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Schools, Sports, and Coaching:

“Here Are the Keys to the Gym. Make Sure No One Gets Hurt.”

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the  
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy  
in Gender Studies

by

Fred Ariel Hernandez

2019

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## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Schools, Sports, and Coaching:

“Here Are the Keys to the Gym. Make Sure No One Gets Hurt.”

by

Fred Ariel Hernandez

Doctor of Philosophy in Gender Studies

University of California, Los Angeles, 2019

Professor Sharon J. Traweek, Chair

This dissertation concentrates on the pedagogical decisions of sports coaches and the underlying sports science, in order to analyze larger contemporary concerns about youth athlete safety, coach preparation, and competition-participation conflict in youth sports. I address how disability, class, heteronormative gender roles, and race & ethnicity inflect larger debates on education, competition, and safety. I have three main research topics with subparts: 1) what are the underlying assumptions of the regulatory and education systems for youth athletics, coaching, the high-performance sports industry, and the way those states produce athlete vulnerabilities; 2) how do coed and mixed sports operate within sex segregated sporting models dominant in coaching and sports science and what pedagogic strategies can disrupt such models; and 3) in what ways can concentrating on public school extracurricular sports, instead of high-performance setting, and the everyday circulation patterns of students, faculty, and staff within aging public school infrastructure, uncover sports related school spaces disrupting normal

administrative control. My dissertation is a multi-sited, multi-method project employing principally ethnographic participant-observation fieldwork, archival research, media analysis, and oral history methods. I have more than eight years of ethnographic fieldwork experience at my two primary field sites and shorter fieldwork stints at three sites in Japan. My analytic approach is an intersectional analysis (attentive to structural inequality) using critical race, queer, and crip studies interpretive strategies (centered on the body and heteronormative gendered expectations).

My findings highlight the informal context of most coach education and the mismatch between coaches and the regulatory environments in which they exist. First, in high-performance sports, I document the Larry Nassar scandal and expand the case to indict win-at-all costs pedagogies as complicit with athlete abuse. Second, increasingly high school coaches are considered “walk-on” non-teacher coaches. The increase in non-certified teacher coaches follows an expansion of required online certificates in basic life-saving skills (CPR, First Aid, Mandated Court Reporter for Child Abuse, and others) but not coaching methods. My research found that standardized online coach education does not address the needs of young women, minority, LGBT, and disabled athletes thus leaving coaches ill-equipped to teach diverse students.

The dissertation of Fred Ariel Hernandez is approved.

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University of California, Los Angeles

2019

This dissertation is dedicated to my *abuelas* and *abuelos*.  
To those here and those there.

“We are very, very proud of you.  
Dream high and far. Do your best. Love knowledge.  
God be with you.”

Written by my grandparents,  
on my high school graduation card,  
June 2001.

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# Introduction

## Youth Sports and My Dissertation Topic

### Introduction

The politics, profit, and dangers evident in professional and global sports have filtered down to grassroots, developmental sports associations and public school athletics. As sub-categories of the overall sports world, youth sports emphasize individual development in their means of coaching. This study discards much of that popular reasoning and takes to task the current system's ideological tenets.

This dissertation concentrates on the pedagogical decisions of sports coaches in order to analyze larger contemporary concerns about youth vulnerability, coach preparation, and win-at-all costs competition conflict in youth sports. I address the ways disability, class, heteronormative gender roles, and race & ethnicity inflect larger debates about coach education, win-at-all cost competition, and athlete safety. I have three main groups of research topics and questions: 1) what are the underlying assumptions of the regulatory and education systems for youth athletics, coaching, the high-performance sports industry; 2) how do coed and mixed sports operate within sex segregated sporting models dominant in coaching and sports science; and 3) in what ways can concentrating on public school extracurricular sports, instead of high-performance setting, and the everyday circulation patterns of students, faculty, and staff within aging public school infrastructure, uncover sports related school spaces disrupting normal administrative control. My approach has been to find the way high-performance sports produce athlete vulnerabilities, including greater exposure to potentially abusive settings.

In search for pedagogic strategies can disrupt such models I studied Los Angeles high school coaches to understand their changing education and certification processes within the

public school regulatory system and in this climate of the privatization of high school sports. The majority of high school coaches are no longer teachers or full-time staff members. This is due to stipends being decreased or eliminated in recent years. Instead, schools hire walk-on or non-certified teacher coaches. An increase in this category of coaches is coupled with a dearth of formal, face-to-face sports education and training. Instead, there are an increasing number of required online certifications to teach necessary life-saving skills (CPR, First Aid, Concussion protocols) and other safety measures. The changing personnel and increasing non-sport specific certification requirements leave athletes vulnerable to a myriad of potential threats, including becoming subject to trainers with little education, having no consistent administrative supervision, and enduring dangerous practices.<sup>1</sup>

Based on my research, I found that the regulatory system—replete with online, certification-based, standardized education modules—does not address the needs of women, girls, minority, LGBTQ, and disabled athletes. I argue that current child safety policy, staff regulations, coach education, and coaching science leave practitioners ill-equipped to teach diverse athletes. By taking seriously public school coaching, my research reframes the male athletic bias in the literature and shows the connection between high-performance sports and athlete abuse in the US while staying grounded in the particulars of everyday practice.<sup>2</sup>

Within the shifting roles and expertise necessary to coach, there continues to be a lack of gender diversity documented in the youth sports industry meaning that the field remains male dominated. Additionally, administrative officials often employ coaches who are simply not trained for the all-encompassing role they play, especially with adolescent participants. Nearly

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<sup>1</sup> Sandra Kirby and Guylaine Demers, “Sexual Harassment and Abuse in Sport,” In *Gender Relations in Sport*, ed. E.A. Roper (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2013).

<sup>2</sup> In this dissertation the term *abuse* refers to physical and emotional maltreatment of an individual or group.

sixty percent of all children ranging from six to twelve years of age compete in organized team sports competitions.<sup>3</sup> The large number of young people in the care of coaches should give us pause when we realize that many of these coaches are not prepared for the task. For the current study, I focus primarily on public school sports coaching, but out of necessity I also give an overview of the larger youth sports industry and the field of Coaching Studies.

When visiting the research sites used for this project, I asked athletes, students, parents, teachers, coaches, staff, administrators, and officials to describe the positive benefits of sports participation for youth. The greater percentage of answers followed a general script, mentioning what respondents considered moral and ethical benefits of sports participation. Athletes are consistently taught a slew of character traits that are supposed to build successful adults, and that include lessons in determination, obedience, patience, persistence, independent thinking, hard work, merit-based results, healthy bodies, teamwork, graciousness in defeat, humility when winning, and self-confidence. The implied proposed benefits that are repeatedly emphasized in academic research and popular coaching books mask an increasingly corporatized and privatized agenda that is nonetheless embraced at all levels of youth sports.

### Debating Participation in Youth Sports

According to national research by the Aspen Institute, there has been a steady decline in real numbers of youth sports participation between 2008 and 2017.<sup>4</sup> The report also listed issues regarding coaching staff working without recommended competencies.

One of the largest challenges facing youth sports: finding qualified coaches...seven in 10 youth sports coaches are not trained in...core competencies required to be a qualified coach. Those competencies are general safety and injury

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<sup>3</sup> John Solomon, "7 Charts That Show Why We Need to Fix Youth Sports," The Aspen Institute, September 5, 2017, <https://www.aspeninstitute.org/blog.post/7-charts-show-fix-youth-sports/>. (Accessed June 23, 2019).

<sup>4</sup> Solomon, "7 Charts."



prevention, effective motivational techniques, CPR and basic first aid, physical conditioning, concussion management, and sport-specific skills and tactics...the issue [i]s a public health concern.<sup>5</sup>

As the current badminton head coach at Azusa High School, I personally do not meet these standards, nor do many of my peers. Those that do fulfill these recommended proficiencies are few and far between. In my experience, the recommended standards are not the only predictor of performance.

The report also highlighted several issues within the youth sports industry commenting that current research is primarily aimed at finding the most expedient, consistent, performance-enhancing training protocols. These methods are often solely focused on motivational techniques, physical training and bodily conditioning, and sport-specific capabilities.

Certifications, such as CPR, first aid, concussion symptoms recognition training, and mandated court reporter training, among other certifications, are infrequently considered essential preparation. However, only thirty-five percent of practitioners have sufficient lifesaving certifications.

The focus on only three elements of coaching (motivational techniques, physical training, sport-specific training) is an artificial constraint prioritizing highly competitive, hierarchically positioned team and staff structures within cis-hetero-able-masculine high-performance sport settings.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, the training staff (coaches, skill-specific athletic trainers, weight lifting specialists, and sports injury and recovery professionals) operates within the same social setting.

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<sup>5</sup> Jacob Bogage, "Youth Sports Study: Declining Participation, Rising Costs and Unqualified Coaches," *The Washington Post*, September 6, 2017, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/recruiting-insider/wp/2017/09/06/youth-sports-study-declining-participation-rising-costs-and-unqualified-coaches/?utm\\_term=.21b85876ba80](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/recruiting-insider/wp/2017/09/06/youth-sports-study-declining-participation-rising-costs-and-unqualified-coaches/?utm_term=.21b85876ba80).

<sup>6</sup> The term *cis-hetero-able-masculine* points to the multiple ways systems of power and marginalization are entangled together. Here it is the enmeshment of systems of privilege, including cisgender, heteronormative, able bodied, masculinity.

Currently, the most effective motivational techniques are considered those that elicit competitive success from athletes. The public health crisis identified by the Aspen Group is exacerbated by a lack of attention to coaching and sports experiences, and this very group has highlighted a narrow and abstracted view of the current issues.

In columnist Amanda Ripley's interesting article in *The Atlantic*, "The Case Against High School Sports," she explains the disconnect between schools and sports in the US.<sup>7</sup> Ripley compared the US to other countries around the world, contrasting the amount of attention, time, and resources allocated to sports. She writes, "[s]ports are embedded in American schools in a way they are not almost anywhere else. Yet this difference hardly ever is considered in domestic debates about America's international mediocrity in education."<sup>8</sup> Ripley recounted the story of a Texas high school that was taken over by the state board of education and forced to make drastic cuts and prioritize primary education; the newly installed principal cut the football team. The outcome was (academically) positive, even though athletes, coaches, students, teachers, staff, parents, and community leaders all denounced the principal for these actions. Ripley's argument also cited evidence that teachers who coach tend to have poorer classroom performance (especially during the season of play) than their peers who do not because the required investment of time in sports for competitive success. Teachers had to make a decision on priorities and classroom teaching became secondary to athletics.

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<sup>7</sup> Amanda Ripley, "The Case Against High-School Sports," *The Atlantic*, September 18, 2013, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2013/10/the-case-against-high-school-sports/309447/>. (Accessed June 23, 2019).

<sup>8</sup> Ripley, "Against High School Sports."

Bowen and Hitt argued against Ripley in their own *Atlantic* article, “High-School Sports Aren't Killing Academics.”<sup>9</sup> In it, they responded directly to Ripley’s critique of US high school sports, making the poignant observation that ending high school and public school sports would disproportionately affect low income and poor students as families would have to spend a greater share of their income on private sporting opportunities.<sup>10</sup> Other than this critical point, they only reiterated common platitudes in favor of youth sports:

Despite negative stereotypes about sports culture and Ripley’s presumption that academics and athletics are at odds with one another, we believe that the greater body of evidence shows that school-sponsored sports programs appear to benefit students. Successes on the playing field can carry over to the classroom and vice versa... [and is] imperative to the success of the school as a whole, not just the athletes.<sup>11</sup>

#### *Depictions of Athletes, Sports, and Coaching in Media*

The social benefits believed to accrue from sports participation are well known to individuals with and without sports backgrounds. Popular media and films are full of stories of savior coaches and remarkable athletes overcoming insurmountable obstacles to achieve athletic success. The 1990s cult classic film series *The Mighty Ducks* is one example of these narratives; the athletes are a motley crew of misfits and the coach, initially against the team, eventually finds himself invested in being a good leader to these kids.<sup>12</sup> The films end with the Ducks winning the epic match, and the coach and players being celebrated for their winning efforts.

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<sup>9</sup> Daniel H. Bowen Hitt Colin, “High-School Sports Aren’t Killing Academics,” *The Atlantic*, October 2, 2013, <https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2013/10/high-school-sports-arent-killing-academics/280155/>. (Accessed June 23, 2019).

<sup>10</sup> Nicholas L. Holt et al., “Benefits and Challenges Associated with Sport Participation by Children and Parents from Low-Income Families,” *Psychology of Sport and Exercise* 12, no. 5 (September 1, 2011): 490–99.

<sup>11</sup> Bowen and Hitt. “High-School Sports.”

<sup>12</sup> Emilio Esteves, *The Mighty Ducks* DVD. Directed by Jon Avnet. Hollywood: Buena Vista Pictures, 1992.; D2: *The Mighty Ducks*, accessed June 24, 2019, <https://movies.disney.com/d2-the-mighty-ducks>; D3: *The Mighty Ducks*, accessed June 24, 2019, <https://movies.disney.com/d3-the-mighty-ducks>.; Joshua

Another idealistic coaching film is the 2005 biographical drama *Coach Carter*, in which an African American man returns to his underperforming high school to coach the boys' basketball team.<sup>13</sup> He takes on an unruly team and eventually persuades the athletes to attend their academic courses and commit to their sport. In this story, the coach is portrayed as the vital component between sports participation and high school academic success. He educates athletes on determination, persistence, sacrifice, and belief in a higher purpose. The students do well overall because Coach Carter knows the right balance between high-level athletics and academics. A strong message from the film is that sports participation brings valuable moral and civic development to athletes' lives.

