take in as much detail as possible to inform one's decisions (Jones, Bailey & Thompson, 2013). In short, orchestration is presented as a more subtle and flexible alternative to traditional leadership theories (for a more complete description of the orchestration metaphor and its content, see Jones and Wallace [2005, 2006] and Jones, Bailey and Thompson [2013]).

The metaphor has received criticism for being too vague and for lacking explicit instructions for how coaches should cope with the said ambiguity (Abraham & Collins, 2011). This is partially due to the fact that the concept is still at an early stage of its development. Jones and Wallace (2005) suggested that "knowledge-for-understanding to inform knowledge-for-action" should be the main focus for coaching research going forward. According to them, such research "*has the potential to provide a stronger and more realistic conceptual basis for future 'instrumentalist' development of coping strategies as part of coach education programmes*" (Jones & Wallace, 2005, p. 132).

Most of the literature on orchestration in coaching has focused on how the coach interacts with his players and, to a lesser extent, his assistants. Meanwhile, the subject of the coach interacting with and influencing his superiors has largely been ignored. The ability to interact with superiors and other powerful stakeholders at the club in order to create optimal working conditions can undoubtedly have a large impact on how well the coach is able to do his job (Allen & Shaw, 2013; Cruickshank & Collins, 2012a, 2012b; Jones et al., 1993). In order to improve the orchestration metaphor, this aspect of the coaching role needs to be given more attention. This can be done by adopting the study of micropolitics into the orchestration metaphor, as was recently suggested by Jones, Bailey and Thompson (2013). In the next section, the concept of micropolitics and micropolitical literacy will be discussed.

Theoretical framework: micropolitics and micropolitical literacy

The study of micropolitics has received increasing attention within coaching research during the past few years. The most used definition of the term is as follows:

"*Micropolitics refers to the use of formal and informal power by individuals and*

groups to achieve their goals. In large part, political actions result from perceived differences between individuals and groups, coupled with the motivation to use power and influence and/or to protect. Although such actions are consciously motivated, any action, consciously or unconsciously motivated, may have political "significance" in a given situation. Both cooperative and conflictive actions and processes are part of the realm of micropolitics. Moreover, macro- and micropolitical factors frequently interact" (Blase, 1991, p.11)

In short, micropolitics is about using formal and informal power in order to achieve one's goals. Building on Blase's definition, Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002b, p. 108) defined micropolitical action as "*those actions that aim at establishing, safeguarding or restoring the desired working conditions*". The term "*desired working conditions*" refers to the conditions a person considers necessary in order to be able to perform his or her professional tasks in an effective and satisfactory way (Kelchtermans, 1996).

Potrac and Jones (Potrac & Jones, 2009b) made a strong case for studying the micropolitics of coaching. They pointed to several recent studies that had portrayed coaching as an activity that demanded constant impression management and strategic thinking in order to gain people's support and trust (e.g. d'Arripe-Longueville, Fournier & Dubiois, 1998; Potrac, Jones & Armour, 2002; Potrac, Jones & Cushion, 2007). Similar to the literature on orchestration, the authors argued that coaching should be not be seen as a rational and unproblematic activity, but as "*an arena for struggle*" and "*a negotiated, contested activity*" (Potrac & Jones, 2009a, p. 233). They suggested that the study of micropolitics could help improve our understanding of the power-ridden nature of coaching (Potrac & Jones, 2009b).

Since then, case studies have looked at how coaches engage in micropolitical activity in order to improve their working conditions at their respective clubs (Potrac & Jones, 2009a; Potrac, Jones, Gilbourne & Nelson, 2012; Thompson, Potrac & Jones, 2013). However, just like the literature on orchestration in sports, these studies have primarily discussed coaches' behavior in relation to the players. The micropolitical actions taken by coaches to influence their superiors and assistant coaches have not been thoroughly discussed. Such studies have successfully been conducted in the field of teaching (e.g.

Blase, 1988; Fry, 1997). As people higher up in the club's hierarchy can unquestionably affect the working conditions of coaches (Cruickshank & Collins, 2012a, 2012b; Relvas, Littlewood, Nesti, Gilbourne & Richardson, 2010), it could be fruitful to look at coaches' interactions with such people from a micropolitical perspective.

In a study of young teachers' political activity, Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002b) came up with the term "micropolitical literacy" to describe the teachers' ability to understand and cope with the micropolitical landscape of their schools. The term consists of three aspects: the knowledge aspect, the instrumental/operational aspect and the experiential aspect. *The knowledge aspect* refers to the person's ability to read and understand the micropolitical landscape, as well as understanding the political implications of both words and actions. Where the knowledge aspect refers to a person's ability to read the micropolitical landscape, *the instrumental aspect*, or *the operational aspect*, refers to their ability to write themselves into it (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a). It consists of the breadth of their repertoire of political strategies, their ability to choose the right strategies at the right time, and their ability to use the strategies properly. Finally, *the experiential aspect* refers to how a person feels about their micropolitical literacy, including their level of satisfaction with their micropolitical knowledge and repertoire. The experiential aspect also refers to feelings of guilt, frustration or happiness after using political strategies.

While the concept of micropolitical literacy was originally developed in the field of teaching and education, it has been suggested as a useful framework for theorizing the political side of coaching (Potrac & Jones, 2009b). The concept was used in conjunction with Ball's framework (Ball, 1987) and Goffman's dramaturgical model (Goffman, 1959) in a case study by Potrac and Jones (Potrac & Jones, 2009a). While this study successfully applied micropolitical literacy to coaching, it focused primarily on the coach's political activity towards the players and his assistant coach. No attention was paid to his interaction with his superiors at the club.

Several case studies have indicated that a poorly developed sense of micropolitical literacy can cause huge problems for coaches (Purdy & Jones, 2011; Purdy, Potrac & Jones 2008; Thompson et al., 2013). By further developing the concept of micropolitical literacy in coaching, also when it comes to interacting and influencing one's superiors,

we can get a better understanding of what coaches need to do in order to create and safeguard their preferred working conditions.

The intention of this study

The main intention of this study is to shed a light on how elite coaches interact with their superiors and their staff members in order to improve their working conditions and achieve their goals. By doing this, we hope to be able to expand on the concepts of orchestration and micropolitical literacy. Most of the literature regarding these two concepts have focused on the coaches' relationship with their players. By using this theoretical framework to analyze coaches' interactions with superiors and staff members, we can get a fuller understanding of the coaching profession. Hopefully, this can help improve the way in which the orchestration metaphor is applied to coaching.

Methods

Participants

Strategic sampling was used in order to find suitable participants for this study (Berg, 2007). More than 20 highly regarded and experienced Norwegian football coaches were contacted. In the end, three coaches were selected for participation in the study.

The three coaches had an average of 25 years of high-level coaching experience. Most of this experience was from head coaching (or first-team manager) positions, but two of them had also spent some time in assistant jobs. The clear majority of their time had also been spent in Norwegian football clubs on the first and second highest levels, although two of the participants have some international experience as well. Two of the coaches are currently employed as head coaches, while the third person had recently taken a temporary break from coaching and is currently working as a football academy teacher. All three participants hold the UEFA PRO license.

The three coaches' experience puts them comfortably inside the definition of "expert coach" provided by Abraham and colleagues (Abraham, Collins & Martindale, 2006).

They have all been employed by several elite football clubs, which makes them suited to answering questions about the inner workings of such clubs. Their experience and insight into the subject in question make them suitable key informants for the study (Andersen, 2013).

Procedures

Data were collected through qualitative interviews with the three coaches. The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured fashion, using an interview guide that contained main topics and questions as well as several possible follow-up questions for each topic. This led to each interview being free-flowing and conversation-like rather than rigid in nature. This also puts the interviewer into an active role in constructing the data (Andersen, 2013).

The main themes of the interview guide were as follows: the negotiation process with the club; dealing with superiors; dealing with the staff; implementing changes; bad spells; and how they had developed their understanding of these topics. These themes remained consistent throughout all three interviews, although some small modifications were done between interviews in order to suit each participant. In preparation for the interviews, two pre-interviews with less experienced coaches were also conducted. This allowed the researcher to test the interview guide and get an indication of what the coaches would answer.

The interviews were conducted, transcribed and analyzed in Norwegian. The excerpts from the interviews included in the article have been translated into English, while carefully making sure that the essence of each quote has not been lost in the translation. In total, the three interviews amounted to around 200 minutes of recorded audio. The recordings were then transcribed into 57 pages of text (1,5 spacing, Times New Roman, 12pt).

Data analysis

The interview transcripts were subject to a process of deductive content analysis (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). At first, the researcher read through each transcript several times in

order to get as complete an understanding of the context as possible. Ball's conceptual framework (Ball, 1987) was then used as a structured matrix in the initial part of the analysis, as it gives a good overview of the micropolitical landscape as experienced by the subject. This was a part of the researcher's attempt to get a full overview and understanding of the material.

A directed approach was taken to the analysis process (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Coding categories were predetermined and based on the theoretical framework – orchestration and micropolitical literacy. However, inductive codes were also used in order to capture topics that were brought up by the research subjects and did not fit into any of the predetermined categories. During the coding process, qualitative data analysis software was used in order to make the analysis as accurate and orderly as possible.

After the coding process was completed, the next step of the analysis was to compare the data sets and look for commonalities. By first conducting an in-depth analysis of each case, and then moving on to a thematic analysis across the cases, the analysis process was strengthened (Thagaard, 2003). The goal was to find common patterns in the three participants' experiences from their coaching careers, and then discuss these patterns in relation to previous literature and research findings.

The presentation of the data is divided into two main parts. The first part goes into the coaches' experience of dealing with their superiors and staff members. It is further divided into four subchapters, targeting four different aspects of the coaches' experiences: the negotiation process before they are hired by the club; dealing with their superiors and other powerful people at the club; dealing with their assistants and the staff; and what happens when the team is performing poorly. The results are discussed in relation to the theoretical framework. The second part describes how the three coaches have developed their understanding of the micropolitical landscape of football clubs throughout their careers. Several suggestions are made for how coaches can improve their micropolitical literacy.

Results and discussion

Negotiations

A coach's first encounter with a football club happens when he or she is holding talks and negotiating with the club before being hired, the exception being when the coach is promoted from another position at the same club. This negotiation process presents the first real opportunity for political activity. The coaches were asked in general terms about how these negotiations usually play out, and what the coaches do in order to get the most out of the negotiation process.

All three coaches stressed the importance of listening to the club's representatives and asking questions during these talks. As one of the coaches put it, you should let the club do most of the talking. Their goal was always to find out as much as possible about what the club wants, what the club will expect from the coach, and what the current state of the club is in regards to economy, organization, and sporting staff. There was a clear consensus among the coaches that the more information they can get out of the club during the initial negotiations, the better it is.

> *Coach 2: I think the most important thing in the initial process is to listen as much as possible. To find out, or get an idea of what they are looking for.*

> *Coach 3: I have customized my philosophy to suit those who ask for my services. Then I can feel confident that they accept my way of working and what I want to do with the team and the players (...) And then we can have a good discussion about how we can achieve what we want throughout the year.*

By engaging in thorough discussions before signing a contract, the coaches believed that potential problems can be avoided before they arise. Much has been written about the issue of contradictory goals and expectations within sports clubs (Bowes & Jones, 2006; Jones & Wallace, 2005, 2006). The three participating coaches had all experienced problems due to goal diversity between themselves and other people at the club on several different levels. Examples include different opinions about what levels of sporting success the club should strive to achieve, different opinions about sporting decisions such as training load and playing style, and disagreements about how the

clubs economic resources should be invested. By addressing these concerns at an early stage, the three coaches believe that they can reduce the chance of such differences causing problems in the future. However, this may not always be easy. One of the coaches described how he had been tricked by a club's representatives to believe that the club had far better economy than they really did. He did not discover this until after he was hired. He stressed the importance of "asking the right questions" during initial negotiations in order to avoid situations like this. The ability to ask good and critical questions during discussions with the club leaders should be considered a part of a coach's micropolitical literacy (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a).

A recurring theme among all the coaches was the willingness to be flexible. They all claimed to adjust their philosophy and their goals in order to fit in with the club. However, all three coaches clearly stated that there is a limit to their flexibility – they will not accept a job if they feel that there is too big of a gap between what they want to achieve and what the club expects from them. The following quote is a good example of this.