In response to the more fictionalized film versions of youth sports, consider *Friday Night Tykes*, a reality TV show based in Texas that made national headlines and prompted the league to suspend several coaches.<sup>14</sup> The show centered on the world of elite pee-wee football (eight to nine year-old children) in Texas.<sup>15</sup> It documented the world of the players, parents, and staff during a football season. During the episodes, coaches discussed their philosophy and showcased their pedagogical expertise. As one can imagine, the show has moments of beautiful unity illustrating the emotional and physical growth of many athletes.

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Jackson. D3: The Mighty Ducks, DVD, Directed by Sam Weisman, Hollywood: Buena Vista Pictures, 1996.

<sup>13</sup> Samuel L. Jackson, *Coach Carter*, DVD, Directed by Thomas Carter, Hollywood: Paramount Pictures, 2005; Ken Clark "The Real Coach Carter," July, 2017, <https://www.iamtherealsolution.com/keystowealth>. (Accessed June 24, 2019).

<sup>14</sup> Bob Cook, "Friday Night Tykes' Coaches Suffer for Showing How Football Sausage Is Made," *Forbes*, February 5, 2014, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/bobcook/2014/02/05/friday-night-tykes-coaches-suffer-for-showing-how-football-sausage-is-made/#6b7594ab3383>. (Accessed June 28, 2019).

<sup>15</sup> Fox Sports, "Friday Night Tykes' Is the Most Depressing Show on Television," *FOX Sports*, January 15, 2014, <http://www.foxsports.com/buzzer/story/friday-night-tykes-is-the-most-depressing-show-on-television-011514>. (Accessed June 28, 2019).

The show also documents evidence to the contrary. One of the most widely condemned instances centered on the Junior Broncos' head coach, Charles Chavarria. During a key game in a losing season, Chavarria instructed his star defensive end to use an illegal tackling method on an opposing player. Chavarria told the player he did not "care if [the other player] doesn't get up."<sup>16</sup> The show is a perfect example of the effects of the confluence of commercialized, adult-run, high-performance sports on children. The league eventually banned Chavarria because of his actions. The previously cited films unquestionably maintain the centrality of competitive performance. However, *Friday Night Tykes*, in my assessment, is much more realistic. The show has numerous examples of trainers in this high-performance league fostering unsafe motivational techniques, encouraging dangerous physical conditioning, and implementing short-sighted sport-specific skills and tactics.

How many more hours of footage is there of coaches abusing young football players that did not make the show, I wonder? To get some idea, all one has to do is search for video clips of abusive coaches on *YouTube*. Just as cell phone cameras have now corroborated the long-dismissed complaints of police brutality and profiling within communities of color, we need to rethink what we consider the everyday practice of coaches.<sup>17</sup> I claim that the average experience of young athletes is of abuse by their coaches. I understand this seems counterintuitive and contrary to much of the established literature that links sports participation to numerous benefits

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<sup>16</sup> Lorne Chan, "Friday Night Tykes' Coaches Suspended," San Antonio Express-News, January 31, 2014, <https://www.mysanantonio.com/news/local/article/Friday-Night-Tykes-coaches-suspended-5190766.php>. (Accessed June 28, 2019).

<sup>17</sup> Madeline Blair, "Caught on Camera: Police Abuse in the U.S.," *WITNESS Media Lab* (blog), September 8, 2015, <https://lab.witness.org/caught-on-camera-police-abuse-in-the-u-s/>. (Accessed June 28, 2019).

including, social inclusion, enhanced academic performance, and violence reduction, but I have found it to be true.<sup>18</sup>

### *Responses by Researchers*

In the essay “Youth Sports: What Counts as ‘Positive Development?’” sports sociologist Jay Coakley conducted a comprehensive literature review.<sup>19</sup> The author concluded that positive development through sports participation is encapsulated between two rhetorical poles, one defined by sports participation helping privileged youth develop, maintain, and accelerate their socialization into privilege, and the other defined by using sports participation as crime and violence reduction schemes in at-risk communities. In a key passage, Coakley explains that the evidence of positive personal development as a result of sports participation is scant:

The relationship between sport participation, educational achievement, social capital formation, and personal success has more often been the focus of personal testimonials than social research. Tracking and measuring changes in social capital and associated life chances along with their real-life consequences over time is methodologically challenging. It is difficult to analytically separate the developmental changes related to sport participation from more general developmental changes in young people’s lives.<sup>20</sup>

Like many other adults, I have an idealized version of my youth sporting experience. I remember many positive reasons why I initially joined sports. However, I am also quickly reminded of the abuse I suffered because of my weight, race, and ethnicity, family income, and incapacity to meet performance standards. If we expand our notion of abuse to include unsafe training methods, improper motivational techniques, and win-at-all-cost approaches, then at least for athletes in team sports the shared experience is one in which there are many opportunities for

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<sup>18</sup> Simon C. Darnell, “Power, Politics and ‘Sport for Development and Peace’: Investigating the Utility of Sport for International Development,” *Sociology of Sport Journal* 27, no. 1 (March 1, 2010): 54–75.

Alexis Lyras, “Olympism in Practice: Psychosocial Impacts of an Educational Sport Initiative on Greek and Turkish Cypriot Youth,” *ICHPER-SD Journal of Research* 7, no. 1 (n.d.): 46–54.

<sup>19</sup> Jay Coakley, “Youth Sports: What Counts as ‘Positive Development?’” *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 35, no. 3 (August 2011): 306–24, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0193723511417311>.

<sup>20</sup> Coakley, “Youth Sports, What Counts as ‘Positive Development?’”

abuse to occur. For athletes, their everyday experience is one of multiple and generalized forms of vulnerability.<sup>21</sup>

Those athletes who are the best in their sports, nationally, globally, and professionally, are not immune to abuse. While the effects of an abuser such as Larry Nassar are without comparison, the common effects of abuse on athletes are rarely studied.<sup>22</sup> Authors Stirling and Kerr conducted research focused on highly competitive settings and analyzed the consequences of emotional abuse on top-level athletes. They found that emotional abuse toward athletes negatively affected athletic performance, noting that

[a]thletes discussed perceived psychological effects (low mood, anger, low self-efficacy, low self-esteem, anxiety, sense of accomplishment), training effects (increased motivation, decreased motivation, reduced enjoyment, impaired focus, difficulty with skill acquisition), and performance effects (performance decrements, enhanced performance) of their experiences of emotional abuse.<sup>23</sup>

The specifics of psychological and emotional abuse cited, such as training mismanagement and inappropriate performance standards, apply to a broad definition of coaching activity.

Similarly, Stirling and Kerr interviewed retired national and international level athletes who had competed in a variety of Olympic style sports (i.e.: swimming, track and field).<sup>24</sup> Similar to their previous study, the authors found that abusive or aggressive communication toward athletes negatively affected their relationships and competitiveness. The authors

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<sup>21</sup> Sandra Kirby and Guylaine Demers, “Sexual Harassment And Abuse in Sport,” In *Gender Relations in Sport*, ed. E.A. Roper (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2013).

<sup>22</sup> Larry Nassar was a former US Gymnastics national team doctor and practicing osteopathic physician at Michigan State University. In 2017 and 2018, during a series of trials, Nassar was sentenced to several hundred years in prison, state and federal, for the numerous charges including child pornography and sexual assault of minors. This scandal is covered in depth in this dissertation.

<sup>23</sup> Ashley E. Stirling and Gretchen A. Kerr, “The Perceived Effects of Elite Athletes’ Experiences of Emotional Abuse in the Coach–Athlete Relationship,” *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology* 11, no. 1 (March 2013): 87.

<sup>24</sup> Ashley E. Stirling and Gretchen A. Kerr, “Abused Athletes’ Perceptions of the Coach-Athlete Relationship,” *Sport in Society* 12, no. 2 (March 2009): 227–39.

remarked, “our findings suggest that coaches who communicated more aggressively were perceived as less favorable...and consequently those athletes exhibited less sportsmanship, were less satisfied with their coaches, and were less successful in terms of win-loss percentage.”<sup>25</sup> The authors concluded that any performance improvements believed to be a result of aggressive communication, measurable or attributed, come at a cost paid primarily by the athletes.<sup>26</sup>

There also is tremendous attention to league administration in popular media describing the ways common issues affect umpires and officials. A recent news report profiled several youth sports umpires about their jobs.<sup>27</sup> In their interviews, each of them returned to three major factors which affected their umpiring and the possibility of resuming the role. First, the umpires explained that the leagues rely on volunteer labor to fulfill key positions and this can lead to miscommunication for which officials are blamed. Second, pay fluctuations make umpiring unreliable. Third, many umpires have experienced violence, threats of violence to themselves and family, and stalking after games. Umpires also lament that in the age of cell phone cameras, angry bystanders, parents, and even team staff will request umpires to review footage against an undesirable ruling. For umpires, these are problematic issues interfering with their love of the game and their desire to provide a safe environment for children’s sports.

Returning to the Aspen report and the desire to find the best motivational techniques, physical training regimens, and sport-specific tactics, it seems that the absence of life-saving certifications (including mandated court reporter training) within typical high-performance-

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<sup>25</sup> Jeffrey W. Kassing and Dominic A. Infante, “Aggressive Communication in the Coach - athlete Relationship,” *Communication Research Reports* 16, no. 2 (March 1999): 116–17.

<sup>26</sup> Jeffrey W. Kassing and Dominic Infante, “Coaches may believe that aggressive communication is necessary to improve performance, but these communication choices may come at the expense of sportsmanship and player satisfaction,” *Communication Research*, 19, no. 9, 117.

<sup>27</sup> Jim Baumbach, “Verbal Abuse Blamed for Decline in HS Refs, Umpires,” *Newsday*, May 27, 2019 <https://www.newsday.com/sports/high-school/high-school-umpires-referees-officials-1.31620328>. (Accessed June 24, 2019).



related research is central to the current troubles confronting youth sports in the US. In this section, I have examined critical debates surrounding the youth sports industry in popular media and traditional academic scholarship. I highlighted the positioning of coaches and athletes within a system that produces vulnerabilities vis-à-vis each other. The reviewed research indicates that the hierarchical forms of current mainstream coaching, education, and development of pedagogical material are separated from on the ground experiences. In subsequent chapters, I review questions of athlete vulnerability, coaching science, and regulations. The next section gives historical background and critical context regarding the rise of the modern youth sports industry.

### Ethnographic History of Youth Sports

This section reads extracurricular athletics and private youth sports organizations through the lenses of Feminist theory, Ethnic Studies, Disability Studies, Physical Education Studies, Sociology of Sport, legal frameworks, newspaper articles, and other popular media. It uses relevant data and literature to analyze the relationship between sports and sport participation as an avenue to power. These same disciplines have shown that sports proponents claim that sports instill in players a morality based on free and fair competition between adversaries linked to ideals of nationalism and patriotism, capitalism (survival of the fittest and idealization of competition), democracy (choice of professional teams and choice of players on the market). Coaches are then expected to help their teams win at all costs and to improve their teams' athletic achievement as proof of their labor.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Messner, M. A. *It's All for the Kids: Gender, Families and Youth Sports*. (Fairfield: University of California Press, 2009); Jennifer Hargreaves, 'Women's Boxing and Related Activities: Introducing Images and Meanings, *Body & Science*, 3, no. 4, 33-49; Megan Chawansky, "That Takes Balls: Toward a Feminist Coaching Methodology," *Women's Studies Quarterly*, 33, 1/2:105.

Physical education and extracurricular athletics were developed at the beginning of the twentieth century. The rise of institutional physical education in public schools alongside private youth sports organizations has significant implications for understanding the trends and developments of the most recent twenty to thirty years. Today, commercialized and privatized youth sports have enormous power over the direction of the industry in America. The social function of public and private youth sports leagues has been debated over the past century. Public school extracurricular sports, part of the physical education curriculum, has also changed over the past century. There exists a significant body of literature, academic and non-academic, confirming and proscribing extracurricular sports as a panacea for society's ills.<sup>29</sup>

Engagement in gym, field, court, or track sports is not limited to school sites. Sports activities tie communities together in ways that cross boundaries of language, class, race, gender, immigration, and colonial status. Likewise, sports also reinforce these very systems of power.<sup>30</sup> This section considers the approaches that sports organizations use to socialize youth into becoming good citizens. In this process of socializing for citizenship, the coach is the key player; closer examination of the coach enables us to understand how systems of power deploy sports as a normalizing practice. More specifically, understanding youth sports coaching enables us to discern the state of extracurricular athletics fifteen years after the passage of the No Child Left

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<sup>29</sup> Robert K. Fullenwider, "Sports, Youth and Character: A Critical Survey, Sport and Peace," *CIRCLE* Working Paper 44, 2006.

<sup>30</sup> Allen Guttmann, "The Development of Modern Sports," *Handbook of Sports Studies*. Ed. Jay Coakley, and Eric Dunning. London: SAGE Publications Ltd, (2000): 248-61. Hargreaves, "Women's Boxing and Related Activities: Introducing Images and Meanings."

Behind Act by the George W. Bush administration.<sup>31</sup> The enduring effects of this act have implications for sports education, youth coaching, and physical education fields.<sup>32</sup>

### *PE and Private Leagues*

The public education system is a powerful site of socialization for the youth of the United States, as it is also in other countries.<sup>33</sup> During the 1890s to 1900s, metropolitan areas like New York City built huge public school systems.<sup>34</sup> As the public school systems began to standardize curriculum, physical education (PE) became an integral part of that curriculum and the broader public school system and its goals.<sup>35</sup> At the outset, PE was established specifically to keep boys healthy by learning and playing various sports, and in so doing to inculcate in them specific moral and civic qualities (as defined by educators and politicians at the time).<sup>36</sup> By the 1920s, schools likewise included girls in PE and extracurricular sports. New York public schools became the first to create official scholastic sports leagues.<sup>37</sup> Private youth sports leagues were established at about the same time.

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<sup>31</sup> Eitzen, D. S. (2000). Social control and sport. *Handbook of sports studies*, 370-381f

<sup>32</sup> Joan Henley, and Julie Milligan. "Robbing elementary students of their childhood: The perils of No Child Left Behind." *Education* 128, no. 1 (2007): 56.

<sup>33</sup> Samuel Bowles, and Herbert Gintis, "Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life," *Haymarket Books*, 2011.; Bell Hooks, "Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope," *Psychological Press*, 36, (2003).

<sup>34</sup> Bowles and Gintis, "Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life."

<sup>35</sup> Pete C. McIntosh, *Landmarks in the History of Physical Education* (Boston: Routledge, 2004).

<sup>36</sup> Clifford Putney, *Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880-1920*. (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2009).

<sup>37</sup> Robert Pruter, *The Rise of American High School Sports and the Search for Control, 1880-1930*, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2013).

By the 1920s, scholastic sports for girls existed in most cities.<sup>38</sup> This trend foreshadowed the eventual introduction of women's sports. Following the post-WWII surge of federal funding for social infrastructures such as highways, housing, and education, high school scholastic sports became an arena for showcasing the health and physical fitness of America's boys and girls.<sup>39</sup> Long-running and influential scholastic leagues, such as the Girl's Athletic Association (GAA) institutionalized scholastic sports for girls. In the beginning, these leagues relied exclusively on private donors for funding, as state funding was largely non-existent in the post-war era.<sup>40</sup>

After the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, the numbers of youth enrolled in scholastic sports exploded.<sup>41</sup> During this time, virtually all women's sports leagues and associations were incorporated into previously male-only and male-run sports associations, such as the NCAA. This transition was highly contentious. Organizations like the GAA had been established as avenues for girls and young women to have access to the benefits of sport participation. A product of gender discrimination, these leagues historically had claimed that allegedly natural binary gender differences justified different association.<sup>42</sup> In practice, this meant competitive restraint in the form of rule differences between girls' and boys' basketball games, or softball/baseball, for example, the athletic or physical

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<sup>38</sup> Putney (2013), Hargreaves, "Women's Boxing and Related Activities: Introducing Images and Meanings; Jennifer A. Hargreaves, "Gender on the sports agenda," *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 25, no. 4 (1990): 287-307; Wiggins, David (2013) - A Worthwhile Effort? History of Organized Sport in the United States, *Kinesiology Review*.

<sup>39</sup> Massey, Douglas S., and Nancy A. Denton. *American apartheid: Segregation and the making of the underclass*. Harvard University Press, 1993.

<sup>40</sup> Cain, Patricia A., "Women, Race, and Sports: Life before Title IX", 4 *J. Gender Race & Just.* 337 2000-2001

<sup>41</sup> Messner (2009), Michael A. Messner & Michela Musto (2014) "Where are the kids?" *Sociology of Sport Journal* 31: 102-122.

<sup>42</sup> Cain (2001), Hargreaves (1997), Messner (2009), Hult, Joan S., and Marianna Trezell. *A Century of Women's Basketball. From Frailty to Final Four*. AAHPERD Publications Sales, 1900 Association Drive, Reston, VA 22901., 1991. p62

expectations for girls being set considerably lower than for boys.<sup>43</sup> In addition, governing bodies enforced rules, such as playing more female players during games and/or each player having more equal play time. Cooperation was prioritized over aggression and competitive methods.<sup>44</sup>

Participation in private and corporate youth sports leagues skyrocketed in the 1990s.<sup>45</sup> Yet although participation among both boys and girls jumped, groups were still significantly stratified along axes of race, class, and disability.<sup>46</sup> Critics of the rise in national private youth sport organizations have dubbed it the “youth sports industry.”<sup>47</sup> From this time on, the business of sports began to prey on the educational, financial, and professional aspirations of players and their parents by linking sports participation with college scholarships and dreams of upward social mobility.<sup>48</sup> It is clear in the research that substantial numbers of US high school students have participated in organized scholastic sports.<sup>49</sup>

The outcomes of youths’ increased participation in sports are not easily defined. Sports psychologists have determined that organized youth sport participation has a variety of effects on athletes, which include enhanced academic interest and success.<sup>50</sup> Many researchers argued that

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<sup>43</sup> Hult, Joan S., and Marianna Trekell. *A Century of Women's Basketball. From Frailty to Final Four*. AAHPERD Publications, 1991.

<sup>44</sup> Hult and Trekell, *A Century of Women's Basketball. From Frailty to Final Four*.

<sup>45</sup> Messner, *It's All for the Kids: Gender, Families and Youth Sports*.

<sup>46</sup> Messner, French, David, and Jenny Hainsworth. "There aren't any buses and the swimming pool is always cold!: obstacles and opportunities in the provision of sport for disabled people." *Managing Leisure* 6, no. 1 (2001): 35–49; Weiss, Jonathan, Terry Diamond, Jenny Demark, and Benedicte Lovald. "Involvement in Special Olympics and its relations to self-concept and actual competency in participants with developmental disabilities." *Research in Developmental Disabilities* 24, no. 4 (2003): 281–305.

<sup>47</sup> “Wade Gilbert is the “Coach Doc,” 2003, *ASEP* <http://www.asep.com/news/ShowArticle.cfm?ID=237>.

<sup>48</sup> Brendan Hokowhitu, “Tackling Maori Masculinity,” *The Contemporary Pacific*, Volume 16, Number 2, Fall 2004, pp. 259-284.

<sup>49</sup> Messner, *It's All for the Kids: Gender, Families and Youth Sports*.

<sup>50</sup> Fejgin, Naomi. "Participation in high school competitive sports: A subversion of school mission or contribution to academic goals." *Contemporary issues in sociology of sport* (2001): 95–108; Eitzen, D.

the benefits of sports leagues are positive, and referred to participants learning moral, ethical, and civic qualities such as hard work, teamwork, determination, leadership, among a litany of other qualities that have come to represent our social understanding of the value of sport participation.<sup>51</sup> As a result, in the US the use of sports education to teach normalized societal roles is deeply embedded. For example, Catholic Missions and the federally instituted re-education schools for kidnapped and captured indigenous youth forced them to engage in physical education. Systems like this became the blueprints for this generally accepted narrative (one that relies on federal funding) of the positive social value of sport participation for building future model citizens.<sup>52</sup>

Yet some youth sports researchers have demonstrated that organized youth sports can adversely affect the bodies, minds, and societal values of children. Stories from athletes and parents in oral histories and popular media corroborate the potentially and actually negative effects of youth sports participation.<sup>53</sup> These include emotional distress, social isolation, violence (personal, social, sexual, physical, emotional), and anxiety.<sup>54</sup>

Despite these critiques, there are still record numbers of American children enrolled in organized youth sports. Organized sports often begin for children during elementary school

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Stanley. "Upward mobility through sports? The myths and realities." *Sport in contemporary society: An anthology* (2005): 256-262.

<sup>51</sup> Taras, Howard. "Physical activity and student performance at school." *Journal of school health* 75, no. 6 (2005): 214-218.

<sup>52</sup> Bloom, John. *To show what an Indian can do: Sports at Native American boarding schools*. U of Minnesota Press, 2000.; Mary, G. "Intersectionality and Sport: Representing Shoni Schimmel, "Rez ball" and the Native American Imaginary." (2016).

<sup>53</sup> Messner and Musto, "Where are the kids?" (2014); Kirby, Demers & Parent. "Vulnerability/Prevention: Considering the Needs of Disabled and Gay Athletes in the Context of Sexual Harassment and Abuse" *IJSEP*, 2008; *Friday Night Tykes*. Esquire Network, 2014 to present.

<sup>54</sup> Pascoe, Cheri J. *Dude, You're a Fag: Masculinity and Sexuality in High School* (Univ of California Press, 2011); Timothy Jon Curry, "Fraternal Bonding in the Locker Room: A Profeminist Analysis of Talk about Competition and Women.," *Sociology of Sport Journal* 8, no. 2 (1991).

through the YMCA and community recreational leagues. Privately run youth sport organizations, like the American Youth Soccer Organization, Little League, and the United States Youth Volleyball League, have team options for athletes up to eighteen years old. Many groups also offer limited programming for athletes with disabilities. Public schools begin official interscholastic competition in middle or junior high schools, culminating in varsity sports at high schools. Because public and private organizations are competing for many of the same athletes and practice and game time slots, private organizations typically schedule their competitions based on the sports schedule of the public schools. The outcome of this American system of youth sports is an ever-increasing circulation of players and coaches rotating between private organizations and public schools.<sup>55</sup> Many players, families, and staff recount how private sports club experience is now a virtual prerequisite for playing time on high school teams—a reality that puts economically less well-off families/youth at a distinct disadvantage.<sup>56</sup>

#### *Title IX, the NCLB Act, and Opening the Market*

For all its benefits, Title IX has been justly critiqued for addressing the needs of and advocating for the middle class, the educated, and white women over women of color, low-income individuals, and working-class women.<sup>57</sup> Yet the majority of funding, scholarship opportunities, and training positions created by Title IX were designated for sports that attract primarily white women. The historically male-run youth sport organizations also benefited from Title IX's enactment. Overall, it laid the foundation for a multi-million-dollar youth sports industry, the takeover of all youth coaching by sport-specific professionals, and institutionalized

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<sup>55</sup> Amanda Ripley, "The Case Against High-School Sports."

<sup>56</sup> Sullivan, Paul. "The Rising Costs of Youth Sports, in Money and Emotion." *New York Times online*. <http://mobile.nytimes.com/2015/01/17/your-money/rising-costs-of-youth-sports.html>

<sup>57</sup> Cain, "Women, Race, and Sport: Life before Title IX."

sports participation for girls and boys. Therefore, although in some ways Title IX benefited the youth sports industry tremendously, its largely negative and discriminatory economic consequences on youth sports are only now being realized and discussed openly.

During the 1990s, private youth sport organizations began to experience increased athlete participation rates.<sup>58</sup> The coaches in private leagues are sport-specific. This is different from the (schools') physical education model that relies on the educator's ability to coach multiple sports.<sup>59</sup> By the mid-2000s, US public schools were forced to comply with another piece of legislation, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) passed in 2001. The NCLB emphasized funding for science, technology, engineering, and math subjects (i.e. STEM fields). This emphasis eventually led to decreased or complete elimination of art and music funding.<sup>60</sup> In a few cases, sports were likewise completely eliminated from school budgets to make monies available for STEM programs, but the vast majority of schools managed to maintain their sports programs, even in the face of stringent test-based funding criteria.<sup>61</sup> Because schools had fewer funds to support extracurricular scholastic sports, wages for coaches remained stagnant, fell, or were eliminated. There was also a generational change in PE teachers at high schools. As a consequence of changing curriculum at the university level, many newer teachers had sport-specific knowledge but lacked the ability to teach multiple sports.<sup>62</sup> With fewer teachers coaching, and even fewer competent across multiple sports, more than ever before athletic

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<sup>58</sup> Messner, *It's All for the Kids: Gender, Families and Youth Sports*.

<sup>59</sup> Personal communication, Steve Meckna. July, 2016.

<sup>60</sup> Vincent, Ryan S. "No Child Left Behind, Only the Arts and Humanities: Emerging Inequalities in Education Fifty Years After Brown." *Washburn LJ* 44 (2004): 127.

<sup>61</sup> Ripley, "The Case Against High-School Sports." "...boy the superintendent brought in to rescue one tiny rural school district did something insanely rational...[he] suspended all sports -- including football." <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2013/10/the-case-against-high-school-sports/309447/>

<sup>62</sup> Personal communication, Steve Meckna, Cal State Long Beach.



administrators were forced to hire coaches from off campus. Certainly, there had always been walk-on coaches, but the numbers suddenly became significantly higher than in the past.<sup>63</sup> As of 2015, more than 50 percent of public school sports coaches in the Los Angeles Unified School District were non-teachers.<sup>64</sup>

Due to the decreased funding for public school sports, schools are now forced to rely on personnel with typically no education or teaching background. The boom in private sports leagues has provided a base of sport-specific coaches ready to move into these positions at high schools. Because the vast majority of school sites contract the same third-party companies for their certification process, and because most coaches are sport-specific, the coaching training for new staff is now largely the same across public and private institutions.<sup>65</sup> There is no research on the number of coaches circulating between public and private sports leagues, but informal estimates place the percentage very high.<sup>66</sup> In short, the result of public school funding changes, significant youth sport growth, and the passage of Title IX, is the professional model of coaching that now dominates American youth sports.

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<sup>63</sup> This is especially true for freshman and junior varsity teams

<sup>64</sup> Eric Sondheimer, "LAUSD is making a mistake by relying too much on walk-on coaches," *LA Times*, 2015, <http://www.latimes.com/sports/highschool/la-sp-high-schools-sondheimer-20150302-column.html>

<sup>65</sup> My school district, and all districts that participate in California InterScholastic Federation (CIF), the governing body for High school sports, use the same online course developed by Human Kinetics. This company produces the majority of coach education in the United States. I purpose an archival investigation of Human Kinetics and the changes in coach education and regulation.