> *Coach 2: I think you have to clarify in detail how much we are going to train and how we are going to play. So that the club can say «oh, you want to train THAT much? That probably doesn't suit our group» (...) And when you meet a club that says «we want to rest a lot, because we believe in being rested and fresh before games», then you just have to say no, I don't think we should talk anymore. Because then that group of players will probably start hating me before we reach the start of the season.*

When the coach discovered that he and the players had diametrically opposite opinions about how much the team should train, he realized that conflict would be inevitable, and he decided not to work with the club. According to this particular coach, his willingness to turn down a job offer is much larger now than it was early in his career, partially because he is more able to see potential problems before they occur, which the above quote indicates. This shows that the knowledge aspect of his micropolitical literacy has improved through years of experience (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a, 2002b).

The three coaches all agreed on another positive effect of doing a good job during the

negotiation process. When signing a contract after going through long and detailed discussions with the club's representatives, the coaches always feel that the club has accepted their way of working. In his early work on orchestration, Wallace (2003) stressed the importance of creating a culture of acceptance among stakeholders in the organization. Although there may not be a quick and simple way to accomplish this, the three coaches believed that engaging in constructive conversation with the club before taking a job is a good start to building such a culture of acceptance.

> *Coach 2: I have always thought that, the moment that you sign, you're the first choice. The second you sign that contract, you were the best person that the club could get at that time. So how many people they were rejected by before they came to you, that doesn't matter.*

> *Coach 3: And then I feel like the club has accepted my philosophy in relation to how I want to use the staff, how I want to work with the players, how I want to implement everything in the club.*

In addition, holding good and productive discussions can help establish a good communication between the coach and the board right from the beginning. The importance of good communication will be discussed in the next few chapters.

Dealing with superiors

The next part of the analysis looks at how the coaches interact with their superiors in order to create and protect their preferred working conditions, and in order to maximize their own level of influence at the club. In this context, the term "superiors" includes the board, the owners or major shareholders, the director of sports, and others who are placed above the coach in the organizational hierarchy.

All three coaches mentioned goal diversity among superiors as a major source of ambiguity in football clubs on every level. For instance, they reported that the board members often have very different wishes for what the club should be doing. Some people only care about economy and profit, some want to safeguard the club's traditions, some want the club to win the Champions League, while some people simply want the club to provide a good social environment for their children.

Coach 1: Many of the board members were parents who had their kids playing in the youth teams. They always wanted to prioritize their kids' development.

Coach 2: The people in the marketing department can at times get so arrogant that they say "no, we can't help the team right now, because we have a meeting with somebody else". I can't think of any specific examples right now, but I have experienced that may times. Some people get so caught up in their own little world; they forget that they should be in a service function for the 11 guys who are playing for the team.

Coach 3: The board members have a lot of economic competence. They measure results based on economy rather than sporting performances. That mixture of business and sports can be very complicated. And people often have many different opinions, which can lead to confusion and conflict, and often to people being released from their contracts.

Coach 3: Many times, you can get an unfortunate involvement from a CEO who wants to use the sport to show off and mark his position.

These findings are all in line with the assumption that there are many different and often contradictory goals and values within a sports club, an assumption that is central to the literature on orchestration (Jones & Wallace, 2005; Wallace, 2003). As the literature says, this is one of several sources of ambiguity that sport coaches have to cope with, and it makes the coaching role more complicated and harder to fully understand.

Goal diversity among superiors makes it difficult to please everybody. The three coaches all agreed that it is important to find the people who have the most power at the club, and then try to build good relationships with them. When discussing this subject further, the coaches all claimed that the power is usually where the money is. This would mean that the most powerful people are the ones who contribute the most to the club's finances – usually the owner, major investors, or large sponsors. However, in some cases it can also be other people who, for some reason, are highly respected and appear to hold much influence over people at the club.

Coach 2: One thing is the organization and official structures – who are you supposed to report to? But then you have the even more important thing, which

is the informal part. Who do you have good chemistry with? Who seems to be most interested? A club can have bot formal and informal leaders. You can particularly have informal leaders with a lot of money. And I believe that as a coach, you have to figure out where the real power is at. Then you have to make sure you have a good connection to them, and build a good relationship.

This quote sums up the three coaches' thoughts about influencing superiors. They all agreed that having good relationships and clear communication with the most powerful people at the club is vital in order to increase their own level of influence at the club. As the quote indicates, it may be necessary to circumvent the official channels and communicate directly with the people with the real power, whether it's an external investor or the team owner. This is an example of the coaches consciously engaging in political activity in order to improve their working conditions (Potrac & Jones, 2009a, 2009b).

When it comes to building good relationships with superiors, it is clearly impossible to come up with a step-by-step guide for how it should be done. Two of the coaches did mention that respecting the wishes of these powerful stakeholders, as well as respecting the financial limitations of the club, was the key to building good relationships with leaders at the club. This again shows the importance of the coach being flexible, reactive and willing to conform when the situation dictates it (Blase, 1988). Also, being able communicate clearly, honestly and politely with superiors was again mentioned as a necessity for building good relationships with powerful stakeholders. In summary, the statements from the three coaches indicated that a coach needs to identify the most influential people at the club, and then build up good relationships with them. The ability to do these two things should be considered a significant part of a coach's micropolitical literacy, in the knowledge and instrumental aspect respectively (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a).

Continuing on the subject of dealing with superiors, the coaches all talked about the importance of managing people's expectations. Stakeholders at the club hold certain expectations for what the club should be doing and how the team should be performing (Cruickshank & Collins, 2012a, 2012b). If the first team is not getting the expected results, people may lose patience with the coach. One of the participants talks about

how he was fired after several successful years at a club, because his good performances had raised the expectations to a level that could not realistically be maintained:

Coach 1: We had a good year, we won a medal in the league. And because of the economical situation, we had to sell all our best players. But the media kept saying we were going to keep rising, we were going to play attractive football, and we were going to conquer Europe. And we had a squad with a lot of kids. The problem was that we had economic troubles, and if you set the goal at surviving in the league, after medaling the year before, that would be too negative. Sponsors would be less interested, and if there was one thing we needed, it was more money. So the club kept building the expectations. And of course, when the expectations are big, the disappointment is big. At that time, the gap between the club administration and myself as the main sporting leader, was far too wide.

This example illustrates the importance of managing expectations. All three coaches talked about this as an essential aspect of interacting with superiors. This is another issue that could likely be avoided through good communication. Communicating with the people in power and discussing the state of the performance team could help keep the leaders' expectations at a realistic level. Although much has been written about communication in coaching, it has mostly targeted how the coach communicates with his players or athletes (e.g. Ronglan, 2011; Ronglan & Havang, 2011; Turman, 2003). More research needs to be conducted in order to find out how coaches can communicate clearly and effectively with their superiors.

However, as the previous quote indicates, the leaders at the club are also being pressured by external stakeholders such as media, supporters and sponsors. This subject has been discussed by Cruickshank and Collins (2012a, 2012b), who state that this type of external pressure is one of the things that are unique to sports coaching jobs. If the club leaders indeed are influenced by supporters and media members, then one can assume that a coach can improve his working conditions by building a good relationship with those groups. One of the three coaches stated that he would often praise the supporters after matches in order to win their approval. By making himself popular among the fans, he believed that he would be granted a little more goodwill from the

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club's leaders when the team eventually encountered a poor run of results. This particular type of political action directed at external stakeholders will be discussed further in the chapter titled "Bad spells".

In addition to the people who control the money, another important person is the Sports Director, who is usually placed directly above the coach in the clubs structural hierarchy (Relvas et al., 2010). According to Relvas and colleagues (2010), elite European football clubs often have a sports director operating as a link between the executive board and the football departments, coordinating the strategies of the first team and the youth team or academy. While the responsibilities of a sports director can vary, they will usually function as the coach's most immediate superior (Relvas et al., 2010). Although one can imagine that conflicts can easily arise in this relationship, the three coaches in this study had exclusively positive experiences from working with a sports director.

> *Coach 3: I like that dualistic model where you work really closely with the sports director. Everything you do goes through him, and he reports to the board. (...) I have never had any bad experiences due to a poor relationship with the sports director.*

> *Coach 2: And I would love to work under a good sports director. Work as a head coach and cooperate with a good sports director.*

All three coaches reported that all their relationships with sports directors had been productive and cooperative, and they all viewed the sports director in their respective clubs as an ally and colleague instead of a "boss". None of them had ever experienced power struggles or other major conflicts with the sports director. Two of the coaches stated explicitly that they would prefer to work with a good sports director rather than not have a sports director above them, despite of the extra power and responsibility the latter solution would give them.

Finally, all three coaches believe that the level of respect and freedom of action a coach is afforded relies strongly on his reputation and experience. The three participants all feel that they are given far more responsibility and trust now than earlier in their careers.

> *Coach 1: When I came to the club, with all my references and all I had done before, I automatically had a lot of power. I believe the previous coach - this*

club was his first top coaching job. We have a lot of the same ideas, but he didn't get the club on board with his ideas. I've noticed the difference from when I started out to now, having many years experience. I get far more respect now.

This could indicate that the coaches' previous honours and credentials can have an impact on how they are treated by people at their club. Cialdini (1993) has argued that "social proof" is one of the main principles that cause people to act in the way they act. When people know that these coaches have been respected by other people in other clubs, their opinion of the coaches may be influenced in a positive way. However, discussing this phenomenon further is beyond the scope of this paper.

Dealing with the staff

This chapter goes into how the coach interacts with people at the club who are not his superiors. This includes the assistant coaches, the medical staff, equipment managers, and certain members of the club administration.

When discussing the most important staff members - the assistant coach, the physical coach, the goalkeeper coach - the participating coaches stated clearly that they always prefer to bring in "their own people" when they join a new club. If it is possible to bring in assistants that the coach has worked with before and feels like he can trust, then that is the preferred option. However, this is seldom possible, partially due to economics and contract situations. In many cases, the coach has to work with assistants who are already at the club. The three coaches agreed that when this happens, their main priority is to make sure that they can trust their assistants.

> *Coach 2: In Norway, you can't expect the club to let you pick 4 assistants to go with you. So that's one of the challenges you have as a head coach. The first thing I do then is to sit down with that particular assistant and be very direct about how I want to work.*

> *Coach 1: The most important people here are the assistant coach and the goalkeeping coach. Those are the ones you work the closest with. The assistant coach was here before I got here, he was already under contract. I had to sit down with him several times and make sure that I could trust him, that I had his loyalty. But that was no problem at all. (…) And that loyalty is extremely*

important. You can't have an assistant coach who goes behind your back, and talks to the players saying "that head coach is an idiot" and things like that.

According to the three coaches, the relationship with the assistant coaches usually ends up working quite well. However, they have all experienced difficulties when having to work with an already employed assistant. Once again, they all stressed the importance of discovering such difficulties at an early stage, before they evolve into large conflicts. As the literature on the orchestration metaphor has stated, goal diversity can exist at all levels of a club (Jones & Wallace, 2005). An assistant coach might be an ambitious individual who would like to take over the head coaching job at some point in time, which in a worst case scenario could make him want to work against the head coach rather than help him. Being aware of this possibility could be considered a crucial part of any coach's micropolitical knowledge (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a).

When asked about how they act when they believe that the assistant coach is disloyal or untrustworthy, the three coaches were quite unanimous in their answers.

Coach 3: When you get to a team where there already is an assistant coach, you have to figure out where his loyalty is. Is he loyal to you and the club no matter what, or does his loyalty still lie with the former coach? And where does that leave me? How will you accept having me as your new boss? And that can at times be difficult. (…) and then it becomes a process where you eventually have to release them from their contracts. And it is always an awful thing to have to deal with, and it can affect the mood of the team, but sometimes it is simply necessary.

Coach 2: Sometimes you discover that an assistant is not loyal to you. And in those situations, I am very cynical. Then I'll turn you into a "cone mover" for the remainder of your contract. I'll tell you what is going to happen at today's training, but I will not invite you to any discussion. If I don't trust people, I will not include them in my work.

As these quotes indicate, the first thing the coaches do when they feel that they cannot trust one of their assistant coaches, is to try to have them removed from their position. If this is not possible, they will try to marginalize that assistant by involving him less in

the decision making processes and keeping him busy with less prominent tasks. The goal is to reduce their level of influence and power. This particular strategy is very similar to what was described in a previous case study, when a coach had to marginalize the influence of a senior player who was unhappy with the coach's training methods (Potrac & Jones, 2009a). This could be considered a type of political activity that requires advanced micropolitical literacy, in both the knowledge and the instrumental aspect (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a). As one of the coaches pointed out, it is also important to consider how your interactions with one staff member are going to affect the general mood of the staff. If the head coach alienates an assistant coach who is a well-liked figure at the club, he runs the risk of being unpopular among the rest of the staff. This illustrates how difficult and complex this side of coaching can be. Being able to understand and handle these kinds of situations requires a large amount of social awareness and micropolitical knowledge.