<sup>66</sup> Eric Sondheimer. Personal communication with coaches at other schools, my own circle of professional coaches also moves between high school and elite settings.

## Preliminary Descriptions of Field Sites

I turn in this section to give a short description of my primary research sites and of several secondary ones. My primary research site is Azusa High School in the City of Azusa, California. My secondary site is Long Beach Polytechnic High School in Long Beach, California. I also conducted preliminary field site investigations at several locations in Japan. Each site is described below to provide relevant information for this study. Further analysis of these sites and the findings of my research are presented in subsequent chapters.

### *Azusa High School*

Azusa High School is a public high school in the Azusa Unified School District in the city of Azusa, CA. There are three high schools in the district, Azusa High being the oldest, having been built in 1956. The National Center for Education Statistics reported that between 2016 and 2017 the high school served almost 1,300 students, 91 percent of whom were identified as Hispanic, and that approximately one thousand of the 1,300 students received free or reduced-price lunches. Enrollment of girls and boys was roughly equal.<sup>67</sup>

I was a student at Azusa High from 1997 to 2001 and played on the badminton team all four years. My sisters, aunts, and uncles also graduated from Azusa High. Subsequently, I have been employed as the head badminton coach for eight consecutive years under three different school administrations. Badminton is the only coed sports team at the high school; for six of the last eight years, the badminton team has been the league champion and has qualified for post-season playoffs every year. In 2019, the team reached the playoff finals.<sup>68</sup> In total, I have

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<sup>67</sup> “Search for Public-schools - School Detail for Azusa High,” accessed June 19, 2019, [https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/school\\_detail.asp?Search=1&DistrictID=0603600&ID=0603600002](https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/school_detail.asp?Search=1&DistrictID=0603600&ID=0603600002)

<sup>68</sup> “CIF-SS Badminton,” accessed June 19, 2019, <http://www.cifssbadminton.org/>.

therefore been connected to the Azusa badminton team for more than twenty years. I discuss the school site more thoroughly in chapter two.

The city of Azusa sits at the northeast corner of the San Gabriel Valley, at the base of the San Gabriel Mountains and the Angeles National Forest. The city occupies the land of the Tongva who lived in the area before European colonization. Incorporated in 1898, Azusa was part of the famous Southern California citrus belt and honeybee farming enterprise until the 1950s.<sup>69</sup> The agricultural industry brought immigrant and working-class people together in growing communities within the boundaries of the city. The 1930s insurance redlining map of Azusa highlights the racist residential segregation policies operating at the time. These maps are remarkably similar to current housing patterns.<sup>70</sup> During the past decade, new growth and investment in city infrastructure has concentrated in the area near Azusa Pacific University. The university is a small, private, and religious institution located along Citrus Avenue, about one mile from the house in which I grew up. The investment has primarily benefited the students of the university and surrounding businesses, rather than other local citizens and school children.

At the high school, my main informants were: coaches (past and present), girls' and boys' locker room staff, campus security guards (not the police officer stationed on campus), campus financial accounts office staff, bus drivers, administrative office staff, main office staff, the principal, vice-principal of athletics, Physical Education (PE) teachers, non-PE teachers, the athletic trainer (when the position was staffed), evening and night custodial staff, and the school's Athletic Director. For most my fieldwork, the same people held these positions, with

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<sup>69</sup> *The Canyon City...Azusa is on the MAP!* (1950s Azusa brochure)  
<https://www.ci.azusa.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/7288/Azusa-1950s?bidId=>

<sup>70</sup> Mosavi Sayedah, "White Pride of the Foothills: Redlining in Glendora, Covina and Azusa," *Citrus College Clarion*, August 28, 2018, <http://www.ccclarion.com/2018/08/28/white-pride-foothills-redlining-glendora-covina-azusa/>.

few exceptions. In fact, most personnel change happened at the top of the hierarchy—namely with the principal and vice-principals.

*Long Beach Polytechnic High School (LB or Poly)*

LB Poly is a public school in the Long Beach Unified School District. The school was opened in 1895, with major reconstruction occurring during the 1930s thanks to financial help from the Public Works Administration.<sup>71</sup> During the 2016–2017 school year, Poly served 4,202 students, of whom 2,800 had free or reduced fee lunches. Then and now, enrollment of girls and boys is approximately equal. Poly has been considered one of the nation’s best high school sports programs. Indeed, in 2005, *Sports Illustrated* magazine named Poly’s high school athletic program as the best in the nation.<sup>72</sup>

I was introduced to the head Poly badminton coach, Steve Meckna, while I was playing for Azusa. As my younger sisters also played badminton, I visited and spoke with Steve after I graduated. My sister was close friends with several members of Poly’s team. Now, as head coach at Azusa, I have continued my personal friendship with Steve. After taking over the program at Azusa, I often called Steve to ask his opinion regarding training techniques. I even attended Poly’s 5:30 a.m. weekday practices to learn from Steve. Suffice it to say that over the past twenty years my friendship with Steve has deepened as I have assumed more responsibility for the Azusa team.

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<sup>71</sup> J. B. Bennington, Zenia Sacks DaSilva, and Michael D’Innocenzo, *The 1930s: The Reality and the Promise* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016), 75.

<sup>72</sup> Alan Shipnuck, “The 25 Best High School Athletic Programs,” *Vault*, 2005, <https://www.si.com/vault/2005/05/16/8260841/the-25-best-high-school-athletic-programs>.

## Discussion of Research Methods

There is a broad array of qualitative and quantitative social science research methods available, including historical archive research, surveys, interviews, ethnography, conversation analysis, focus groups, demographic studies, observational studies and oral histories. In this section, I briefly highlight accepted research methods in Coaching Studies and how these methods are applied to this study. I will then give a brief explanation of several methods I chose to use and discuss my methods more fully in later chapters. Finally, I provide an overview of my research sites and discuss my ethnographic and interview method selection based on three texts.

### *Accepted Research Methods in Coaching Studies*

The field of Coaching Studies has shifted methodologically since the 1980s. The field began as an applied practice that developed ways of observing and measuring specific sequential activities.<sup>73</sup> These studies led to the institutional development of coach education pedagogy, based on discrete and reproducible interactions between the coach and athlete dyad. Studies using survey methods, sports psychology, and rigidly defined models dominated Coaching Studies throughout the 1990s.<sup>74</sup>

By the early 2000s, sociologists had moved the field from modeling to describing the intricate and heterogeneous practices of coaching.<sup>75</sup> The central debates included embedded and highly contextualized methodologies. Published in 2004 by Robyn Jones, Kathleen Armour, and Paul Potrac, *Sports Coaching Cultures* is an excellent example of the sociological turn in the

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<sup>73</sup> Fairs, John R., "The coaching process: The essence of coaching." *Sports Coach* 11, no. 1 (1987): 17-19.

<sup>74</sup> Côté, J, Salmela, J, Trudel, P, Baria, A and Russell, S. The coaching model: A grounded assessment of expert gymnastic coaches' knowledge." *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 1995.

<sup>75</sup> C. Sherman, B. Crassini, W. Maschette, and R Sands, "Instructional sport psychology: A reconceptualisation of sports coaching as sports instruction." *International Journal of Sport Psychology*, 1997.

field.<sup>76</sup> The book is organized by interviews of eight elite coaches, six men, and two women. By describing each coach's unique path to their profession, the authors demonstrated the value of sociological research of coaching. These studies reoriented the field toward centering context and heterogeneity as opposed to modular understandings. The move from individual and static models to more heterogenous and holistic descriptions coincided with researchers exploring pedagogical expertise from Physical Education Studies.<sup>77</sup>

There are a few studies that highlight methods used in Coaching Studies that are relevant to my research. For instance, Megan Chawansky's 2005 article, "That Takes Balls: Toward a Feminist Coaching Methodology," interrogated coaching pedagogy via feminist ethics.<sup>78</sup> In the article, Chawansky recounts her experience coaching an NCAA Division II women's basketball for two consecutive years.<sup>79</sup> She discusses her public use of feminist pedagogy and administrative critiques. Methodologically, Chawansky shifts between an institutional ethnography of her position in the sports hierarchy at the university and a historical analysis of feminist coaching practices. She calls for further research investigating feminist possibilities in sports coaching. Chawansky's methods are appropriate for how I situate myself vis-à-vis the institutional structure of public schools and offer a critique of dominant coaching methodology.

Micah Gilmer's 2009 master's thesis at Duke University is another notable work in Coaching Studies. Gilmer's study, titled "'You Got to Have a Heart of Stone to Work Here':

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<sup>76</sup> Jones, Robyn L., Kathleen M. Armour, and Paul Potrac, *Sports coaching cultures: From practice to theory*. Psychology Press, 2004.

<sup>77</sup> Lemyre, François, Pierre Trudel, and Natalie Durand-Bush, "How youth-sport coaches learn to coach." *The sport psychologist* 21, no. 2 (2007): 191-209.

<sup>78</sup> Parent, Sylvie, and Kristine Fortier, "Comprehensive overview of the problem of violence against athletes in sport." *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 42, no. 4 (2018): 227-246; Chawansky, "That Takes Balls"; Megan Chawansky, "The Recruit," *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health* 3, no. 1 (March 2011): 1-8, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19398441.2010.541930>.

<sup>79</sup> Chawansky, "That Takes Balls," p105.

Coaching, Teaching, and ‘Building Men’ at Eastside High,” was the result of a year-long ethnographic study of high school football coaches, all African American men, at one site.<sup>80</sup>

Gilmer is an ex-college football player who began coaching while in graduate school because he missed the camaraderie and relationships sports provided him. Gilmer’s goal for his research was “to serve as a resource in helping educators, scholars, direct service practitioners, philanthropists, and policy advocates better understand the complex ways in which Black male educators and mentors engage with their younger counterparts.”<sup>81</sup> In the yearlong project, Gilmer drew on field notes, informal conversations, and focus groups.

I draw from Gilmer’s work for both personal and scholarly reasons, and I identify with his life as a retired elite athlete (in his case collegiate football) returning to higher education to study public school sports coaching. As an assistant coach, Gilmer also committed to a long-term ethnographic project at one high school with an all boys’ football team. The parallels between our projects made me want to expand upon his work, using it as a blueprint for my project.

The final article I highlight is William G. Taylor, Heather Piper, and Dean Garratt’s “Sports Coaches as ‘Dangerous Individuals’ – Practice as Governmentality.”<sup>82</sup> Their study documented the effects of ever-increasing credentialing courses enforced by national sports governing bodies in the United Kingdom. The authors characterized the methods deployed in the study as “mainstream qualitative methods and a broad ethnographically inspired approach...through observations of practice, individual and group interviews, participant

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<sup>80</sup> Gilmer, Micah, ““You Got to Have a Heart of Stone to Work Here”: Coaching, teaching, and “building men” at Eastside High.” PhD diss., Duke University, 2009.

<sup>81</sup> Gilmer, p7.

<sup>82</sup> Taylor, William George, Heather Piper, and Dean Garrat, “Sports coaches as ‘dangerous individuals’—practice as governmentality.” *Sport, Education and Society* 21, no. 2 (2016): 183-199.

observation of child protection training courses and the analysis of policy documentation.”<sup>83</sup>

Their claim of “mainstream qualitative methods” is important for my study as I use similar ones for collecting my empirical data.

### *My Research Methods*

My work focuses on high school badminton coaches. There has been little research on high school coaches in Coaching Studies. In fact, elite (college and beyond) coaching practices are more commonly explored in the academic literature. However, Physical Education Studies have investigated some high school sports. These studies generally focus on the coaches as extensions of the school’s education apparatus; here, all coaches are considered to be educators.<sup>84</sup> For my dissertation, I conducted a multi-sited, multi-method research project exploring badminton and sports at two high schools, Azusa High School and Long Beach Polytechnic High School. I conducted an eight-year ethnographic study drawing upon historical ethnography and participant observation. My methods were selected to focus on coaching strategies within demographically diverse school groups. These schools each have a diverse gender, ethnicity, racial, and migration and immigration demographics. Because my research is at the nexus of sports, coaching, and public schools, I have chosen to address my methods via three primary texts: *Research Methods in Sports Coaching* edited by Lee Nelson, Ryan Groom, and Paul Potrac, *Research Methods in Physical Education and Youth Sport* edited by Kathleen Armour and Doune Macdonald, and *Research Methods for Sports Studies* by Chris Gratton and Ian Jones.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Taylor, Piper, Garratt, 2.

<sup>84</sup> Azzarito, Laura, and Melinda A. Solomon, "A reconceptualization of physical education: The intersection of gender/race/social class," *Sport, Education and Society* 10, no. 1 (2005): 25-47.

<sup>85</sup> Nelson, Lee, Ryan Groom, and Paul Potrac, *Research methods in sports coaching*. (Boston, Routledge, 2014); Armour, Kathleen, and Doune MacDonald, eds. *Research methods in physical education and*



Writing on research frameworks in *Research Methods in Physical Education and Youth Sports*, Richard Tinning and Katie Fitzpatrick explore Fitzpatrick's framework of critical ethnography, noting that

[i]n line with a critical ethnographic approach, consideration of power issues and inequities extends to the research itself, including processes, representation and my relationship with participants...First was my responsibility to the students and the school...I needed to be aware constantly of respecting that trust and not reporting on aspects of the school that were outside the research brief and what the school had given me permission to do...A second concern was my European/Pakeha background. Because of my age, cultural background and ethnicity, there was potential for misinterpretation and miscommunication.<sup>86</sup>

My position at the school site and between coaches, staff, faculty, and athletes could have important repercussions for the ethical implications of my research. Fitzpatrick reminds researchers to be aware of the entangled ways power is distributed in the research site. My positions at the schools were complex and changed significantly over time.

Physical Education Studies also critically engages ethnography and explores associated institutional histories. However, ethnography is a novel approach within the field. As Cushion writes in *Research Methods in Coaching Studies*,

Despite its growth coaching research still pays insufficient attention to coaches' and athletes' thoughts and feelings, and has not captured the subtlety and scope of the coaching process in specific contexts, nor of the impact of context on practice...Despite its obvious utility as a methodology, ethnography has had only limited applications to coaching...for a number of reasons...the access required for ethnography can be problematic to achieve, particularly in performance or elite sport contexts. Ethnography by definition is longitudinal and therefore time consuming, and this may not fit demands to produce 'quick fix' research and data. Ethnography's relative absence could also reflect the disciplinary informed focus of researchers investigating coaching and its related issues where ethnography is not an established, understood, or even accepted methodology. Lastly, ethnography aligns readily with assumptions that coaching is a subjective, social, and constructed phenomenon. These assumptions run counter to an objective, singular, and unproblematic stance taken by many that place coaching

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*youth sport*, Boston: Routledge, 2012.; Gratton, Chris, and Ian Jones, *Research methods for sports studies*. (Taylor & Francis, 2010).

<sup>86</sup> Nelson, Groom, and Potrac, 61.

exclusively within the individual and therefore have a prescriptive set of methods for researching it.<sup>87</sup>

My ethnographic research adds to the ‘ethnographic turn’ in Coaching Studies originating in the early 2000s. For instance, the question of “access” to a site is difficult, but only in relation to elite and or performance contexts. This point underscores how coaching science has historically centered upon elite sites as key producers of vital knowledge. Noting that ethnography is underutilized in research, Cushion still focused on elite sport. At its most basic, my research expands his work by focusing on non-professional or non-elite sport.

In all three texts, specific skills are listed as vital for effective ethnography. I list these skills as they are applicable to my study and I used them extensively. For instance, I used the skills of recording effective field notes, interviews, participant observation data, and critical reflection. A common thread between the texts is the understanding that “[i]n ethnography, almost anything (within ethical bounds) counts as evidence because the researcher is immersed in the context and seeing, feeling, listening and being with the participants, and in the cultural space.”<sup>88</sup>

Fieldwork refers to the processes that are used to collect data, and generally rely upon observation.<sup>89</sup> I chose participant observation because, as Gratton and Jones noted in their text *Research Methods for Sports Studies*, “Participant observation is...trying to uncover meanings that are not directly observable. The researcher experiences, rather than observes, what is going on, and it is this experience that provides the data for the researcher.”<sup>90</sup> During my study I was

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<sup>87</sup> Nelson, Groom, and Potrac, 172.

<sup>88</sup> Armour and MacDonald, eds. *Research methods in physical education and youth sport*, 62.

<sup>89</sup> Nelson, Groom, and Potrac. *Research methods in sports coaching*, 174.

<sup>90</sup> Gratton, and Jones, *Research methods for sports studies*, 162

actively coaching at Azusa High School. My participation was an essential element of my findings.

Field notes are integral to fieldwork. Gratton and Jones urged researchers to *be flexible* and *be prepared* to collect data throughout the fieldwork process. Expanding on this, Hastie and Hay, divided fieldwork into two categories: observation and interviews.<sup>91</sup> In explaining field notes, they wrote, “[w]hen conducting observations, the researcher will record descriptive as well as reflective notes about personal thoughts on what was seen, heard and experienced during the session..[and] include the date, site, time and topic on every set of notes...[even] includ[ing] drawings or diagrams.”<sup>92</sup> As they recommended, I wrote notes as soon as each research event had ended.

I also collected interviews and used them as data. Before starting interviews, scholars contend that spending unstructured time with one’s research subjects is important for building the rapport needed to conduct successful interviews. According to Fitzpatrick's reflection on her research of PE classes, “hanging out” was a “central method...simply to be present in the school for extended periods of time...I hung out in school all day, participated in health and PE classes and wrote down what I saw, felt, heard and thought.”<sup>93</sup> Complemented by hanging out, interviews are used to gain “concentrated amounts of data...on topic of interest.”<sup>94</sup> To best grasp the context of my research sites, interviews were invaluable in exploring the school and sports structure.

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<sup>91</sup> Armour and MacDonald, eds. *Research methods in physical education and youth sport*, 84.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Armour and MacDonald, eds. *Research methods in physical education and youth sport*, 62.

<sup>94</sup> Armour and MacDonald, eds. *Research methods in physical education and youth sport*, 84.

I had proposed that I conduct approximately thirteen semi-structured interviews with various coaches, administrators, teachers, and staff. That previous research plan also intended to discuss sports background, motivation for becoming a coach, relationships with administrators and schools, changes in the practitioner's community and accepted training practice. However, changes in my faculty dissertation committee and personnel changes at my research sites led to me conducting only informal interviews. I did not record interviews but instead made copious notes immediately after each one. Informally, I was able to interview more than the initially proposed number of participants.

My research entails an ethnographic history of Azusa High School's sports programs. Here I invoke the notion of working "along the archival grain," as Stoler directed researchers to engage archives in methodical, careful, and close investigations, "not [as] an attempt to define [an archive's] outer limits, all that it includes and excludes and all that [has been] left out," but rather to extract the "surplus production...[the] interior ridges and porous seams" of the archive.<sup>95</sup> Of course by "archives" is meant more than dusty boxes of papers. Moving through the single hallway of the main office at Azusa High, lined with chronologically arranged senior class photos dating from the founding of the school in the 1950s, the photos showcase a changing student body over the decades. While using the pre-ADA bathroom with sinks and fixtures dating to the last remodel during the 1960s, I confront the location, land, and the built environment as archives.<sup>96</sup> For instance, the differences in architecture, construction materials, and the appearance of permanency describe the expansion of classrooms and administrative buildings, making the very grounds of the high school a functioning archive.

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<sup>95</sup> Stoler, Ann Laura. *Along the archival grain: Epistemic anxieties and colonial common sense*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 14, 16.

<sup>96</sup> The Americans with Disabilities Act, also known as the ADA, prohibits discrimination based on disability.

Finally, reflexivity is another central component of ethnographic research, one that is made explicit in subsequent chapters. Drawing from *Research Methods in Coaching Studies*, Chris Cushion wrote on the presence of the researcher at the field site. He reflects that all ethnographic data is a product of the researcher, and thus all knowledge production filters through “cultural equipment.”<sup>97</sup> A core tension in his work is the issue of “what I have to become in the field.”<sup>98</sup> Cushion explained that instead of dwelling on this sentiment,

The ‘practical use’ of my presence in research is best explained because my coaching background influences and shapes the research process. In sport this background is in fact something of a research imperative. Failure to meet a degree of experiential criteria would undoubtedly limit access to the inner sanctums of clubs and the coaches’ worlds...Furthermore, my coaching background often offsets my ‘academic’ status.<sup>99</sup>

#### Dissertation Chapter Descriptions

I lay out my research and argument in five chapters plus a conclusion. These proceed as follows:

##### Chapter 1: *Theoretical Approach and Key Ideas*

In the first chapter I present my theoretical repertoire, explaining several critical terms or points that are used throughout the dissertation. I review a set of Foucauldian analytics of power and then I discuss the concepts of normalization, naturalization, intersectionality, and media bias. In other chapters, I explore the relationship between these concepts in the context of specific examples in my study.

##### Chapter 2: *Coaching Science and the Limits of High-Performance Research*

I survey the field of Coaching Studies and describe its current debates. I identify the structural and theoretical building blocks of the ‘Imperative of Performance’ and put into conversation critical social science research on sports and Coaching, Ethnic, Disability, and

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<sup>97</sup> Nelson, Groom, and Potrac. *Research methods in sports coaching*.

<sup>98</sup> Nelson, Groom, and Potrac, 178.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

Gender Studies. I claim that athletes are already vulnerable vis-à-vis their coaches as a result of particular ways in which coaching education deals with non-high-performance issues and I address the lack of historical analysis in the field. As evidence, I extend my analysis to spotlight endeavors in feminist coaching and narratives of female coaches in the field.

### Chapter 3: *Material Ecology and Circulation Patterns at Azusa High*

Here I discuss my ethnographic research at Azusa High School through a tour of the site. I guide readers by first entering the main parking lot, moving to the main office and then onto campus. The chapter finishes with an extended exploration of the gym, its structures, and uses. I highlight important places and key issues for students, coaches, and the badminton team describing the physical infrastructure the team uses, and how that can change, depending upon time and place. Throughout, I engage with Kim Fortun's concept of *late industrialism* to describe the school's infrastructure and antiquated administrative protocols.

### Chapter 4: *Everyone's Bodies and Everyday Violence:*

#### *High-Performance Professionals in Action*

I draw from my experiences as a professional athlete, as the coach of a mixed-gender competitive sports team, as well concepts from critical disability, sports, and education scholars, to argue that abuse of athletes is common and occurs at all levels of competitive sports. I discuss several paradoxical situations related to the institutional regulations of athlete safety, sexual harassment and abuse, and high-performance sports. The Larry Nassar and USA women's gymnastics abuse scandal is a crucial component of analysis for determining the links between high-performance sports pedagogies and research and the actions of a perpetrator like Nassar. To disrupt the abuse and for profit pedagogies, again I draw from my athletic background and coaching research to postulate several badminton drills which can, in my estimate, alleviate or

disband some heteronormative gender barriers in sport. Finally, the chapter ends with a deep look at Poly's head coach, Steve Meckna's op-ed for local press questioning the advancements made in girls' sports in the past forty years since passage of Title IX. Together, these parts come together to move from the scandal heavy Nassar case to optimistic possibilities for disrupting high-performance ideologies in practice.

#### Chapter 5: *New Iterations of this Emergent Analytic Frame for Critical Coaching Studies*

In this chapter I wrestle with ways in which dissertation's initial analytic frame had been disrupted and expanded in the context of my research and data collection. From that position, I have begun three new projects expanding my theoretical, methodological, and practical concerns of mixed sport coaching, Los Angeles badminton history, and the inclusion of air pollution and environmental hazards into sports pedagogy. The first project extends my analysis of mixed coaching internationally to Japan. I will focus on the preparations Japan is making for the 2020 Olympic and Paralympics games, including developing new mixed coaching methods. The second project is a historical ethnography of badminton in Los Angeles from 1920 to 1970, extending my former concentration on badminton history from 1970 to 2018. The third project takes air pollution seriously and proceeds to engage in community based pollution monitoring at the high school and in the neighborhoods surrounding the school. This study is aimed at finding current pollution governance strategies and providing monitoring results so as to design sports practices to account for harmful vehicle emissions at certain times of day.

#### Chapter 6: *Conclusion*

The conclusion addresses the study as a whole explaining the findings and outcomes, including how the work from this study has a significant impact for future work. Each chapter is summarized along with the key concepts, observations and critiques. I present the relevant findings from the dissertation and how they have inspired new research questions and directions, in projects both in Los Angeles and internationally.

# Chapter 1

## Theoretical Approach and Key Ideas

### Introduction

This chapter discusses a multitude of theories and concepts I have used to examine the field of Coaching Studies. The current study uses the following theoretical frameworks: 1) Power and Normativity (as theorized in Disability Studies, Ethnic Studies, Queer Theory, Sexuality Studies, Women and Gender Studies); 2) Intersectionality Studies (as theorized in Critical Race Theory, Women and Gender Studies); 3) Grounded discourse (as theorized in Women and Gender Studies); and 4) the propaganda model of the mass media (as theorized in Media Studies). Each of those frameworks intersects with debates around gender, race, class, sexuality, disability, and I refer to these as a lens through which to analyze sports. These theories and conceptual models have been used to analyze and critique the youth sports industry at a broad national level, to understand coaching practices at the individual level, and to grasp the various institutional forces operating to control basic research and knowledge making in these areas.

I have organized the chapter into four sections. The first section begins with vignettes from my ethnographic research regarding questions of gender, coaching, and competition. The second section discusses theories of power from three scholars—Foucault, Cacho, and Davis—and their interpretations of the concept of normativity. In the third section I discuss both Mani and Traweck's theoretical approaches to defining structuring assumptions in scholarly critique. The fourth section applies Chomsky and Herman's propaganda model to the sports industry, in so doing uncovering a system that is tightly controlled by a small group of publishers who constrain coaching research within a narrow range of topics and settings that they deem acceptable. The analytic import of the theories discussed, such as intersectionality and its



contrast with other theories in this chapter, provides me with an approach to research defined from the margins.<sup>100</sup>

### Gender, Coaching, and Competition

As a coed sports coach, my education has not prepared me to address certain situations that arise in the gym. The lessons taught to my colleague and me during our collegiate years that addressed diversity issues were woefully inadequate for responding to real-life situations and did not provide any solutions for problematic situations arising in working with mixed gender athletics. The knowledge and skill set learned from my athletic training was geared toward high-performance and not specific educational goals.

An incident that dent home the need to address diversity in public high school athletics was sent home to me during my first year as head coach of the badminton program at Azusa High School. At times former players that still lived nearby visited the gym to help with practice. Grace, an alumna of the badminton program, dropped by one day to help. She had continued her competitive badminton career in college and as a high school athlete dominated her competition. She was always counted on to win her matches, and indeed she won top places for both girls' doubles and mixed doubles during her senior year of high school.