Another theme that came up during the discussing was the empowering of assistants. All of the coaches believed that trusting staff members with responsibilities and a decent amount of autonomy is part of the key to keeping them satisfied.

> *Coach 3: I really want everybody to have ownership to the team's performance and improvement. And that is very much about involvement. You empower everybody around you by giving them their own tasks. And then you can just oversee everything and have people report to you. And that has worked very well at this club. The staff members think it is a far more exciting way of working than simply having the manager make all the decisions.*

> *Coach 1: Of course, when I decide something, that's how we are going to do it. But I'm very committed to motivating and stimulating my assistants, and then it is important to include them in the processes. Give them your trust and some responsibilities. Because the assistants are often young and ambitious people, it is important to communicate with them all the time. We're supposed to develop players, but we're also developing coaches, assistant coaches, youth coaches. Everything.*

They also talked about listening to the staff and letting them play a part in decision

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making processes:

> *Coach 1: My philosophy is that three coaches are smarter than one coach. I believe in involving staff members in decisions. That is important in order to create ownership to the process. You have to steer them in the direction you want, but you can't just go around and make every decision on your own.*

> *Coach 2: In my former club, the administration consisted of 5-6 people. Then I could bring in all of them for meetings, and even bring in the board. We're all part of the family. (...) That is very important, especially at a relatively small club like that.*

According to the three coaches, this type of democratic leadership style helps keep the staff members happy, and it makes them feel like a part of the team. The three coaches made it very clear that everybody knows who is the boss, but they do not engage in unnecessary micromanagement or lead in a strong, authoritarian way. Looking at the model of micropolitics by Smeed and colleagues (2009) concerning different types of power exertion, it seems clear that all three coaches prefer using "power with" rather than "power over" when dealing with the members of their staff. "Power with" values trust, empowerment, collaboration and open communication, whereas "power over" is a dominant, controlling and authoritarian form of leadership (Smeed, Kimber, Millwater & Ehrich, 2009). The use of "power with" in relation to staff members seems to be more compatible with the orchestration metaphor, as it involves unobtrusive organization and steering rather than leading in a controlling manner (Jones & Wallace, 2005, 2006; Wallace, 2003). These findings also seem to support the orchestration literature's claim that a coach does not need to portray himself as a charismatic and visionary leadership figure (Jones & Wallace, 2006; Wallace, 2003). Also, we do not need to look any further than to the self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2007) to understand the positive rewards of creating an empowering and autonomy-supportive environment for the staff members. An earlier qualitative study found that coaches would empower their assistants as a social strategy to increase their loyalty and give them a sense of ownership to the coaching process (Santos, Jones & Mesquita, 2013). It seems plausible that adopting this type of leadership style can help the coaches create a culture of acceptance among the staff members.

Further, the coaches talked about what they do to get the staff members to pull in the same direction. As the literature on the orchestration metaphor says, this is largely about creating incentives for each individual (Jones & Wallace, 2005; Wallace, 2003). Empowering the assistants and instilling a sense of ownership in every one of them by exerting "power with" (Smeed et al., 2009), as discussed in the previous paragraph, could be a good way of creating incentives and motivating staff members to do what is best for the club. All three coaches talked about creating incentives by explaining to every staff member that their job security and working conditions are dependent on the first team's performances.

> *Coach 2: It is about getting the whole club to care about the first team. Get everybody to understand that everything that happens in the club is a consequence of what the first team does. (...) Everybody needs to understand the order of priorities, so that nobody becomes a little satelite that goes another way. If the first team gets relegated, we no longer have a job. So it is in everybody's best interest to help the first team. Help it avoid relegation.*

> *Coach 1: The first team is the club's main product. It's what the sponsors want to sponsor, it's the reason why the fans show up for games. So everybody at the club should be thinking «what can I do to help the first team?» (...) We're all here because of the team. Then we all have to think «what can I do to make the team better?» For instance, we have a groundsman who almost will not allow us to train on the pitch. He's afraid we will ruin it. Then I have to ask him «are you helping the team by not letting us on the pitch? Of course not».*

These examples are very much in line with the philosophy of using rewards and incentives to influence people's agency, which is very central to the orchestration metaphor (Jones & Wallace, 2005, 2006; Wallace, 2003). In this case, the coaches try to convince the staff members that the first team is the most important thing at the club, and that everything else is affected by the team's performances. As one of the coaches put it: "if the first team gets relegated, none of us has a job". This is an attempt to get the staff members to put the first team as their number one priority. As discussed in previous literature, members of a sports clubs or other organizations often have their own values and goals that they want to pursue (Jones et al., 2013; Jones & Wallace,

2005; Wallace, 2003). Creating incentives for people it is a way of steering their agency in the wanted direction, and this is what the three coaches are trying to do.

Finally, all the coaches once again stressed the importance of good communication. Communicating clearly and directly with the staff and making sure that they understand what the coach is saying appears to be critical. According to the coaches, conflicts often arise due to poor communication.

> *Coach 3: You need to have a team that wants to pull in the same direction. And you also have to communicate in the same way. Very often, a club's biggest problem is the communication. The players hear different things from different people, which leads to confusion and eventually breaks down the trust.*

Based on these findings, as well as the findings discussed in the previous chapter, it seems clear that the importance of building up a good communication between people in the club cannot be understated. Wallace (2003) presented "culture building and communication" as an important part of the orchestration metaphor within educational systems. It appears to be equally important within coaching.

Bad spells

This chapter relates to what happens when the first team is performing worse than expected for an extended period of time. How does a bad run of results affect the coaches and other people at the club? Does anything change? What do the coaches do to cope with the situation? According to the interviews with the three coaches, two things seem to be common when teams experience a prolonged run of poor results. The first thing is that some people try to distance themselves from the head coach and the first team, not wanting to be associated with the "failure".

> *Coach 1: You can feel it. People act very different in good and bad times. Take the board members, for instance. During the good times, they stop by and talk to you and everything. During the bad times, they keep their distance. They don't talk as much.*

> *Coach 2: I noticed that when you had won a game, everybody would come up to you and tap you on the back and congratulate you. But when you had drawn or*

lost a game that you were supposed to win, people would look down at the floor when they met you in the hallways. Nobody said anything.

This is an interesting finding, but it is difficult to know whether it is a real phenomenon or simply "paranoia" on the part of the head coaches, as described by Jones (2006). It may be a subtle kind of political activity that people at the club engage in in order to distance themselves from the struggling first team and the head coach. A case study by Potrac and colleagues (2012) described how an assistant coach at a football club tried to distance himself from a member of the coaching team who appeared to be close to losing his job. This could be similar to what the participating coaches are experiencing during bad spells.

The second thing that all the coaches experienced during bad spells was the increased involvement by board members and other leaders at the club.

> *Coach 3: It is very strange. You are hired because the administration believes in you. They believe in your philosophy, they believe in you as a person. When the results are poor, you feel like they don't believe in you. And they will come up with a lot of measures that are supposed to help the team. And most of the administrators and board members in a football team, they have no idea about leading a football team. And then all of a sudden you're getting all this advice from people who have never been on a training ground or coached a team. It's very strange.*

> *Coach 2: People ask you a lot of questions. Why are we doing this, are we properly conditioned, why are we playing 4-4-2? Wouldn't 4-5-1 be better? How many chances are you going to give that right winger? (…) But sometimes they only ask questions in order to make sure that you've thought of those things. They just want to help you. And if you give them an answer, they accept it. They know that you're aware of the problem, and they accept it.*

According to the three coaches, increased involvement by the superiors is one of the most common occurrences during bad spells. Their involvement can be well-meaning, in the sense that they want to help out by making sure that the coach has thought about everything. In other cases, like the first of the quotes above, the increased involvement

can happen because of a distrust in the coach and his methods. When faced with tough questions from the board and other superiors in times of bad results, the coaches all stressed the importance of convincing people that you are the right man to turn the results around. According to them, it is critical not to appear perplexed and overwhelmed by the situation, but to rather seem like you are in control and know what needs to be done.

> *Coach 2: First of all, don't jump into the trenches. Don't see it as criticism and go straight into defensive mode. You have to be calm, analyze the question, and give them an analytic answer.*

> *Coach 1: Sometimes, if the team is struggling, they will call you in for a meeting with the board and say "we're struggling, how are you going to fix it?". And then you have to present your plans for them. And you have to be convincing and sell your ideas. And when you are done, they decide what happens. "We believe in this guy, he had a confident body language. He's not affected by the situation at all". But if you go in there and you don't seem like you know what to do, then you will be removed from your position. And then you deserve to be removed from your position. I don't know, but I believe that's part of the difference between those who are fired right away and those who get more time.*

The action taken by the coaches to portray themselves as confident and in control could be characterized as "face work" or "impression management", two terms that are central to Erving Goffman's work (1955, 1959). Engaging in this kind of political activity does seem to be necessary for a coach to survive a prolonged period of bad results by the first team (Potrac & Jones, 2009a, 2009b). According to two of the coaches, the ability to appear confident in adversity is one of the factors separating the coaches who get fired quickly when encountering a run of poor results from those who are given the time and opportunity to turn things around. The importance of acting confident in front of players and staff has been discussed in a previous study on the orchestration metaphor (Santos et al., 2013), but the findings of the present study indicates that it is also important when the coach is dealing with his superiors. Acting confident in one's abilities and keeping the trust of the powerful stakeholders at the club could possibly, in some cases, help buy the coach some more time.

One of the coaches told a story from his time as an assistant coach at an elite-level Norwegian football club, where he and the head coach were on the verge of getting fired halfway through the season because of poor results. They took action into their own hands and called for a board meeting, where they presented the board members with a clear plan for how they were going to get the team back on the winning track. They presented their vision clearly and with a confident body language, and it worked as planned. They managed to win the board's trust, and the team finished the season strongly. According to the coach, this little meeting played a massive part in buying them the time needed to turn the team's fortunes around. They had the situational awareness to know that they desperately needed to regain the confidence of the board, and they had the ability to do what was required. This anecdotal story indicates a well-developed sense of micropolical literacy in both the knowledge and the instrumental aspect, and it may have been what saved their job in this case (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a, 2002b). It also shows the importance of presenting a confident "front" in times of adversity (Goffman, 1959; Goffman, 1969).

Although it clearly is important to have the confidence of the board and other superiors, the coaches agreed that this is not the sole factor determining the fate of the coach. As discussed earlier, the leaders at a club are always experiencing a certain amount pressure from the outside, from groups like supporters, sponsors and members of the media (Cruickshank & Collins, 2012a, 2012b). The coaches believed that even if the board thinks you are the right man for the job, they may decide to fire you during a bad spell in order to show decisiveness to these external stakeholders.

> Coach 1: Let's say you are in one of the top clubs in Norway. They obviously expect great results. If you are struggling, the leaders at the club may still believe in you as a coach, but the noise from the fans, the influence from the media – it all becomes kind of a mass suggestion. After a while, the noise level is so high that the club has to sacrifice you to calm everybody down, and then simply find a new coach.

This finding indicates that when the team is performing poorly, the coach's relationship with the fans could play a part in deciding whether or not the coach gets to keep his job. One of the coaches talked explicitly about building up a good relationship with the

supporters during the good times, in order to secure himself some more patience and goodwill for the inevitable bad times. This was done by thanking the supporters after every game, by mentioning them in media interviews, and even by making statements like "we have the best fans in Europe". This should be considered part of this coach's arsenal of micropolitical strategies (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a). Similar strategies could possibly be applied in regards to other powerful stakeholders, such as sponsors and the media.

> *Coach 3: (On the relationship with fans and sponsors) You have to build those relationships during the good times. You can't neglect them when the results are good. Because if you show that you care about them during the good times, it gives you a kind of immunity when you start to struggle. You will never be completely safe, but it can buy you a little bit of time when the results are poor.*

Continuing on the subject of coping with poor results, the three coaches believe that you have to prepare for the bad spells before they occur. This includes making sure that you have a well-functioning team around you. It is important for the coach to have a group of close, trustworthy assistants that can give him advice and take part in discussions about what needs to be done to improve the team's performances.

> *Coach 3: And that's when the strong group you are trying to build really has to function optimally, so that you are not completely isolated. Because when the times are tough, you can rarely come up with a genius solution on your own.*

> *Coach 2: I believe it is important to find out what you are doing right, and stick to that. Don't be affected by all the pressure from everybody else. At the same times, internally, with the people you trust, you have to talk a lot and try to make those little adjustments that makes everything better. So it is craftsmanship, and it is intuition.*

As discussed earlier, the three coaches all prefer to empower their assistants and exert a somewhat democratic leadership style. This provides them with autonomy and an increased sense of ownership to the team's performances, which can possibly make them better suited to handling the extra challenges that come with the poor results (Ryan & Deci, 2007; Thompson et al., 2013).

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Summary

In this section, the first part of the analysis will be briefly summarized. First of all, the coaches seemed to agree that differences in goals and values among people can be a major source of conflict and ambiguity in football clubs, which is in line with the literature on the orchestration metaphor. The findings show that the participants experience coaching as a contested activity, although maybe not to the large extent that some of the previous studies have indicated (Jones, 2006; Potrac & Jones, 2009a; Potrac et al., 2002; Potrac et al., 2012; Purdy et al., 2008; Thompson et al., 2013).

All the three themes presented by Wallace (2003) as central to the orchestration metaphor were clearly present in the coaches' work. In particular, the theme of culture building and communication appeared to be critical on all levels of the organization. The coaches placed great emphasis on establishing a good communication with superiors and staff members from day one at the club. They all believed that by communicating clearly with people, a lot of potential problems could be avoided.

Another finding was that the coaches were very committed to empowering their assistants, trusting them with responsibilities and autonomy. The coaches appeared to make no attempt to portray themselves as charismatic and omnipotent leaders in front of their staff, preferring instead to take a more subtle and unobtrusive approach to their role. This is very much in line with the literature on orchestration, which promotes steering, empowering and creating incentives for people in order to influence them to do what you want them to do (Jones et al., 2013; Jones & Wallace, 2005, 2006).

They coaches also stressed the importance of identifying the most powerful stakeholders at the club and building good relationships with them. This included figuring out what these people expected from the coach and adapting their behavior to fit those expectations. This, among many other findings, indicated that the three coaches have a well-developed sense of micropolitical literacy, in both the knowledge aspect and the instrumental aspect, as one would expect from highly expected coaches. The experiental aspect was more difficult to analyze, but all the coaches appeared to have accepted micropolitical activity as an unavoidable part of their profession. The findings show that the coaches consciously engage in micropolitical activity in order to improve

their working conditions and to get what they want out of people.

Developing micropolitical literacy

The final part of the discussion chapter will describe how the three coaches have developed their micropolitical literacy throughout their careers, and discuss several ways in which other coaches can improve their own literacy.

It turned out that all three coaches had primarily learned about the inner workings of football clubs through experience. They had all gone through coach education classes and multiple seminars, but the political side of coaching was hardly discussed on those occasions. In that sense, they were thrown into the coaching world without having the tools necessary to deal with its complexity and ambiguity-

> *Coach 1: Well... sometimes I get embarrassed when I think about things I have done in the past, when I was starting out as a coach. But that's life. It is about life experience.*

Previous case studies have described similar findings, indicating that beginning coaches are seldom prepared for the power struggles and conflicts that can exist in elite sports clubs (Potrac et al., 2012; Thompson et al., 2013). Therefore, they may be forced to develop their micropolitical literacy through nothing but their own experience. All the three coaches in this study believed that coach education could be improved by focusing more on the "hidden sides" of coaching, enabling young coaches to get better at understanding the informal power structures and communicating efficiently with people.

> *Coach 2: I believe coach education would be strengthened by doing more one-to-one coaching. Trying to make the coach better at seeing the informal power structures - better at communicating with people. Because it is all about human relations - it is not the organization chart that decides whether you're a success or not. It is about how you avoid jumping right into the trenches when your work is questioned; how you avoid feeling sorry for yourself, avoid thinking that the world is unfair. You have to find ways of dealing with the reality as it is, and make an impact where you can make an impact. So I believe you can help coaches by giving them the tools to communicate with people in the right ways.*

Another way for coaches to develop their micropolitical literacy is through mentoring. The three coaches in this study all had one person that they frequently discussed their problems with. This could either be other experienced football coaches or highly educated "leadership coaches". They all believed that discussions with trusted, knowledgeable people could play a vital part in one's improvement as a coach. One of the coaches believed that the lack of trustworthy and independent discussion partners could be a major problem for coaches. He claimed that as a coach, you can talk to your assistants, but they are often biased and looking at things from the same perspective as yourself. Having somebody who sees you from the outside and provides you with constructive feedback is often overlooked, but it can be very valuable. A study by Erickson and colleagues looked at Canadian coaches' preferred and actual sources of coach knowledge, and one of the main findings was that the 44 coaches wanted far more mentoring than they were currently getting (Erickson, Bruner, MacDonald & Coté, 2008). Based on this, it would seem like a good idea for national coaching federations to facilitate more mentoring for young and inexperienced coaches.

Another interesting finding was that all three coaches claimed to have learned a lot about the inner workings of coaching during breaks between classes in coaching seminars. These "coffee breaks" provided great opportunities for coaches to discuss problems and learn from each other in an informal setting.

> *Coach 3: I have learned a lot during coaching seminars, due to the social aspect of it. During breaks and after classes. We've discussed what we do, how we do it, how we prioritize everything. And then you listen to others, and you pick up things that they do that you had not thought about yourself. So that stuff is very important for evolving as a coach and as a person.*

> *Coach 1: I remember my UEFA PRO license class. It was a good source of learning. One thing is the course itself, but another thing is when we are just sitting there and talking, sharing experiences and stories. That part is extremely helpful.*

In these discussions, the coaches actively talk about problems and share possible solutions, giving everybody an opportunity to learn from each other's experiences. This

kind of informal learning opportunities can be emulated through organizing what is called "communities of practice" (Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002). In short, a community of practice is a concept where people who share a mutual interest or profession get together and discuss their practice in an informal yet structured manner. As described by Culver and Trudel (2008), studies have indicated that communities of practice can provide a good learning ground for coaches, given that the community meetings are led by a competent facilitator. However, this assumes that the coaches consider each other collaborators rather than competitors, and thus are willing to share their knowledge (Culver & Trudel, 2008).

A study by Curry and colleagues indicated that beginning teachers can develop their micropolitical literacy by discussing their experiences in a community of practice (Curry, Jaxon, Russell, Callahan & Bicais, 2008). Based on this literature, and based on the experiences of the three coaches, it appears that organized communities of practice could provide a good platform for coaches to improve their micropolitical literacy.

Concluding thoughts

This paper has attempted to expand the concepts of orchestration and micropolitical literacy by seeking knowledge-for-understanding about how coaches interact with their superiors and staff members in their clubs. The findings indicate that this is a very important part of the coaching profession, although it has not received very much attention in previous coaching research.

The paper has attempted to shed a light on a less glamorous part of a coach's everyday life, while at the same time answering previous scholars' calls for more research targeting knowledge-for-understanding within coaching (Jones & Wallace, 2005). Although we believe that this paper does provide a good insight into how coaches experience the inner workings of elite football clubs, there is still a major need for more research in this area. More qualitative research needs to be conducted to give us a better understanding of how coaches should interact with their superiors and staff members in order to create optimal working conditions.

In addition to this, the paper has also discussed how coaches develop their micropolitical understanding throughout their careers. The findings indicate that the main part of their development happens through "learning by doing". Several suggestions have been made for how we can facilitate better opportunities for micropolitical learning for beginning coaches. Given that engaging in political activity appears to be avoidable for coaches who want to improve their working conditions at their club, this aspect of coaching should be given more attention within coach education.

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Abstract

While coaching research has always been concerned with how sports coaches interact with their players, few researchers have shown much interest into how coaches interact with superiors and staff members at their clubs. In this paper, it is argued that the way coaches handle this side of their profession can have a large impact on how well they are able to do their job.

This study attempts to shed a light on how expert football coaches interact with other people at their club in order to improve their working conditions and achieve their goals. This is achieved by conducting qualitative interviews with three Norwegian coaches with an average of 25 years experience of high-level coaching. The interview data are subjected to a process of directed content analysis, building on a theoretical framework consisting of orchestration metaphor, the study of micropolitics and the three aspects of micropolitical literacy.

The discussion chapter goes into detail on how the coaches handle the negotiation process before being hired by club, how they deal with their superiors, how they deal with the staff, and what happens when the team is going through periods of poor performances and results. Finally, suggestions are made for how other coaches can improve their ability to handle this aspect of the coaching profession. Implications for coach education are discussed.

This master's thesis consists of two parts: one scientific article and one detailed description and discussion of the theory and methodology used in the study.

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1.0 Introduction

This master's thesis consists of one scientific article, along with a complementary description and discussion of the theory and methodology used in the study.

In this part of the thesis, I will start by presenting and discussing the theoretical framework of my study in more detail than in the main article. Then, I will expand on the methodology used in the study, describing and explaining the choices I have taken during this research process.

2.0 Theory

2.1 Orchestration

2.1.1 Definitions

The concept of orchestration was first presented by Wallace and Pocklington (2002), as a way of understanding how school leaders manage complex educational change. The term "orchestration" was defined as follows:

> *"Coordinated activity within set parameters expressed by a network of senior leaders at different levels to instigate, organize, oversee and consolidate complex change across part or all of a multi-organisational system"* (Wallace & Pocklington, 2002, p. 207-209).

Orchestration is seen as a flexible strategy for coping with the ambiguity and complexity of such multi-organizational systems. As described by Jones and Wallace (2005, p. 128), the term is used in order to "*capture how senior leaders in complex organisational systems respond to central directive-driven imperatives to get change to happen through allocating tasks to others in their own and other related organisations, typically under conditions which are not entirely of their choosing*". It involves creating incentives and pulling strings in an attempt to influence people's agency and steer them in the needed direction. These kinds of actions can be grouped into three themes that are central to the orchestration metaphor: flexible planning and coordination; culture building and communication; and differentiated support (Wallace, 2003).

The orchestration metaphor was introduced to the coaching world by Jones and Wallace (2005). Just like senior leaders in schools and other organizations, coaches have to make the most of their limited power and agency to achieve certain goals under less-than-optimal conditions (Jones & Wallace, 2005). A modified definition of orchestration was developed to better fit the coaching process:

> *"Coordinated activity within set parameters expressed by <u>coaches</u> to instigate, plan, organize, monitor and respond to evolving circumstances in order to bring about*

improvement in the individual and collective performance of those being coached"
(Jones & Wallace, 2005, p. 128).

2.1.2 The challenges of coaching

The orchestration metaphor was introduced to coaching as a way of coping with the ambiguity and complexity that supposedly are endemic to the coaching process (Jones & Wallace, 2005). Jones and Wallace (2005) argued that many models and theories of and for coaching are overly simplistic and give an unproblematic and mechanical representation of a very complex reality. Part of the reason for this is that we still do not fully understand every aspect of coaching, yet we are eager to create blueprints for how it should be conducted. Trying to provide solutions to a problem that we do not fully understand, seeking "prescription before comprehension", is a sure-fire way to create oversimplified solutions (Jones & Wallace, 2005).

While discussing this same problem on the topic of educational change, Wallace (2003) argued that the focal point of research needed to be changed. The largest amount of public funding and interest seem to go to research targeting the intellectual projects of knowledge-for-action and instrumentalism. The project of "knowledge-for-understanding" seems to be less attractive, as it focuses on ambiguity and limits rather than providing immediate solutions (Wallace, 2003). This also appears to be true when it comes to sport coaching research. In an attempt to explain the origin of this current problem, Bowes and Jones (2006) pointed to the overly rational approach that has been taken by many coach researchers. Central to this approach is reductionism, which in this context means trying to understand a complex system by analyzing all of its individual parts [1] (Bowes & Jones, 2006). This leads to a mechanistic and sequential description of coaching, where human behavior is viewed as "*measurable, causally derived and thus controllable*" (Bowes & Jones, 2006, p. 236). The main problem with such models is that they fail to take into account the less visible components and subtleties that contribute to the complexity and ambiguity of coaching (Bowes & Jones, 2006). In the following subchapter, I will go through some of the reasons for why recent research has considered coaching to be a complex and ambiguous environment.