The day Grace stopped by the gym to help out, I asked if she would work on attack and defense with the most advanced boys on the team. I gave her one specific drill to work on with the athletes and let her design the rest of the practice session. To be clear, I thought this would be an interesting opportunity to invert the normal hierarchy of practice where there are no women coaches. The particular practice session I am referring to was early in the season. There were

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<sup>100</sup> Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought : Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (Routledge, 2002); Bell Hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (Pluto Press, 2000).

several returning male players but a new women's squad. As Grace was a very experienced and aggressive athlete, I thought her working on attacking play with the team's top players (at the time all boys) was clearly advantageous for the players to learn from her. I spent that practice session working on more basic skills with the newer players. Afterward, Grace reported to me that the varsity boys were highly disrespectful during this training. She stated that they neither worked hard nor took her advice. Instead, they joked with each other, only managed to display minimal amount of energy, and made flippant remarks about her playing and coaching ability. It is true that none of the players on the team at the time had ever seen Grace play before. This very well could have been an element in their encounter. After our brief chat, I thanked her for coming to help and walked with her out of the gym. Grace has not returned to volunteer at practice since.

All sports programs at Azusa, including badminton, rely on a free circulation of former players reinvesting their time into the current team, reproducing what the previous generation had done for them. I divulge this point like a secret to the players and coaches. I ask the players to make the connection between our team's twenty-two-year winning record and the reoccurring time, labor, and care that former players expend by returning to help current athletes. The players often joke about who will return after graduating.

At the end of practice on the day Grace was there, I had a conversation with the boys' team about gendered expectations, starting the conversation by asking if they had heard of the word misogyny. As the boys' team sat on the gym floor peering at me through furrowed brows, I tried to explain that their behavior was misogynistic and directly impacted the longevity, competitiveness, and durability of the entire team. I discussed how they had been highly disrespectful to Grace, an alumna with a distinguished career, and explained that such behavior is

ultimately detrimental to future generations of Azusa players. By necessity coaches confront the attitudes and behaviors athletes bring into their sports. Yet, I am told from other coaches that coaching a coed team must be different than any other sports context on campus. Stories <sup>101</sup>like the one outlined above remind me of the need for addressing tolerance, and inclusive thinking in high school sports coaching and in research.

Another example of the need to address the ethical development of young adults via coaching arose when Azusa High senior Pat Cordova-Goff became the state's first public school transgender athlete by winning a spot on the girls' softball team.<sup>102</sup> As one might unfortunately imagine, other teams, coaches, media outlets, and parents vilified Pat's presence on the team, her softball ability, and her performance. The year following Pat's graduation, I found myself in several conversations with older coaches, all men who were very relieved that Pat had left. One of the most senior coaches, a person who had been at the school since before I was a

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<sup>101</sup> Fred Robledo, "Azusa High School's Patrick Cordova-Goff, the State's First Transgender Student Athlete, Attends First Practice with the Aztecs Softball Team," *Best High School Sports Blog* (blog), February 18, 2014, <http://www.insidesocal.com/tribpreps/2014/02/18/azusa-high-schools-patrick-cordova-goff-the-states-first-transgender-student-athlete-attends-first-practice-with-the-aztecs-softball-team/>; "First Transgender Girl Plays on California High School Girls' Softball Team," GLAAD, February 18, 2014, <https://www.glaad.org/blog/first-transgender-girl-plays-california-high-school-girls-softball-team>; "California 2014: Strapping Senior Calling Himself Female to Play on Girls' High School Softball Team," accessed September 6, 2019, <https://dailycaller.com/2014/02/15/california-2014-strapping-senior-calling-himself-female-to-play-on-girls-high-school-softball-team/>; "Op-Ed: Transgender Student, Softball Star," April 7, 2014, <http://www.advocate.com/commentary/2014/04/07/op-ed-transgender-student-softball-star>; "Transgender Teen to Play on Azusa High's Girls' Softball Team," Los Angeles Times, February 14, 2014, <https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-xpm-2014-feb-14-la-me-ln-azusa-teen-first-transgender-softball-team-20140214-story.html>.

<sup>102</sup> Cornell Law School, "26 U.S. Code § 221. Interest on Education Loans," *Legal Information Institute, Cornell Law School*. 2018. <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/26/221>. In August 2013 the California Assembly passed bill 1266, the School Success and Opportunity Act, which became effective on January 1, 2014.<sup>102</sup> The updated education code reads, "a pupil shall be permitted to participate in sex-segregated school programs and activities, including athletic teams and competitions, and use facilities consistent with his or her gender identity, irrespective of the gender listed on the pupil's records."; Fred Robledo, Melissa Masatani, and Zen Vuong, "Transgender student to play on Azusa High School softball team," San Gabriel Valley Tribune, August 30, 2017, <http://www.sgvtribune.com/sports/20140213/transgender-student-to-play-on-azusa-high-school-softball-team>.

student, commented that Pat had caused many people to be uncomfortable based on her choice of gender, not her softball skills. I have only encountered criticism of Pat's athletic abilities from parents of players that were not selected for the team.

Other analogous situations have occurred during my years of coaching. I have been privy to conversations related to the diversity of sexuality and gender of players, coaches, training staff, school staff, teachers, and administrators. Nothing in my formal education prepared me to deal with such issues. While there are educational models that can assist in changing attitudes, they are not widely available for practitioners, nor are they required to begin coaching.

This chapter provides an overview of critical theorists who inform the general state of my academic analysis and coaching pedagogy. The authors, texts, disciplines, and concepts in this chapter represent the theoretical genealogy I carry with me from my education and are important for my dissertation study. The major focus of this section discusses the problems and inadequacies of the current youth coaching industry in the US.

#### Theories of Power and Normativity

Michel Foucault, Lisa Marie Cacho, and Lennard Davis are three theorists that have constructed significant analyses of power and of processes of normalization that were valuable in my examination of sports throughout this dissertation. The paradigms of diversity taught to coaches do not adequately account for questions and issues of racism, ableism, cis-gender normativity, and economic discrimination. Theoretical perspectives based on Foucault's theory of power and normativity, Cacho's denaturalization of normative expectations, and Davis' concept of the norm help define and describe the functions of power in sports and coaching and how such power becomes operationalized in everyday life. I first discuss Foucault, then Cacho, and end the section covering Davis.

## *Foucault and Conceptions of Power*

This section discusses the description and analysis of Michel Foucault's nature of power and normalization.<sup>103</sup> I draw from many scholarly who have been engaged in debates made popular by Foucault. In the context of my dissertation, the concept of *normativity*, or *norm*, has a distinctive Foucauldian hue and will be presented through the use of his power and normalization imagery as it addresses the fundamental nature of the current study.

Foucault's analysis of power and normalization states that power is not a set of monolithic structures applied uniformly across societies. For example, colonization and empire construction are not unidirectional nor linearly progressive long-term events.<sup>104</sup> Colonization is itself in constant flux with societies showing constant rebuttal, resistance, reorientation, and regrouping.

Foucault's analysis of power invokes the process of normalization. This invocation occurs when the different modalities of power intersect. Foucault explained that

[t]here is one element that will circulate between the disciplinary and the regulatory, which will also be applied to body and population alike, which will make it possible to control both the disciplinary order of the body and the aleatory events that occur in the biological multiplicity. The element that circulates between the two is the norm. The norm is something that can be applied to both a body one wishes to discipline, and a population one wishes to regularize ... The normalizing society is a society in which the norm of discipline and the norm of regulation intersect along an orthogonal articulation...succeed[ing] in covering the whole surface that lies between the organic and the biological, between body and population.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, Vol. I (New York: Vintage, 1978), 92. "Power's condition of possibility...which also makes it possible to use its mechanisms as a grid of intelligibility of the social order, must not be sought in the primary existence of a central point...it is the moving substrata of force relations..." Foucault, 1990, 93. "[P]ower must be understood in the first instance as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization..."

<sup>104</sup> Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* (Duke University Press, 1995).

<sup>105</sup> Michel Foucault, "Lecture 11, 17 March 1976" in "Society Must be Defended," *Lectures at the Collège de France 1975-1976*, trans David Macey (New York: Picador, 2003), 252-253.

This is Foucault's process of normalization. The norm is then a transitory statistical model used to direct an individual body's movement or future, in essence, what Foucault refers to as governmentality or control over a population.<sup>106</sup> As a coach, I work to ensure disciplined and regulated my athletes have discipline and are regulated so they are ready for competition. My position as the head coach for a varsity sport requires that I pursue the most effective means of producing competitive results. Both the teaching of sport's specific movement patterns and the desired strategic and psychological approaches to competitive strategies are built into the system. The coach clearly facilitates the process of normalization.

Importantly, the coach is also implicated in resistance to power. The coach's position is one through which the normalizing of sports science and private for-profit ideologies are funneled. Foucault writes that concomitantly with the flow of power, resistance to power is present. He suggested that "[j]ust as the network of power relations ends by forming a dense web that passes through apparatuses and institutions, without being exactly localized in them, so too...resistance traverses' social stratifications and individual unities."<sup>107</sup> The extracurricular public school sports coach is ideally situated to both discipline athletes into proper conformity and disrupt normative systems of power where such discipline emanates from. I fully consider these possibilities in chapter four and the development of practice and training drills disruptive to competitive ideologies. Foucault's theories thoroughly describe the imposition of power, and also gives space to respond and disrupt those same systems.

### *Cacho and Denaturalizing Normative Expectations*

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<sup>106</sup> Foucault theorizes that regulatory and disciplinary power operate on different levels and yet at moments can be articulated simultaneously. The method in which he is able to tie in together the two technologies of power is to develop the concept of the norm.

<sup>107</sup> Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 99.

There are many experts who focused much of their research on exploring the denaturalization of normative expectations, be they gender, race, class, or disability based. Denaturalizing normative expectations is a process of exposing how universalized life expectations are constructed within systems of relationality.<sup>108</sup> Lisa Marie Cacho writes of this process describing her challenge of assigning value to the life of her deceased cousin, Brandon Jesse Martinez, and his two friends, who died in a car accident on March 24th, 2000. Her process holds lessons for those of us wanting to disrupt current sports culture. Her writing has helped me more fully conceptualize decisions I made during my tenure as head coach of the badminton team.

According to Cacho's argument, Brandon's life was valuable only as a cynical counterpoint to a productive life.<sup>109</sup> She argued that Brandon's "death...validated [her] social value."<sup>110</sup> She wrote,

[Brandon] had a talent for choosing life's non-options...[his] failure to meet heteronormative and neoliberal expectations (and his reluctance to even try to attain them) was compounded by his racial background as Chicano/Mexican American because he was not just a lazy kid without a high school diploma who drank too much and lived off his parents...[he] defied normative investments in heteropatriarchy.<sup>111</sup>

Cacho explained that the usual ways of assigning value to Brandon's life lacked substance. She clarified that "[e]ither we devalued his life by demonizing the same deviant qualities we missed and mourned, or we unduly disciplined ourselves for not diverting his delinquency early

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<sup>108</sup> Cacho, Lisa Marie, "Racialized Hauntings of the Devalued Dead," in *Strange Affinities: The Gender and Sexual Politics of Comparative Racialization*, (Duke University Press, 2011), 28.

<sup>109</sup> Cacho, 27–28.

<sup>110</sup> Cacho, 28.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

enough.”<sup>112</sup> In theorizing a redistribution of dignity to Brandon’s life, Cacho questions herself and her efforts to counsel Brandon while he was alive.

Not wanting to demonize Brandon or herself and their family and friends, Cacho’s methodological choice at this moment applies more broadly than simply to her narrative. She deliberately stays with the psychic and emotional terrain that opened as a result of Brandon’s death. My interpretation of Cacho’s argument is that she developed an intersectional framework displacing normative assignation of value. In her writing she works to disconnect her cousin’s life choices, and her performance of sorrow and grief, from socially anticipated outcomes. Cacho describes this framework, of cutting ties from imposed social values, as working toward “[d]enaturalizing (hetero)normative time, space, and the life achievements they universalize.”<sup>113</sup>

Brandon’s life choices destabilize Cacho’s understanding of her own social value. Cacho claimed, “the act of ascribing legible, intelligible, and normative value [to Brandon’s life] is inherently violent and relationally devaluing.”<sup>114</sup> Cacho finds the foundations of her life ruptured, “necessarily destabilized,” as a consequence of the space opened by Brandon’s death and road-side memorial events mourning the three friends.<sup>115</sup> Eventually, Cacho slips away from trying to find a method of assigning value to her cousin’s life. For instance, in writing about Brandon’s life choices as actively and accidentally leaving the rest of us behind, empty and haunted, Cacho deflects the assignation of normative value to Brandon’s life while alluding to the victimization of his death.<sup>116</sup> Continuing this method of reflexivity, Cacho remarked that it is

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Cacho, 47.

<sup>114</sup> Cacho, 27.

<sup>115</sup> Cacho, 28. Brandon’s friends and family “held their own ceremonies in the middle of the road...and their own bodies to display the communal tombstone.”