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[1] Interdisciplinary dictionary of religion and science. http://inters.org/reductionism

Causes of ambiguity in coaching

Jones and Wallace (2005) point to three reasons for why coaching cannot be a completely rational activity. The first one is the existence and pursuit of alternative goals, values and beliefs within a sport organization. People within an organization will often have different reasons for being part of it. This is as true in sports as it is in other types of organizations. Although most sport clubs have official, board-approved goals for what they want to achieve and what kind of club they want to be, it would be very naive to think that every member of the organization, from the chairman to the players, will fully adopt the goals and pursue them as their own. Hoyle (1986) used the term "organizational pathos" to describe the discrepancy between the proclaimed goals of an organization and the achievement of these goals. The pathos can be partially attributed to the false assumption that members of an organization can be expected to fully accept and work towards the goals set by the organization (Hoyle, 1986). For sports teams specifically, there are several factors that render this assumption unreasonable. Even if every person in a team is involved in the goal setting process, the final decision will in reality be made by people higher up in the hierarchy (Jones & Wallace, 2005). When a coaching team and the players are supposed to work together to set goals for the season, the asymmetrical power relation between the parties will make sure that the goals are more of the coaches' goals than the group's goals. As a consequence, players will continue to work towards their individual goals, and sometimes even work against the "consensus goals" while doing so (Jones & Wallace, 2005). Jones and Wallace (2005) also state that team goals are often very diffuse, difficult to operationalize, and contradictory to each other. Such factors can also contribute to the organizational pathos.

The issue of alternative goals also exists higher up in the organization than on the coach-player level. Case studies from English football have shown examples of assistant coaches who intentionally sabotage other coaches in order to improve their own position in the group (Potrac, Jones, Gilbourne & Nelson, 2012; Thompson, Potrac & Jones, 2013). Needless to say, such tactics do not help the team move toward its shared goals. In addition, the board, the owners, and external stakeholders such as the media and the fans will also have their own goals, and they will try to make the most of their powers to

influence the club in the direction they want (Cruickshank & Collins, 2012a, 2012b).

The second main source of ambiguity is the fact that coaches have limited awareness of the goings-on inside a sports club. It is simply impossible for a coach to know everything that is happening within the team, let alone the entire club (Jones & Wallace, 2005) in the same way that it is impossible for the CEO of a company or a school principal to be aware of everything that is going on in their organization (Wallace, 2003). An observational study of a professional rowing team showed that the athletes would use derogatory nicknames and make negative remarks behind the coaches' back in order to undermine their authority (Purdy & Jones, 2011). Such behavior would not have been possible, and certainly not very clever, if coaches had a full view of everything that went on. In addition, the existence of social irony makes it difficult for a coach to interpret all of his observations in the correct way (Hoyle & Wallace, 2008).

The third cause of ambiguity, as suggested by Jones and Wallace (2005), is the limited control that coaches have over their surroundings. Although coaching, like any other environment, is often modeled as an hierarchical structure, the coach does not have complete authority over his subordinates. While discussing athletes' power within sports teams, Potrac and Jones (2011, p. 142) state that "*most of the work examining power within sports coaching has positioned athletes as rather passive actors who are subjected to it*". They argue that there is always room for agency, although it may at times be quite limited (Potrac & Jones, 2011). We often hear about coaches leaving their position after having "lost the dressing room". For instance, an autoethnography by a professional rower described how athletes were able to force the coach out of the club, despite the fact that the coach is higher up in the hierarchy (Purdy, Potrac & Jones, 2008). Such occurrences show that the coach does not have complete control over his athletes.

We also have to remember that even if the power structure in elite sports teams had been completely hierarchical, the coach would not be sitting at the top of the hierarchy. Elite football clubs in Europe are often organized in a way that puts a sports director or a football business manager directly above the coach (Relvas, Littlewood, Nesti,

Gilbourne & Richardson, 2010). In addition, the board and the owner(s) are obviously placed at the top. These people will, to a varying degree, influence what the coach is or is not able to do (Cruickshank & Collins, 2012a, 2012b).

2.1.3 The coach as orchestrator

The literature on orchestration gives very few explicit instructions for how coaches should behave. This is not surprising, seeing as the metaphor was originally developed as a protest against overly simplistic and mechanistic leadership models (Jones & Wallace, 2005; Wallace, 2003; Wallace & Pocklington, 2002). It was introduced to the world of sports as a coping strategy - a way for coaches to learn to live with the complexity and ambiguity of the coaching context (Jones & Wallace, 2005, 2006). The coach recognizes that he has limited control over what happens in the team, and tries to make the best out of the situation by putting his agency to use where it can make the biggest impact (Ronglan, 2011).

Researchers have considered orchestration to mean both more than leadership and less than leadership (Jones & Wallace, 2006; Wallace, 2003). The nature of orchestration involves using one's power in a more subtle and unobtrusive way instead of leading from the front, which means that the traditional "charismatic leader" is no longer needed (Jones & Wallace, 2006). As stated by Wallace (2003, p. 22), "*orchestration contrasts starkly with the public, visionary and charismatic behaviour widely popularized as hallmarks of leadership*". This means that the "coach as orchestrator" does not have to portray himself as a charismatic and visionary leader figure. Orchestrators will also be less tempted to spend time and effort in an attempt to gain complete control over their surroundings, as they know that such a goal is practically unattainable. In this sense, orchestration means less than leadership (Jones & Wallace, 2005).

At the same time, orchestration can also mean more than leadership (Jones & Wallace, 2005). After realizing that he has limited power, a coach cannot simply use the traditional authoritarian approach and command the players and supporting staff to do what he wants them to do. He must instead use encouragement and create incentives in order to influence their agency and make them pull in the wanted direction (Ronglan,

2010). Arguably, this is a far more complicated task than simply using authority. The coach will also have to consider that different people will respond to different incentives, highlighting Wallace's principle of differentiated support (Wallace, 2003).

Orchestration is also more complicated than leadership in the sense that the coach is forced to be reactive as well as proactive (Jones & Wallace, 2005). Again, the realization that the coach has limited power over his surroundings means that cannot freely shape the context in the way he wants. Instead, he has to adjust to the context at all times, which requires a high degree of flexibility (Jones & Wallace, 2006; Wallace, 2003). It also requires the coach to be constantly aware of what is going on around him. As discussed in the previous chapter, limited awareness is an important source of ambiguity in the coaching context (Jones & Wallace, 2005; Wallace, 2003). Jones, Bailey and Thompson (Jones, Bailey & Thompson, 2013) suggested that the theory of orchestration should adopt Mason's (2002) work on noticing. In short, the discipline of noticing involves paying attention to the right things and picking up on important signals from one's surroundings (Mason, 2002). Through being as aware as possible of what is going on in the club, the coach can make informed decisions.

The orchestration metaphor is still fairly young, having been introduced to coaching only a decade ago (Jones & Wallace, 2005). Most of the empirical research on the theory up to this point has primarily been concerned with how the coach can influence athletes and players. It is also important to look at how coaches can influence their superiors in order to maximize their power at the club and create optimal working conditions for themselves. In order to achieve this, it has been suggested that the study of micropolitics should have a place in the orchestration metaphor (Jones et al., 2013). This subject will be explored further in the next chapter.

The only in-depth multi-case study that explicitly studies orchestration among professional sports coaches was conducted by Santos, Jones and Mesquita (2013). The five participants had more than 10 years experience from the highest level of their respective sports, and they all held the highest possible coaching badges in their sports. Data was collected through qualitative interviews and subjected to deductive and

inductive analysis. The latter was based on the main tenets of orchestration (Jones &
Wallace, 2005, 2006). It appeared that all five coaches recognized the importance of the
principles of the orchestration theory. They all stated the importance of smart
observation and "noticing" in order to make well-informed decisions, and they all
realized the necessity of securing the cooperation of powerful stakeholders at the club.
They also made use of well-thought out strategies in order to create the right level of
insecurity among the players, and in order to portray themselves as in control and as
competent as possible (Santos, Jones & Mesquita, 2013).

2.1.4 Criticism

The theory of orchestration has received some criticism for not being practical enough.
Abraham and Collins (2011) argue that while the literature on orchestration does well in
bringing attention to the ambiguous nature of coaching and the fact that coaches do not
have unlimited power, it does not provide practical solutions for how coaches should
cope with it. They also criticize the literature for explaining the processes in coaching in
such a complex way that, paradoxically, "*the inherent coaching complexity remains
unaddressed*" (Abraham & Collins, 2011, p. 370). It is also argued that while we still do
not have, and may never have, a complete understanding of coaching, we still need a
model for it (Abraham & Collins, 2011). While this criticism is understandable, it
should be mentioned that the theory of orchestration is still in the early stages of its
development. The theory was introduced to coaching as recently as 2005, and even
since then, there has not been conducted much research attempting to bring the theory
forward.

As Abraham and Collins (2011) correctly point out, most of the literature on
orchestration has focused on the weaknesses of previous coaching and leadership
models, rather than creating another model for how coaching should be conducted. This
criticism is understandable, and it is true that the literature on orchestration provides
little explicit guidance for how coaches should behave. This is because the studies have
focused on knowledge-for-understanding rather than knowledge-for-action or
instrumentalism (Wallace, 2003). As stated by Jones and Wallace (2005), future research
on orchestration in coaching should target "knowledge-for-understanding to inform

knowledge-for-action". It is important that we better understand the environment of coaching before we prematurely create blueprints for it.

2.1.5 The way forward for orchestration

The orchestration literature has provided a refreshing take on the world of coaching. Still, a lot of work needs to be done in order to improve the theory. As stated by Santos, Jones and Mesquita (2013) there are still many blank spaces within the theory that need to be filled. There is very little empirical data on orchestration in coaching. We need more empirical research in order to gain the necessary "knowledge-for-understanding".

Most of the literature on orchestration has looked at how coaches interact with the players or athletes. In my opinion, a model of coaching should also include how coaches interact with their superiors and other people at the club in order to achieve their goals and improve their working conditions. This is, after all, an unavoidable part of coaching. It has already been suggested that the study of micropolitics should be adopted into the orchestration metaphor (Jones et al., 2013). Improving our understanding of how coaches engage in micropolitical activity can possibly improve the orchestration metaphor even further.

2.2 Micropolitics

By integrating the study of micropolitics into the orchestration metaphor, the political side of coaching can be accounted for (Jones, Bailey & Thompson, 2013). In this chapter, I will go through the existing theoretical and empirical research on micropolitics. Then, I will look at Kelchtermans and Ballet's (2002b) work on micropolitical literacy, and discuss how it can be applied to sports coaching.

2.2.1 Micropolitics in sports and education

Definitions

According to Blase and Anderson (1995, as cited in Potrac & Jones 2009b), theoretical and empirical work on micropolitics did not start out until the first part of the 1980s. One of the first researchers to take on this topic was Eric Hoyle, who defined

micropolitical action as "*strategies by which individuals and groups in organizational contexts seek to use their resources of power and influence to further their interests*" (Hoyle, 1982, p. 88). Hoyle's work was centered on educational systems, and what he called "the dark side of organizational life" in such institutions. Almost a decade later, Joseph Blase developed what is now the most frequently used definition of micropolitics.

> "*Micropolitics refers to the use of formal and informal power by individuals and groups to achieve their goals. In large part, political actions result from perceived differences between individuals and groups, coupled with the motivation to use power and influence and/or to protect. Although such actions are consciously motivated, any action, consciously or unconsciously motivated, may have political "significance" in a given situation. Both cooperative and conflictive actions and processes are part of the realm of micropolitics. Moreover, macro- and micropolitical factors frequently interact*" (Blase, 1991, p.11).

The first sentence of Blase's definition sums up the most important part: micropolitics is about using formal and informal power to achieve one's goals. Building on this, Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002b, p. 108) defined micropolitical actions as "*those actions that aim at establishing, safeguarding or restoring the desired working conditions*". The term "desired working conditions" refers to the conditions a person considers necessary in order to be able to perform his or her professional tasks in an effective and satisfactory way (Kelchtermans, 1996).

Micropolitical research in education

Although there exist a certain amount of literature examining micropolitics in educational systems, the research subject was largely ignored for a long time. It has been suggested that the negative connotations of the word "politics" should take some of the blame for this. Any acknowledgement that there existed political activity in a school "*was recast deliberately as poor climate, bad management, or an indicator of incompetence on the part of teachers and administrators*" (Lindle, 1994, p. 2, as cited in Potrac & Jones, 2009b). While some people may consider "politics" an inherently negative thing, other researchers have argued that whenever two or more people are

involved in the same activity, political activity can always be found (Leftwhich, 2005). In that sense, politics can be considered a natural part of human interaction.

In a later article, Lindle presented scenarios that illustrated the need for micropolitical understanding among teachers and other employees (Lindle, 1999). For instance, she provides an example of a new principal who drops into a teacher's classroom to do an unannounced, informal evaluation. Although the evaluation is highly positive, the teacher in question is deeply offended by this "violation". "*[The principal] could only reflect that nothing in his certification course work had prepared him for this incident*" (Lindle, 1999, p. 174). Her conclusion is that the study of micropolitics is unavoidable, and more research on the subject is necessary. She does not, however, suggest a way forward for further research.

One of the most important pieces of literature on this subject was Stephen Ball's book "*The micro-politics of schools: Towards a theory of school organization*" (Ball, 1987). It is argued that people in schools, on all levels of the organization, have different ideas and beliefs (ideologies) regarding how the school should be run. These ideologies play a big part in shaping the people's goals, or their "strongly held preferences" (Ball, 1987). Differences in ideologies and goals contribute to the pathos and organizational irony that I have discussed earlier (Hoyle, 1986; Hoyle & Wallace, 2008; Jones & Wallace, 2005). The political activity people engage in to realize their ideas and beliefs, was labeled "skilled strategic action". Skilled strategic action is often conducted in order to influence one's superiors, or as Ball calls them, "critical reality definers" (Ball, 1987).

Ball also developed a useful conceptual frame for conducting micropolitical analysis of any organization. It involved looking for and analyzing the following themes: "power, goal diversity, ideological disputation, conflict, interests, political activity, and control" (Ball, 1987, p. 11). Some of these themes are largely interrelated and certain observation or pieces of data can be put into several of the seven categories. For instance, the themes of goal diversity, ideological disputation, and interests often overlap (Fry, 1997). Although the framework is not the be-all and end-all of micropolitical analysis, it can still be very helpful when trying to analyze how any person perceives the micropolitical

landscape in any complex social structure.

Ball's framework has been used in a case study detailing how a young, female teacher maneuvers through the micropolitical landscape of a school in order to implement a new subject into the syllabus (Fry, 1997). By using the framework developed by Ball (1987), the study did a good job in describing the very complex and conflict-ridden environment that the participant teacher, "Mary", had to deal with. The study helped shed a light on what kind of resistance a teacher may have to face when trying to change the status quo in a school (Fry, 1997). It also detailed the different strategies that Mary used during her mission. Her thought process is presented through a narrative part of the article, where the main topics are perceiving a need, seeing herself as competent, playing a waiting game, dealing with power, finding new ways, gaining allies, having the subject offered, and keeping up the momentum (Fry, 1997). With a few minor modifications, Ball's framework (1987) could possibly be applied in a productive way in the field of coaching research, to provide an overview of how coaches experience the micropolitical landscape in their clubs.

Another important piece of work on micropolitics in educational systems was the book "*The everyday political perspectives of teachers: Vulnerability and conservatism*" by Blase (1988). In this book, Blase looked at the different micropolitical strategies used by teachers in order to achieve their goal within the school organization. He grouped the strategies into six categories and placed them on a continuum from reactive to proactive: acquiescence, conformity, integration, diplomacy, passive-aggressiveness, and confrontation (Blase, 1988). The continuum provides an interesting opportunity for analyzing teachers' selection of micropolitical action. For instance, the strategies used by the teacher in Fry's study (1997) could easily be analyzed by using Blase's continuum. In this case, most of her actions fit into the category of diplomacy, but she also used conformity and integration when she felt that it was appropriate. While Blase's work clearly targeted teachers, his continuum can also be transferred to coaching, especially when it comes to influencing one's superiors and changing the club's culture.

A recent article on micropolitics in education looked at the different ways school leaders

can influence people lower down on the hierarchy (Smeed, Kimber, Millwater & Ehrich, 2009). They created a simple model of micropolitics, looking at three different ways of exerting power, ranging from authoritarian to democratic: power over, power through, and power with. This model could be interesting when looking at how a head coach interacts with other coaches, the supporting staff and the players.

Micropolitical research in sports

In 1993, Jones, Wells, Peters and Johnson (as cited in Potrac & Jones, 2009b) claimed that being political was a necessary part of a coach's repertoire, because their job was dependent on their ability to gain the approval of "contextual power brokers", meaning athletes, other coaches and owners. In other words, leading the team to good performances does not automatically guarantee job security. No matter how good results a coach can deliver, a falling out with the club owner can lead to the coach being fired.

Potrac and Jones (2009b) made a strong case for examining the micropolitics of coaching, pointing at the way recent studies had portrayed coaching as an activity that demanded constantly interacting with and influencing other people (e.g. d'Arripe-Longueville, Fournier & Dubiois, 1998; Potrac, Jones & Armour, 2002; Potrac, Jones & Cushion, 2007). These activities "*often involves coaches' manipulating others' impressions of them to generate the necessary professional support, space, and time to carry out their programs and agendas*" (Potrac & Jones, 2009b, p. 224). In line with the metaphor of orchestration, the authors argue that coaching should be portrayed not as a unproblematic and linear activity, but as "*an arena for struggle*" and "*a negotiated, contested activity*" (Potrac & Jones, 2009b, p. 233). They suggest that by examining coaching from a micropolitical perspective, we will be better able to understand the political activities that coaches have to take part in on a daily basis.

We have very little empirical knowledge of micropolitics in sports. Over the last few years, some narrative case studies have been conducted on the topic (Potrac, Jones, Gilbourne & Nelson, 2012; Thompson, Potrac & Jones, 2013). These studies looked at how the coaches experienced being a part of a coaching team in a professional football team. In both of these studies, the coaches felt a large amount of hostility from the other

coaches. In order to gain a better position in the group and gain the trust and approval of the head coach, the assistant coaches try to make each other look bad, even though it is likely to have negative effect on the team as a whole (Potrac et al., 2012; Thompson et al., 2013). After being unfairly chastised by the goalkeeping coach for unknowingly making a minor mistake during the team's preparation for a game, the coach in one of the studies made the following comment:

> "*Maybe it's cynical, but I really think he was trying to assert his authority over me and to publicly undermine me. At that level of football, everyone is fighting to keep their jobs and get their contracts renewed. I suppose that if I look incompetent and cuts have to be made, I'll get axed before he does*" (Thompson, Potrac & Jones, 2013, p. 8).

This quote sums up the essence of the article, stating that not only is coaching a contested and conflict-ridden activity that requires being political, but it is also appears to be accepted as such by the coaches. This fits in with the foundation of the orchestration metaphor – the world of coaching is not a simple, rational and predictable environment. It is, to the contrary, an arena for struggle (Potrac & Jones, 2009b).

The study of micropolitics within sports coaching has received some criticism. Abraham and Collins (2011) stated that while the research may have shown that the nature of coaching is inherently political, it has not yet provided any solution for how coaches should maneuver through the political landscape. This criticism is similar to the aforementioned criticism of the orchestration theory (Abraham & Collins, 2011). In my opinion, it does seem reasonable to gradually shift the focal point of the research towards "knowledge-for-action" as we start to better understand the subject. Action-oriented research is important, but it needs to be based on understanding. Our understanding of the micropolitical landscapes of elite sports clubs is still very limited, and we need to gain more knowledge about it before we can prescribe a solution.

2.2.2 Micropolitical literacy

Three aspects of micropolitical literacy
In a 2002 article, Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002a) looked at the micropolitical learning

process of a young teacher. They studied the different kinds of political activities that he took part in, and described how he increasingly developed an understanding of the micropolitical realities of the school. They came up with the term "micropolitical literacy", which describes how teachers are able to cope with the micropolitical realities within a school (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a). The term includes the teachers' ability to read the micropolitical landscape, as well as their ability to "write themselves into it" (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a, p. 756).

The term "micropolitical literacy" includes three aspects: the knowledge aspect, the instrumental or operational aspect, and the experiential aspect (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a, 2002b). The knowledge aspect consists of the ability to read and understand the micropolitical landscape. It involves the ability to see the political implications of both words and actions. The knowledge aspect of micropolitical literacy is closely connected with the discipline of noticing (Mason, 2002), which has recently been included as a part of the orchestration metaphor (Jones et al., 2013). Several case studies have shown how the lack of micropolitical knowledge can make coaches' life harder, and even lead to them losing their job (Purdy & Jones, 2011; Purdy et al., 2008; Thompson et al., 2013). Such findings illustrate the importance of this aspect.

If the knowledge aspect refers to a person's ability to read the micropolitical landscape, the instrumental or operational aspect refers to his or her ability to write him-/herself into the landscape (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a). This aspect "*encompasses the repertoire of micro-political strategies and tactics a teacher is able to apply effectively (…) in order to establish, safeguard or restore desirable working conditions*" (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002b, p. 117). It concerns both the breadth of their repertoire (how many different micropolitical strategies they know) and how well they are able to use it, as well as their ability to select the right strategy at the right time. As discussed in a previous chapter, the strategies can range from reactive to proactive in nature (Blase, 1988).

The final aspect is the experiential aspect, which describes how a person feels about his or her micropolitical literacy. This includes their level of satisfaction with their

micropolitical knowledge and repertoire. Some teachers and coaches may feel disheartened, vulnerable or frustrated when they discover the political realities of their job, while others may react more positively (Kelchtermans, 2005; Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002b). In one of the case studies of micropolitics in sports, the coach admitted to feeling guilty after using "dirty tricks" to gain authority over another assistant coach (Potrac et al., 2012). Another coach changes his attitude towards such "dirty tricks" throughout his short career as a fitness coach at a professional football club, from being appalled and angered by them, to embracing them as a part of the game (Thompson et al., 2013). Such feelings should also be considered a part of the experiential aspect.

Micropolitical literacy in coaching

Although the term was developed in educational research, it has also been used in research targeting sport coaching. Potrac and Jones (2009b) wrote largely about how the notion of micropolitical literacy could be used in coaching research. The same authors then used the theory in conjunction with Ball's framework for micropolitical analysis (1987) and Erving Goffman's "*The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life*" (Goffman, 1959), when studying the experiences of the head coach of a semi-professional football club (Potrac & Jones, 2009a). Some of Goffman's work can be considered a predecessor to the study of micropolitics. For instance, what he describes as doing "face work", "impression management" and creating different "fronts" are examples of political activity (Goffman, 1959). Goffman's terminology can be useful when analyzing people's micropolitical activity.

While very few empirical studies have explicitly addressed micropolitical literacy among coaches, several studies have clearly showed how coaches' micropolitical knowledge and ability can affect their ability to do their job. One example is Purdy's autoethnography (2008), which shows how a coach gradually loses the respect of the athletes. One of the reasons appears to be that she alienated the cox, who normally is one of the most influential athletes, instead of befriending her and making her an important ally (Purdy et al., 2008). With a better micropolitical understanding, the coach might have seen the possible advantages of building a good relationship with powerful and influential people within the team. This particular study did not, however, touch on

the coach's relationship with her superiors or other coaches in the club.

There are other recent case studies that have focused specifically on coaches' political activity in relation to other coaches and superiors. One of them details the emotions that the coach felt after using cynical micropolitical strategies or "dirty tricks" to gain authority over another assistant coach (Potrac et al., 2012). The coach in question did actually retire from coaching a while later, because he (and his wife) did not like what the political activity was doing to him. He felt shameful of his own actions, and he experienced the need for constant impression management and political awareness as tiring and stressful (Potrac et al., 2012). Such descriptions give us a great insight into the experiential aspect of micropolitical literacy, but there is an obvious need for more research on this topic.

Another informative case study on this topic looked at "Adam's" experience as a newly appointed fitness coach in a high-level English football club (Thompson et al., 2013). From the start of his tenure, Adam struggled to connect with the other coaches, and he was regularly made the scapegoat whenever something went wrong. It does appear that most of his problems stemmed from an underdeveloped micropolitical literacy. The most interesting part of the study is that Adam felt that he gradually understood more and more of what was required to survived at the club. At one point, for instance, he realized the importance of acting confident and extra knowledgeable in order to gain more respect from his colleagues. He then implemented several different strategies in order to achieve this, such as holding well-prepared formal presentations for the other coaches in order to prove his competence. If we want to relate this example to the three aspects of micropolitical literacy, Adam's realization that he needed to seem confident and knowledgeable is part of the knowledge aspect. The way he selected strategies and took action are part of the instrumental or operational aspect (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a, 2002b).

The study also describes changes to the experiential aspect of Adam's literacy (Thompson et al., 2013). Towards the latter stages of his tenure at the club, he started adopting some of the micropolitical strategies that had angered him when they were

used against him earlier. When a new sport science consultant arrives at the club, Adam pretended not to like him in order to create a common enemy and bring himself closer to the other coaches who also had a problem with "the new guy". Adam's ability to employ this strategy shows how much his micropolitical understanding and ability had improved, but even more interestingly, it shows that he had accepted this political warfare as an unavoidable part of the coaching game.

> "*I've learnt that how you deal with the political side of the job can really impact upon how successful you can be as a coach. (...) The more you know about that side of things the more you can do with your coaching knowledge and practical skills*" (Thompson, Potrac & Jones, 2013, p. 11).