<sup>116</sup> Cacho, 49.



through women of color feminism and queer of color critique, that is, by locating Brandon in “queer time and place,” that she comes to understand how value is defined, parceled out, and withheld, via neoliberal heteronormative expectations.<sup>117</sup>

Not all athletes are capable of meeting the expectations of win-at-all-cost competition. As a coach, my limited education prepares me to engage athletes that are driven to succeed and ready to sacrifice time and experiences for the good of competition. Many times, it is difficult for coaches to value the contributions of athletes that do not meet those standards. Returning to Cacho’s work, she provides an answer to this dilemma of valuation, writing, “[w]hen we take Brandon and others like him seriously, we are expected to suspend judgment of those who choose to drive down fatal roads because there is value as well as fear in taking risks and living differently.”<sup>118</sup> Because of pressures to pursue competitiveness over other goals, the focus on competition and closely related skills is the position from which all other aspects of coaching are engaged. Questions about moral and civic issues, long-term health, social, psychological, and safety concerns all become secondary problems. Athlete interests are also secondary to competition. In the universe of what a coach is supposed to do, the technical and tactical aspects are only two of several important tasks.<sup>119</sup>

In focusing on coaching, telling stories is a commonly noted pedagogical tool.<sup>120</sup> At Azusa, we engage in *story time* as part of our pedagogy. I follow Cacho’s lead in choosing to tell stories that do not buttress the overwhelming emphasis on competition. Many times we present story time as a way to remember athletes from Azusa badminton who have graduated, reminding

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<sup>117</sup>Cacho, 47. Here Cacho follows Judith Halberstam’s conceptualization of “queer time and place,” which opens the possibility of finding “ways of being and frameworks for valuing that “challenge conventional logics of development, maturity, adulthood, and responsibility.”

<sup>118</sup> Cacho, 49.

<sup>119</sup> I further elaborate on this topic in the Introduction and chapter 4.

<sup>120</sup> Jones, Armour, and Potrac, *Sports Coaching Cultures: From Practice to Theory*.

current athletes and coaching staff that they are a part of a sports program with a long history. Story time also helps us all learn from each other, from past teammates and coaches, and to reflect on how to approach our collective future. Even the official narrative provided by sports banners decorating the gym walls can be disrupted with story time by remembering the teams that did not produce winning seasons.<sup>121</sup> Our approach to valuing past teammates and coaches, regardless of their competitive record, creates a framework that moves past the drive to win-at-all-costs.

My approach as head coach is to help situate myself and the assistant coaches within that same history. We regularly tell each other stories from when each of us played, or since we joined the team staff. Our stories revolve around how the administration does not appreciate badminton, the game against our cross-town rivals, or our league standing. While I am the head coach and must make all final decisions, I often speak with the assistants and we share ideas for practice. I value and dignify each member of the staff. Often, I work individually with the new coaches to help them develop their own philosophy and style.

The importance of maintaining traditions at Azusa existed long before I became head coach. Cacho's direction has helped me in maintaining some of those traditions. The Brian Bugayong Memorial Tournament is one such event. The tournament itself is one we have hosted for forty years. The previous head coach changed the name for the tournament to the current one and I have continued it. The tournament celebrates the life of Brian Bugayong. As a team, we commemorate him as a former top player, as a former coach, as an Azusa graduate, as part of an Azusa badminton legacy family (many siblings from the same family have played on the team), as a Navy medic, and as a veteran. There is an embroidered flower by his name on the California

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<sup>121</sup> Further discussions concerning the banners and other sports paraphernalia in the gym are covered in chapter 3.

Interscholastic Federation (CIF) banner that “tells” his story differently than all other names immortalized on the banners.<sup>122</sup> We explain the tournament's name to participants. We engage in story time the morning of the tournament and someone who knew Brian personally tells stories to the entire team. During this particular story time, JV and Varsity get together before the tournament begins. As an extension of the Azusa badminton family, I visit Brian’s parents every year and invite them to the tournament.

Cacho helped me find ways to honor, memorialize, and remember Brian with practices that disrupt, reverse, and bypass normative power relations. Because Brian was many things to many people, there are competing stories of his life. As a combat veteran, Brian’s death holds value for the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) program on campus.<sup>123</sup> Brian was not the only badminton player to have joined the armed forces, but he was never part of the JROTC on campus. Notions of patriotism and service to country lace discussions of Brian with the commanding officer during yearly veterans’ appreciation efforts. At this moment Cacho provides inspiration to circumvent the narrative of Brian as a military hero. Concentrating on her cousin Brandon she wrote, “We needed to disconnect the life he experienced from the life he had been failing to achieve.”<sup>124</sup> As the coach, I try to bypass the narrative of Brian as a military hero and point students toward experiences of war and friendship he documented on his *MySpace* account. The photos are retrospective moments that peer into his life outside of the badminton gym, more than ten years after his death. Students always enjoy readings Brian’s words in the

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<sup>122</sup> California Interscholastic Federation, a private organization in charge of setting rules and regulation for scholastic sports competition across the state.

<sup>123</sup> The JROTC program is a military themed student development program at US high schools. Each branch of the military operates its own version. At Azusa the program is run by the US Army.

<sup>124</sup> Cacho, “Racialized Hauntings of the Devalued Dead,” 47.

captions and are fascinated with photos of Iraq.<sup>125</sup> Although Brian's story is a clear example of the connection between Cacho's writing and coaching practice, many other coaching situations resemble this one.

### *The Norm and The Natural*

Closely related concepts of the norm based on past expert scholarly work have included the term naturalization.<sup>126</sup> I reviewed at length Cacho's discussion of naturalization. The inherent slippage between terms when contrasting and building consensus between disciplinary texts is apparent within this discourse. For example, private and public youth sports systems are endpoints on a spectrum that naturalizes competition; whereas scholastic sports do not singularly prioritize competition, private leagues do. The issue here is that competition is idealized across all instances. In this context, competition points include, 1) the organizing role that competitive events have on youth sports experiences (and this is a definite benefit), and 2) the civic, personal, educative benefits expected from participation in competitive sports. This suggests that competition is not an element of any analysis of youth sports; competition is already assumed; competition is the ground state; competition is evident and natural. I have named this allegiance to competition as education by participation as an ideological position. The links between funding streams, research focus, and practical application education are compounded because of the monopoly on publishing outlets and control over the market. I suggest that competition should not hold such an exalted position for youth sports.

While Foucault does make a case for his interpretation of the norm, and Cacho describes fundamental issues with the process of naturalization, I focus on the explanation of the concept

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<sup>125</sup> Brian Bugayong, "Brian Bugayong MySpace Page," *MySpace*, accessed June 25, 2019, <https://myspace.com/brianbugayong>.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*

by Disability Studies historian Lennard Davis. The way Davis discusses the norm holds lessons for understanding the imperative of performance guiding youth sports and coaching generally. In order to understand the process of constructing standards and norms, especially for sports, statistics are a valuable tool. Davis gave a critical history of the rise of statistical science in legitimating eugenic projects and discrimination against people with disabilities, closely linking the US and Nazi Germany in the rise of eugenics.<sup>127</sup>

Davis chose to focus on the concept of the norm by interrogating how the able body is constructed. Instead of concentrating on the disabled body, Davis documented how the able body was defined through the interplay between the rise of statistics as a scientific tool and its use by social Darwinist thinkers. In a particularly important section of his work, he writes that the “statistical ideal is unlike the classical ideal which contains no imperative to be the ideal. The imperative of the norm powers the new ideal of ranked order ... creat[ing] a dominating, hegemonic vision of what the human body should be.”<sup>128</sup>

Both US and Nazi eugenic campaigns relied on the pseudo-science of eugenics to satisfy their own actions, the latter to mass executions and sterilizations of people with disabilities as the precursor to the Nazi Holocaust.<sup>129</sup> So while Davis does not investigate sports per se, he does call on scholars to draw on this history to understand its usefulness in other fields. According to Davis, normalization is the process by which the statistical extreme is considered the highest level of competition and athletic performance. Normalization thus becomes the overwhelmingly idealized category or standard to which all performances are held based on an idealized

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<sup>127</sup> Lennard J Davis, *The Disability Studies Reader* (New York; London: Routledge, 1997).

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Snyder, Sharon, and David Mitchell, "The Eugenic Atlantic: Disability and the Making of an International Science," *Cultural Locations of Disability* (2006): 100-33.

extreme.<sup>130</sup> Seen in this light, the majority of performances making up the actual statistical norm are now flawed.

Building on Davis' analysis, Rembis applies the idea of the norm to famous para-sport athletes.<sup>131</sup> Rembis uses the opportunity to comment on how racialized and cis-heteronormative expectations are filtered through the lives of high-performance paralympians. Rembis does not comment on high-performance sports per se, but on how para-athletes have labored to access able bodied privilege, often by disavowing certain other aspects of their identities. Rembis writes that, "passing need not always involve the act of physically concealing one's impairment, but rather depends on how well one can approximate the gendered, white, heterosexual, nondisabled norm and meet societal expectations for conduct, competition, appearance, and performance."<sup>132</sup>

This definition of the norm, and of the labor needed to approximate the social expectations as closely as possible, nuance the concept further. I find this discussion of the norm by Davis and Rembis important for my work because it offers an alternative theorization from Foucault's concept. I have found Davis' analysis well situated for critiquing the process by which only some kinds of athletic achievement become valued and sought after. Davis expresses how the norm is related to the changes between an agrarian society and one of capitalist market-driven economies. His historical analysis described the norm as an imperative. I apply that concept to the overwhelming drive in sports research that idealizes the most extreme athletic performance, one that often coincides with financial profit.

#### Grounding Common Discourse

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<sup>130</sup> Davis.

<sup>131</sup> Michael Rembis, "Athlete First: A Note on Passing, Disability, and Sport," *Disability and Passing: Blurring the Lines of Identity*, 2013, 111–141.

<sup>132</sup> Rembis, 112–13.

Sharon Traweek discussed the world of high energy particle physicists at two major labs, one in the US and one in Japan.<sup>133</sup> Traweek's study is the result of a long-term ethnography whereby she developed the concept of *ground states* to describe the agreed upon foundation to begin discussion, analysis, and data collection in research. Ground states also pertains to the forms and styles of interaction between the community members, considered a shared set of understandings. Traweek also claimed that the governing rules (formal and informal) were based on the functional use of resources in a lab, further explaining how the international physics world maintains ties across time, space, culture must conform to a shared state of expected interaction:

I believe that to understand how scientific and technological knowledge is produced we must understand what is uncontested as well as what is contested, how the ground state is constructed as well as how the signals called data are produced. When I speak of the shared ground, I do not mean some a priori norms or values but the daily production and reproduction of what is to be shared. In my research, I wanted to find the forces of stability, the varieties of tradition, in a community dedicated to innovation and discovery.<sup>134</sup>

Traweek's concept of the ground state helps me recognize the contested and uncontested debates in sports and coaching science. For instance, the overarching priority given to high-performance settings highlights such tension. Another example of such prioritization is the unquestioned goal of setting new athletic records. In the field of sports science, such tensions serve as stability within a system under continuous pressure to innovate.

Another methodological and theoretical import I draw on comes from a co-authored article by Sharon Traweek and her late colleague Frank Dubinkas,<sup>135</sup> In their publication, Traweek and Dubinkas were critical of Nancy Munn's anthropological research on the Australian Aboriginal people known as the Walbiri today who are considered by contemporary

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<sup>133</sup> Sharon Traweek, *Beamtimes and Lifetimes: The World of High Energy Physicists*, 1992.

<sup>134</sup> Traweek, 9.

<sup>135</sup> Frank A. Dubinkas and Sharon Traweek, "Closer to the Ground: A Reinterpretation of Walbiri Iconography," *Man* 19, no. 1 (March 1984): 15.

scholars as the Warlpiri.<sup>136</sup> Munn described her own work as *structuralist*, writing claiming, “I am concerned with the structural analysis not simply as an end in itself, but more fundamentally as a means of throwing light on Walbiri [*sic*] society and culture.”<sup>137</sup> Traweek and Dubinkas countered that Munn’s structuralist approach of analyzing Warlpiri art was, a significant methodological error and clarified that the mistake inappropriately centralizes the “Western epistemological tradition.”<sup>138</sup> In my research I find coaching and sports science inappropriately naturalizes Western notions of sex and gender difference.<sup>139</sup> Gendered assumptions of strength, speed, and athletic ability become, as Traweek and Dubinkas write of Munn’s methodological adherence to dualities, “*a priori*, innate categories” in high-performance research.<sup>140</sup> It is not surprising that gender differences form a foundational ground state of modern sports.

I additionally draw inspiration from Traweek and Dubinkas’ analysis in which they “examine Munn’s book as if it were two texts: a text of [her] ordering categories and structures and a Walbiri text of actions and commentaries.”<sup>141</sup> I discern that their critical views on Munn’s work applies to coach research. Many of the most recent and influential articles and publications on coaching were born from long-term ethnographic investigations of club sports. I have found

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<sup>136</sup> Tasman Brown et al., “Yuendumu and the Warlpiri: Early History,” in *Yuendumu*, Legacy of a Longitudinal Growth Study in Central Australia (University of Adelaide Press, 2011), 24, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.20851/j.ctt1sq5wwx.9>.

<sup>137</sup> Nancy D Munn, *Walbiri Iconography: Graphic Representation and Cultural Symbolism in a Central Australian Society* (Ithaca, N.Y. : Cornell University Press, 1973), 3,

<https://trove.nla.gov.au/version/21914476>. In the social and behavioral sciences, structuralism is a methodological position which understands society and human culture as undergirded by sets of dichotomous relationships that are both discoverable and fundamental to all interaction within that culture. Structuralism is mainly associated with European continental philosophy beginning in the early 1900s. A typical example useful for this study is the strict division between men and women.

<sup>138</sup> Dubinkas and Traweek, “Closer to the Ground: A Reinterpretation of Walbiri Iconography,” 16.