All of the mentioned studies provide us with some empirical data on the three aspects of micropolitical literacy. However, we need more research in order to better understand if and how the theory can be successfully applied to coaching. Especially in regards to influencing superiors such as sporting directors or board members. This topic is not touched on in any of these studies. Micropolitical activity directly aimed at influencing one's superiors is discussed to some extent in teacher studies (Blase, 1988; Blase, 1997; Fry, 1997; Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a, 2002b), but it remains an uncharted territory within coaching.

Developing micropolitical literacy

Some of the literature on micropolitics in coaching indicates that newly employed coaches quickly catch on to some of the political realities in the club, and improve their literacy through experience (Potrac & Jones, 2009a; Thompson et al., 2013). However, if the world of coaching really is as complex, ambiguous and conflict-ridden as some of the literature portrays it to be, it seems impossible to ever develop perfect micropolitical literacy. There will always be room for improvement. Therefore, coaching research should attempt to find more effective ways to improve coaches' literacy. Such research might help discover a better way to prepare young and inexperienced coaches for the "real world" of coaching.

Erickson and colleagues (2008) conducted a study on the preferred and actual learning sources among 44 Canadian coaches in different sports. The results indicate that coaches wanted more information through the Canadian National Coaching Certification Program, meaning formal classes. They also wanted more mentoring than they were currently getting. The results also show that coaches prefer to learn, and are learning, from a variety of sources. As expected, "learning by doing" was the most common source of coach knowledge. Learning through discussion with other coaches, e.g. in a community of practice, was not mentioned in the study (Erickson, Bruner, MacDonald & Coté, 2008). In another review of coaches' learning sources, Cushion and Nelson (2013) argued that informal learning situations could provide good opportunities for coaches to improve their knowledge. However, in order to be able to reach deep levels of reflection on their own practice, the authors argued that coaches would need guidance from other coaches or from a mentor – simply learning by doing appeared to result in a more shallow and superficial understanding of their own practice (Cushion & Nelson, 2013). The findings in these studies should also be applied to micropolitical learning.

One way to improve coaches' micropolitical understanding could be by organizing communities of practice, which involves gathering several coaches and letting them discuss and reflect on their practice with their peers in a informal, but structured manner (Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002). One study looked at beginning teachers' micropolitical learning in a community of practice setting (Curry, Jaxon, Russell, Callahan & Bicais, 2008), providing a good contrast to previous studies on teachers' micropolitical learning, which have portrayed this learning process as an individual and lonesome journey (Blase, 1997; Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a, 2002b; Kuzmic, 1994). Having a forum to discuss problems and situations with one's peers seemed to be helpful for all the participating teachers (Curry et al., 2008). Culver and Trudel (2008) have made the case for why coaches should embrace organized communities of practice as a good source of learning. Given that they are led by a competent facilitator and that the participants are willing to cooperate with each other, communities of practice can provide an good arena for facilitating informal learning (Culver & Trudel, 2008). It could also be a productive way for coaches to improve their micropolitical literacy.

3.0 The intention of this study

This study aims to do multiple things. The main goal is to shed a light on how coaches interact with their superiors and staff members at their clubs in order to improve their working conditions and achieve their goals. By gathering data through interviews with experienced coaches and analyzing the findings through a theoretical framework consisting of the orchestration metaphor, the study of micropolitics and the three aspects of micropolitical literacy, we hope to improve our understanding of this largely ignored aspect of the coaching profession. This will in turn help us improve the way the orchestration metaphor is applied to coaching.

In addition to this, we also want to investigate how elite coaches have developed their micropolitical literacy throughout their careers. Hopefully, this will provide information that can help improve other coaches' ability to cope with the complex and political nature of the coaching profession.

4.0 Methods

4.1 Participants

Through a process of purposive sampling (Berg, 2007), I compiled a list of coaches who had a minimum of 10 years experience from the first and second highest levels of Norwegian football. More than 20 coaches were contacted by email or phone. Five of these expressed their willingness to participate in the study. After further consideration, I decided to go through with interviews with the three most experienced coaches.

The three participants have an average of 25 years of high-level coaching experience. Most of their time has been spent in head coaching or first-team manager positions, but two of them also hold some experience as assistant coaches. The majority of their experience comes from the two highest levels of Norwegian football, but two of them have also spent some time in elite-level clubs in foreign countries. One of the coaches also has a few years experience from professional clubs in the third highest division. Two of the participants are currently coaching high-level teams, while the third one has recently taken a temporary break from professional coaching. They all hold the UEFA PRO license, which is the highest official coaching certificate in European football [2].

The coaches' level of experience means that they meet the criteria of expert coach status put forward by Abraham and colleagues (Abraham, Collins & Martindale, 2006). In order to be considered an expert coach within this definition, one must have been coaching for at least 10 years, while also meeting several different criteria such as being respected as top-quality coaches within their own sport, and currently being involved with elite and developmental athletes (Abraham et al., 2006, p. 553). This set of criteria has been used in several studies of expert coaches (e.g. Santos, Jones & Mesquita, 2013).

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2   http://www.fotball.no/Utdanning-og-kompetanse/Trener/UEFA_PRO-lisens/UEFA_PRO-lisens/

4.2 Interviews

Because of the purpose of the study, semi-structured interviews were selected as the data collection method (Thagaard, 2003). The lack of previous literature on the subject made constructing the interview guide a challenging process. I decided to conduct two pre-interviews in order to test the questions beforehand and make sure they were not excessively guiding the subjects, as recommended by Elo and colleagues (2014). The interview subjects in the two pre-interviews were coaches who did not meet the inclusion criteria for the main study. The audio recordings from the pre-interviews were also transcribed and later used to test the selected data analysis process. The final interview guide consisted of six main topics: the negotiation process with the club; dealing with superiors; dealing with the staff; implementing changes; bad spells; and how the coaches had developed their understanding of these topics. Each topic contained a few main questions and several suggestions for follow-up questions (Thagaard, 2003). I also made sure to have an clear understanding of the entire theoretic framework, in order to be able to recognize themes from previous literature and ask the right follow-up questions during my conversations with the coaches.

The participants appeared to be very confident and comfortable in the interview situation, and they seemingly had no problems with sharing their experiences. This could possibly be attributed to their large experience and knowledge of the topic of the conversation. This made it easy for me to ask follow-up questions and take a more active role as interviewer and researcher, which can increase the quality of the gathered data (Andersen, 2013). Although the interviews largely followed the planned structure, they did resemble open, free-flowing conversations. The open nature of the questions allowed the coaches to elaborate on their viewpoints, while I attempted to ask the right follow-up questions in order to steer the conversation in the needed direction (Andersen, 2013). I made sure to bring a pen and a notebook to each interviews, in order to be able to record my immediate thoughts and note down topics I wanted to explore further with the interview subject. This could be considered a part of my role as an active participant in the interview (Andersen, 2013).

Two of the interviews were done face-to-face, one was done by phone. They were all recorded and transcribed verbatim. All three coaches agreed to do a follow-up interview by phone if it was deemed necessary. Two of the coaches even suggested it before I asked them, suggesting that the relation-building part of the interview had been successful (Thagaard, 2003).

4.3 Data analysis

The data analysis method selected for this study was a deductive content analysis. According to Elo and Kyngäs (2008, p.111), such an approach "*is often used in cases where the researcher wishes to retest existing data in a new context* " (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008, p. 111). Since the main purpose of my analysis was to apply the theoretical framework to a different context, this was a natural choice. The content analysis is a very flexible method, with many choices being left up to the judgement of the researcher (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005), meaning that there is no clear, "set in stone" blueprint for how the analysis should be conducted. In this chapter, I will describe my analysis process as detailed as possible in order to improve the trustworthiness of the study.

After the audio recordings from the interviews had been transcribed, I started out by reading through the transcripts several times to give myself a full understanding of each interview as a whole before beginning the detailed analysis process (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). This helped me capture the wholeness of the data material. Then, I used Ball's framework (1987) for micropolitical analysis as a structured matrix for the first part of my analysis. As stated in chapter 2.2, this framework is very helpful for analyzing how a person experiences the micropolitical landscape of his surroundings. Even though this part of the analysis was never intended to be included in the final paper, it did help me get a systematic overview of the coaches' experience.

A directed approach was then taken to the content analysis process (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). This involves using coding categories that are predetermined and based on themes from the theoretical framework. In my case, the categories were based on the

literature on orchestration and micropolitical literacy. Because my theoretical framework had not previously been applied to coaches' relationship with their superiors, I also allowed myself to use inductive codes to capture topics that the coaches brought up themselves. This is not unusual within the directed approach to content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). In order to make the analysis process as orderly and accurate as possible, I used the qualitative data analysis software "QDA Miler Lite" when coding the data material. This made the process of coding much easier. The software let me create summaries for each of the coding categories and cross-reference the categories during the analysis process, which was particularly helpful in the latter stages of the process.

During the coding process, I wanted to avoid both using too many categories and using too few categories. As stated by Elo and Kyngäs (2008), finding the right amount of categories can be challenging for the researcher. Again, this is a judgement call with no clear right answer. I started out by using far too many categories, and I was forced to merge several categories together after the first round of coding. This was especially true for the inductive codes. The deductive codes were based on the theoretical framework, and I decided to keep most of them, even those that were used only once or twice in each interview. Another challenge in the coding process is finding the right meaning units (Elo et al., 2014). A small meaning unit runs the risk of being considered irrelevant and unclear, while a large meaning unit can include several meanings, which can be confusing to the process (Elo et al., 2014). I took this into consideration, and most of my meaning units ended up consisting of one to three sentences, with some exceptions. This ensured that the meaning and context of the coaches' statement were preserved, while still still keeping the units small enough to avoid including several contradicting meanings within the same meaning unit.

In qualitative content analysis, the presentation of the results is part of the analysis (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Due to the richness of the data, it is impossible to present every single finding in the final paper. Therefore, deciding which findings to include is again up to the judgement of the researcher. By first analyzing each interview on its own, and then doing a thematic analysis across the cases, I was able to find patterns and commonalities

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between the coaches (Thagaard, 2003). Patterns that were found in all three cases, it was considered more interesting than findings that were only present in one or two of the interviews. I decided to structure the results and discussion chapter in almost the same way as the interview guide, except the topic "implementing changes", which was integrated in the chapters regarding dealing with superiors and the staff. In each part of the results and discussion chapter, the most interesting findings are presented and discussed in relation to the theoretical framework. I have frequently included quotations from the interviews in order to show that my interpretations are indeed based on the data material, and not invented out of thin air (Elo et al., 2014). The quotations also makes the discussion chapter more interesting and easier to read. When writing the results and discussion chapter, I frequently had to go back to the raw data material to ensure that I had in fact interpreted the coaches' statements correctly, increasing the trustworthiness of the study (Elo et al., 2014).

Initially, I wanted to see if Cialdini's (1993) six principles of influence and persuasion were relevant. This was meant to be included in the theoretical framework. When preparing the interview guide for the pre-interviews, I decided to not include this in the study after all, apart from a single mention in the discussion chapter.

4.4 Trustworthiness

When evaluating the trustworthiness of qualitative research, several factors need to be taken into consideration. According to Graneheim and Lundman (2004), trustworthiness consists of three main concepts: credibility, dependability and transferability. Other scholars have argued that two additional concepts should be addressed when addressing trustworthiness, these being conformability and authenticity (Elo et al., 2014). In this chapter, I will briefly describe each of these five concepts and how they have been accounted for in my study.

The *credibility* of the study, as described by Elo and colleagues (2014, p. 3), "*deals with the focus of the research and refers to the confidence in how well the data address the intended focus*". According to Graneheim and Lundman (2004), ensuring the

trustworthiness of a study begins with choosing the right participants and data collection method. In my case, the process of finding proper participants has been described thoroughly under chapter 4.1. Due to the nature of the study, it was also clear that the data collection had to be done through a semi-structured interview, as described in chapter 4.2. By conducting two pre-interviews to help improve the interview guide, the credibility was increased further. To ensure the credibility of the data analysis process, I made sure to follow the guidelines of competent qualitative content analysis researchers such as Elo and Kyngäs (2008) and Hsieh and Shannon (2005). For instance, using properly sized meaning units during the coding process, as well as not using too few or too many categories, has been mentioned as important in order to achieve credibility (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). I frequently consulted the aforementioned literature on content analysis when faced with these kinds of questions. I also sought advice from my supervisor, who is highly experienced in the field of qualitative research. This helped me make informed and reasonable decisions, ensuring credibility throughout the entire process.

Dependability refers to "*the stability of data over time and under different conditions*" (Elo et al., 2014, p. 4). If a study can be repeated in the same context with similar participants and yield the same results, then the study is perfectly dependable. To ensure the dependability of my study, I have described each step in the research process in detail. The participants' experience and credentials have been described as detailed as possible without revealing their identities. The interview guide I used is available as an attachment to this paper. I have also attempted to describe the analysis process to the best of my ability, although the subjective nature of qualitative content analysis makes it impossible to describe it in complete detail. Since September 2014, I have kept a journal of my choices and reflections in regards to this research project, which has made this process easier and more accurate. I believe the information provided in the methods chapter of my paper is sufficient that it can be used as a starting point for any researchers wanting to replicate this study.

The concept of *transferability* describes "*the extent to which the findings can be transferred to other settings or groups*" (Elo et al., 2014, p. 6). As stated by Graneheim

and Lundman (2004), authors can only describe the context and the results as detailed as possible, and then it is up to the readers to decide whether or not they believe that the results are transferable to different settings. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the context of the study has been described as detailed possible while still preserving the anonymity of the participants. The fact that all the three participants have based their views on their experiences from several different clubs can also increase the transferability of the study. The transferability could have been improved further by increasing the sample size, given that the quality of the sample was not decreased in the process.

The fourth concept is *conformability*, which is related to the researcher's objectivity. Elo and colleagues (2014, p. 6) state that "*the findings must reflect the participants' voice and conditions of the inquiry, and not the researcher's biases, motivations, or perspectives*". In my case, I have to the best of my ability attempted to not let my own feelings or biases interfere with the analysis or the presentation of the data. To improve the conformability of qualitative content analysis, several authors suggest including unedited excerpts from the content in the presentation of the results (Elo et al., 2014; Graneheim & Lundman, 2004; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). This allows the readers to see for themselves that the author's interpretations are indeed based on the real content. In the results and discussion chapter of my paper, I have included frequent quotations from the interview transcripts. However, since the quotations have been translated from Norwegian to English, they may not provide a perfect representation of the original data. Ideally, another researcher should have helped me with the translation process to make sure that the essence of the quotes was not changed during the translation.

The fifth and final concept is authenticity, which describes "*the extent to which the researchers fairly and faithfully show a range of realities*" (Elo et al., 2014, p. 8). Lack of authenticity can arise from the researcher intentionally omitting results to promote his own viewpoints or biases, or from lack of experience and competence on the part of the researcher causing him to misinterpret or misrepresent the content (Elo et al., 2014). In my case, I made sure to not intentionally omit or ignore any pieces of data. In order to increase the authenticity of the study, I tried to follow the guidelines provided in the

literature on qualitative content analysis (e.g. Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Elo et al., 2014; Graneheim & Lundman, 2004; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005), as well as contact my supervisor whenever I had questions about the research process. The authenticity of the study could have been further strengthened by having multiple researchers participating in the transcribing and analysis processes. Unfortunately, this was not possible in my case.

4.5 Ethics

In this chapter, I will briefly describe the ethical considerations related to this study. This project was reported to the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD) on September 25th 2015. On October 2nd 2014, the NSD approved the project, provided that some minor changes were made to the application (see attachment). The amended application was then returned to NSD on October 6th. The data collection did not start until this process was finalized. Throughout the research process, the regulations provided by the NSD and the Norwegian School of Sport Sciences were followed.

A key principle in all research is the concept of informed consent (Thagaard, 2003). The researcher have to inform the participants of the content of the study, what the results are intended to be used for, as well as any risks or consequences related to participation. In my case, I made sure to provide the participants with as much information as possible from the first time I contacted them. The initial e-mail that was sent to all the qualified participants included information about anonymity and confidentiality, the topic of the study, and how the results would be published. Before the start of the interviews, I once again repeated this information, and asked if they were comfortable with the interviews being recorded. They were also given a letter of information approved by the NSD, including a form for providing their written consent (see attachment). Throughout the process, they were repeatedly informed of their right to withdraw for the study at any point in time without having to provide an explanation. Neither of the coaches decided to exercise this right.

Several measures have been put in place in order to ensure the participants' anonymity.

First of all, nobody has had access to the original recordings from the interviews, except myself, the head researcher. The recordings were stored at a safe and hidden location in my own apartment. During the transcription process, I immediately censored any pieces of information that could be used to directly identify the participants. When using excerpts from the interviews in the paper, no names, dates or club names have been included. Although I wanted to describe the participants as accurately as possible, I still made sure that the given information could not be used to reliably identify any of them. At the end of the research process, I can say that I have done everything in my ability to follow the ethical guidelines associated with qualitative research (Thagaard, 2003).

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6.0 Attachments

Interview guide

Dine mål og ønsker

Hva ønsker treneren å oppnå? Hvorfor takker du ja til en trenerjobb?

Når du starter i en ny klubb

- Samtaler med klubben/ledelsen

    o Hvilke krav blir satt? Hva ønsker ledelsen å oppnå? Hva forventer de av deg?

    o Hva er dine krav? Hvilke forutsetninger bør være til stede? Hva forventer du?

    o (Hvordan presenterer du budskapet ditt? Hvilken visjon presenterer du?)

- Selge inn budskapet til spillerne

    o Hvordan vinner du dem over? Hvordan får du dem til å støtte deg?

Forholdet til ledelsen

- Hvordan forholder du deg til ledelsen i det daglige?

    o Hvordan følger ledelsen med på arbeidet du gjør?

    o Hvem har du kontakt med? Hva snakker dere om?

- Finnes det noen nøkkelpersoner? Personer som er ekstra viktige å ha på din side.

    o Hvem er de? Hva slags stilling har de? Hvorfor er de viktige, og hva er konsekvensen av et godt/dårlig forhold til disse?

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o   Hva slags forhold har dere? Hvordan forholder du deg til dem?

- Opplever du at ledelsen ønsker andre ting enn deg? Forskjellige mål og visjoner?

    o   Hvordan påvirker det deg?

Støtteapparat

- Assistenttrener. Er han håndplukket av deg?

- Er det et problem at assistenttrener ofte overtar etter hovedtrener?

- Hva skjer dersom du er uenig med assistenttreneren i hvordan ting bør gjøres?

Gjøre endringer

- Fortell om hvordan du går frem for å endre kulturen i en klubb. For eksempel: du kommer inn i en klubb og ser at det må gjøres endringer. Hva gjør du?

    o   Hva var målet ditt? Hvordan gikk du frem? Hadde du en plan for hva du skulle gjøre?

    o   Hvordan reagerte folk i klubben? Var det noen som skilte seg ut?

    o   Du har nå vært her i to og et halvt år.

- Hvilke endringer er viktigst å gjennomføre?

    o   Eksempler: Nye treningsmetoder, nye «ordensregler» (alkoholforbud etc.),

- Hvordan går du frem for å gjøre disse?

    o   Hvor fort kan du gå frem? Ser du an spillernes reaksjon?

- Har du noen gang innført upopulære tiltak? Eller endret ting for raskt?

- Møter du motstand fra spillere, støtteapparat eller ledelse?

o Hvordan kommer motstanden til uttrykk?

- Er det deler av filosofien din som er vanskeligere å implementere enn andre?

I perioder med motgang

Hvordan blir du og folk rundt deg påvirket av tunge perioder?

Forståelsen av tingene vi har diskutert

- Hvordan har denne utviklet seg i løpet av karrieren din?

- Pleier du å diskutere situasjoner og løsninger med andre personer? Hvem?

- Er det noe av denne kunnskapen som i større grad bør implementeres i trenerutdanningen?

Forespørsel om deltakelse i forskningsprosjektet

«Norske elitetrenere: innflytelse og arbeidsforhold»

Bakgrunn og formål

Formålet med studien er å finne ut mer om hva trenere i norsk toppidrett gjør for å få gjennomslag for sine ideer. Vi ønsker å undersøke hvordan trenerne går frem for å skaffe seg best mulig arbeidsforhold i klubben de er ansatt i, hva slags motstand de eventuelt møter på, og hvordan de håndterer denne motstanden. Studien er en del av et mastergradsprosjekt ved Norges Idrettshøgskole.

Du har blitt plukket ut som en passende deltaker i studien på grunn av din erfaring som trener på elitenivå i norsk idrett.

Hva innebærer deltakelse i studien?

Dersom du samtykker til å delta i studien, vil vi gjennomføre et 60-90 minutter langt dybdeintervju. Temaet for intervjuet vil være dine erfaringer som trener på elitenivå. Spørsmålene vil blant annet omhandle arbeidsforhold, hvordan du samarbeider med dine over- og underordnede, og hvordan du går frem for å skape endringer i klubben.

Intervjuet vil bli tatt opp ved hjelp av båndopptaker.

Hva skjer med informasjonen om deg?

Alle personopplysninger vil bli behandlet konfidensielt. Bare personer som er direkte involvert i prosjektet (dvs. student og veiledere) vil ha tilgang til personopplysningene dine. Det samme gjelder lydopptaket fra intervjuet.

Den endelige publikasjonen vil inneholde sitater fra intervjuet med deg. Person-, klubb- og stedsnavn vil bli endret for at det ikke skal være mulig å identifisere deg eller andre personer ut fra sitatene.

Prosjektet skal etter planen avsluttes 1. mars 2016. Da vil datamaterialet anonymiseres. Det innebærer at direkte personopplysninger vil bli slettet, og alle indirekte personopplysninger (arbeidssted, alder, kjønn, etc.) vil bli omskrevet slik at enkeltpersoner ikke kan gjenkjennes. Alle lydopptakene vil også bli slettet permanent.

Frivillig deltakelse

Det er frivillig å delta i studien, og du kan når som helst trekke ditt samtykke uten å oppgi noen grunn. Dersom du trekker deg, vil alle opplysninger om deg bli anonymisert.

Dersom du ønsker å delta eller har spørsmål til studien, ta kontakt med student Jørgen Holmemo på telefon (95134461) eller e-post (jorgenh@student.nih.no), eller veileder Frank Abrahamsen på e-post (f.e.abrahamsen@nih.no).

Studien er meldt til Personvernombudet for forskning, Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS.

Samtykke til deltakelse i studien

Jeg har mottatt informasjon om studien, og er villig til å delta

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(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

Frank Eirik Abrahamsen
Seksjon for coaching og psykologi Norges idrettshøgskole
Postboks 4014 Ullevål stadion
0806 OSLO

Vår dato: 01.10.2014   Vår ref: 40008 / 3 / LT   Deres dato: Deres ref:

TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 25.09.2014. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

40008	*The micropolitical literacy of Norwegian elite football coaches*
Behandlingsansvarlig	*Norges idrettshøgskole, ved institusjonens øverste leder*
Daglig ansvarlig	*Frank Eirik Abrahamsen*
Student	*Jørgen Holmemo*

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger er meldepliktig i henhold til personopplysningsloven § 31. Behandlingen tilfredsstiller kravene i personopplysningsloven.

Personvernombudets vurdering forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, ombudets kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/meldeplikt/skjema.html. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, http://pvo.nsd.no/prosjekt.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 01.03.2016, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

Katrine Utaaker Segadal

Lis Tenold

Kontaktperson: Lis Tenold tlf: 55 58 33 77
Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering
Kopi: Jørgen Holmemo jorgenh@student.nih.no
Dokumentet er elektronisk produsert og godkjent ved NSDs rutiner for elektronisk godkjenning.

Personvernombudet for forskning

Prosjektvurdering - Kommentar

Informasjonsskriv og samtykkeerklæring er noe mangelfullt utformet. Vi ber derfor om at følgende endres/tilføyes:

- det må settes inn tittel på norsk
- det avmerkede grå felt på tilsendt utkast må fjernes

Revidert informasjonsskriv skal sendes til personvernombudet@nsd.uib.no før utvalget kontaktes.

Personvernombudet legger til grunn at forsker etterfølger Norges idrettshøgskole sine interne rutiner for datasikkerhet. Dersom personopplysninger skal lagres på mobile enheter, bør opplysningene krypteres tilstrekkelig.

Forventet prosjektslutt er 01.03.2016. Ifølge prosjektmeldingen skal innsamlede opplysninger da anonymiseres. Anonymisering innebærer å bearbeide datamaterialet slik at ingen enkeltpersoner kan gjenkjennes. Det gjøres ved å:

- slette direkte personopplysninger (som navn/koblingsnøkkel)
- slette/omskrive indirekte personopplysninger (identifiserende sammenstilling av bakgrunnsopplysninger som f.eks. bosted/arbeidssted, alder og kjønn)
- slette lydopptak