<sup>139</sup> Scott Lauria Morgensen, *Spaces between Us: Queer Settler Colonialism and Indigenous Decolonization* (U of Minnesota Press, 2011); Brendan Hokowhitu, “Tackling Māori Masculinity: A Colonial Genealogy of Savagery and Sport,” *The Contemporary Pacific*, 2004, 259–284.

<sup>140</sup> Dubinkas and Traweek, 16. Emphasis original.

<sup>141</sup> Dubinkas and Traweek, 16.



that approaching these published studies as Traweek and Dubinskas did with Munn's, many of them are also two studies: 1) a study of the particular club or team and a report of the participants own thoughts and opinions about their group practices; and 2) a study of the ways western dichotomous gender norms, gender-segregated high performance, and for-profit sports coaching form the filter through which analysis is passed. Drawing inspiration from these theoretical frames, my research provides tools to uncover underlying assumptions about coaching and the sports industry.

### Intersectionality Studies

Kimberlé Crenshaw is widely credited with initiating the rise of the term intersectionality.<sup>142</sup> Since her initial research a burgeoning field of Intersectionality Studies has become recognized. Reading Crenshaw's coedited introduction to a volume on the status of the field, she made the case that intersectionality is not bounded by disciplinary dogmatism. Rather,

[o]ur view [is] that intersectionality is best framed as an *analytic sensibility*...a way of thinking about and conducting analyses...conceiving of categories not as distinct but as always permeated by other categories, fluid and changing, always in the process of creating and being created by dynamics of power— [which] emphasizes what intersectionality does rather than what intersectionality is.<sup>143</sup>

My approach to building an analysis of coach education involves recognizing the way dispersed power systems are inflected in the everyday actions of practitioners. My professional athletic and coaching background has assisted in developing this critique because, as noted in the quote

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<sup>142</sup> Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review* 43 (1991 1990): 1241–1300; Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics [1989]," *Feminist Legal Theory*, February 19, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429500480-5>.

<sup>143</sup> Sumi Cho, Williams Crenshaw Kimberlé, and Leslie McCall, "Toward a field of intersectionality studies: Theory, applications, and praxis," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 38, no. 4 (2013): 785-810. Emphasis added.

above, that experience can be an *analytic sensibility*, especially when researching sports topics.<sup>144</sup>

In the same article, Crenshaw and her co-authors posited the forming of a duality in the field and argue against their mutual exclusion. The authors described two processes by which intersectionality seemed to have found a place in broader scholarly communities. The first was a centrifugal process of distilling some essence of the concept. This process is described as intersectionality traveling to, being adopted by, and used to make interventions within disciplines. The centrifugal process is described from the position that there are clear disciplinary boundaries.<sup>145</sup> In contrast, the centripetal process was defined as “scholars interested in intersectionality [that] strikeout mainly in the margins of their disciplines and are often skeptical about the possibility of integrating mainstream methods and theories into their intersectional research.”<sup>146</sup> In their discussion of the two processes, and how to harness the critical work from both the authors’ argument is reminiscent of Foucault’s distinction between disciplinary and regulatory power.

Disciplinary power and centrifugal intersectional research were designed as individualizing narratives whereby one was aimed at the individual body, and the other was at the individual discipline. Regulatory power and centripetal intersectional research targeted large scale units. One was aimed at control over a population irrespective of individuality, the other at scholarly literature and research design across disciplines. The intersection of the two types of

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<sup>144</sup> Kathleen Stewart, *Ordinary Affects*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007. The notion of sensibility referred to by Crenshaw et al. is akin to Stewart’s. She writes, “Ordinary affects are public feelings that begin and end in broad circulation, but they’re also the stuff that seemingly intimate lives are made of...They can be experienced as a pleasure and a shock, as an empty pause or a dragging undertow, as a *sensibility* that snaps into place or a profound disorientation.” 2. Emphasis added.

<sup>145</sup> Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall, “Toward a Field of Intersectionality Studies,” 792.

<sup>146</sup> Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall, “Toward a Field of Intersectionality Studies,” 793.

power or research produce two different outcomes. For Foucault, power desires control over all of life and this happens when the two types of power intersect. In contrast, Crenshaw describes the meeting point between the types of intersectional research as expanding the field. She wrote, “it would seem that the future development of intersectionality as a field would be advanced by maximizing the interface between the centrifugal and the centripetal processes.”<sup>147</sup>

### The Propaganda Model and US Youth Sports Industry

The propaganda model developed by Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman in their book, *Manufacturing of Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, explains the way mass media is used to maintain and constrain specific political debates.<sup>148</sup> They observe that the media limits debate on issues to a narrow spectrum of possible or expressible opinions, and a small number of fundamental premises. Control over these public discussions is captured by a few select people and powerful corporations. Ultimately many mass media actors (and the news media specifically) are not defenders of freedom and democracy, nor do they encourage pushing back against such established power. Instead, much of the media functions as sophisticated propaganda agencies to obfuscate, deceive, and misdirect the public toward their goals. Chomsky and Herman liken such propaganda of mass media in the US to authoritarian regimes engaging in threats of force upon their populations.

The propaganda model relies on what Chomsky and Herman have labelled as the five filters of the mass media: ownership, advertising, sourcing, flak, and fear. These concepts were very influential in my overall reading of the high-performance sports industry. Although this study only emphasizes certain elements, in this section each filter is reviewed and its

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<sup>147</sup> Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall, “Toward a Field of Intersectionality Studies,” 794.

<sup>148</sup> Edward S. Herman, *Manufacturing Consent : The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, (Boston: Everett, 2002).

implications for high-performance sports examined giving a broader picture as to how the industry functions. This in depth overview is important critical context for analysis in subsequent chapters.

In general, the five filters of mass media serve to distort and present news coverage in favor of the businesses and corporations that own media outlets. These filters also limit the points of view to two predetermined, closely linked positions on the overall issues at hand. In sports and coaching science, most researchers, publishers, investors, and educators learn to maintain a very limited scope in their work to maximize publishing avenues. For instance, the major publisher and supplier of coaching education and training resources in the United States, *Human Kinetics* (HK), has only three texts addressing transgender athletes, and none are required readings. Yet, in California transgender students were guaranteed the right by the state's supreme court to participate in the sports corresponding to their gender identity.<sup>149</sup>

If my application of the propaganda model to the youth sports industry is correct, then the bias in publications systematically favors the interests of for-profit, competitive, professional, or professionalized sports, and coaching settings that thrive on sex-segregated events and win at all cost environments. The results of using this model are a reinterpretation of the sports research publishing sector as gatekeepers impeding the growth of new sports and coaching knowledge. I explore this particular idea further in chapter four.

### *Ownership*

The first filter of mass media is ownership. Chomsky and Herman argue that media outlets are themselves businesses and are parts of more substantial business conglomerates or

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<sup>149</sup> Ellen J. Staurowsky, *Women and Sport: Continuing a Journey of Liberation and Celebration*, Human Kinetics. (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 2016); Bruce Martin and Mark Wagstaff, *Controversial Issues in Adventure Programming* (Champaign, Ill.: Human Kinetics, 2012).

corporations. Businesses are understood to take biased decisions in their own favor. As many news media outlets are owned by corporations that have stakes often in diversified environments and markets the corporation has a direct interest in minimizing news that can damage the ability to generate profit. The news media and mass media generally are not objective, nor are they hostile or even unbiased toward the established powers, economically and politically, that manage its funds and pay the bosses.

The youth sports industry in the US is the primary athletic development pathway for scholastic, collegiate, national, Olympic and Paralympic, and professional sports careers. Major commercial brand name products, services, organizations (sport and non-sport) are heavily invested in sponsoring teams and leagues, developing training camps, and discovering the next big talent. This is because the extreme profit margins of professional sports, developmental contracts, and capital investment when a location is selected for multi-national games (i.e., the Olympics and Paralympics), and international sales demand stability in an otherwise unstable world of competitive sports.

As a current example, take Colin Kaepernick's blacklisting from the NFL draft and free agency. The NFL even commissioned a report, in secret, that polls US football spectators on their opinions of Kaepernick to use as justification for blacklisting him. The NFL franchise owners colluded to keep Kaepernick out of the NFL and have settled out of court with Kaepernick and teammate Michael Bennet in a non-disclosed settlement.<sup>150</sup> In this case, the owners of the NFL and the commission had a financial interest in clamping down on protest and used Kaepernick as an example for everyone else. The collusion and blacklisting of players using

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<sup>150</sup> Stephen A. Crockett Jr, "The NFL Needs to Get Behind Its Blockers and Run Colin Kaepernick His Check," *The Root*, August 3, 2016, <https://www.theroot.com/the-nfl-needs-to-get-behind-its-blockers-and-run-colin-1832238316>. Accessed June 29, 2019.

their free speech rights to critique the US government is even more problematic because the government has become a consistent funder of the NFL slowly merging patriotism and professional sports.

The national anthem has been played at major sporting events since at least the end of World War II. However, until 9/11 it was not the tradition for players to be on the field during the anthem; they would enter only after the anthem finished. In 2015, senators Jeff Flake and the late John McCain published the results of a joint oversight report regarding the revelations that the Department of Defense (DoD) had been actively seeking NFL partnerships to fund particular promotional activity, among other things. The yearly amount of taxpayer-funded DoD payments for military-related advertisements, fighter jet fly-overs, live bands, and ceremonies honoring veterans (to name only a few categories) was to the tune of almost seven million dollars. The vast majority of teams received some benefit from these funds. Moreover, security and public safety concerns at games are often paid by the public through the presence of police, firefighters, ambulances, and first responders stationed at stadiums. The federal government even pays for the security bill at the annual Super Bowl.<sup>151</sup> Furthermore, NFL stadiums and teams also receive significant tax breaks from their home cities. This was widely reported amid the controversy of players, like Kaepernick, kneeling during the playing of the national anthem.<sup>152</sup>

I mean to direct attention not so much to the total amount of money the DoD paid the NFL and other major professional sports teams and leagues, but to the deal. At no cost to the

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<sup>151</sup> Mia Fischer, “Commemorating 9/11 NFL-Style: Insights Into America’s Culture of Militarism,” *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 38, no. 3 (June 1, 2014): 199–22.

<sup>152</sup> Natasha Bertrand, “The Pentagon Paid 14 NFL Teams \$5.4 Million to ‘Salute Troops,’” *Business Insider*, May 2015, <https://www.businessinsider.com/the-pentagon-pays-the-nfl-millions-to-honor-veterans-at-games-2015-5>; Burgess Everett, “Report: Pentagon Spent Millions on ‘paid Patriotism’ with pro Sports Leagues,” *POLITICO*, November 2011, <https://www.politico.com/story/2015/11/pentagon-contracts-sports-teams-215508>.

teams, teams have funds to produce spectacular pre-game shows, that are consistently paid for by the government. The pre-game entertainment is essential in the social imaginary of the US as patriotism. Nationalism is mobilized to energize the spectators as few other kinds of entertainment do. I compare this to the ways in which many individuals feel energized by listening to a moving sermon at church. Imagine the impact this energy can have on the overall experience of the event, not to mention being injected into food and drink sales.

Perhaps more significant than a glamorized pre-game show is the fact that significant security at games and the Super Bowl are paid by local police departments and cities and the federal government, respectively. Often labor is the most expensive cost of hosting an event. Security personnel are typically present before the first fan arrives and after the last fan leaves. For a particularly significant event like the Super Bowl and any playoff games, even more security is needed. With so many security issues already taken care of, and without the cost of such labor, NFL teams and their owners are making much more money from the benefits of military funding than potentially without. After all, the NFL, like all major professional sports leagues, is a profit-driven corporation with definite financial incentives to controlling the public narrative about itself and partner teams. The team owners and NFL commissioner did not principally care about Kaepernick's racial politics. Instead, Kaepernick's kneeling was problematic to them because it began to unmask the tentacles of the DoD and military-industrial complex that benefits financially in so many ways by the unknowing taxpayer directly subsidizing mega-corporations and ensuring even more profits through the impacts of those subsidies long-term. The benefits are racialized and show that Kaepernick's protest coalesced as an intersectional issue simultaneously critiquing the construction of patriotism, race, gender, and a host of similarly positioned topics.

High school football teams and youth football leagues are not immune to the same controversies as the professionals. Many youth teams have chosen to participate in the protest—only for local officials to use them as pawns in local political problems. Some youth teams have forfeited their entire season for taking a knee.<sup>153</sup> Explained like this, it is clear that the owners and the investors in youth sports (beyond the parents) are major corporations; often professional teams directly sponsor youth programs. The desire for corporations to keep marginalized any news and information that might damage their profits is like making the point that humans breathe oxygen.

Another way in which the narrative of cis-heteronormative sports is squashed by owners is how, regardless of performance level, most coach education in the US is published and passed through *Human Kinetics* (HK) publishing. This publisher plays the role of gatekeeper regarding which scientific, pedagogical, and educational material will be accepted. It also has control of a captive market because there are no other publishers with market share and scope like HK. With almost complete market control, it is reasonable to assume that HK will not publish much or any material that might disrupt its profit-making apparatus. Sports and coaching research that disrupts normative ideals of gender, race, class, disability, and performance are only rarely published. The control of available information to practitioners via the tight-knit relationship

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<sup>153</sup> Chris Perez, “Youth Football Team Stages Their Own Kaepernick-Style Protest,” *New York Post* (blog), September 19, 2017, <https://nypost.com/2017/09/19/youth-football-team-stages-their-own-kaepernick-style-protest/>; Julia Glum, “The Texas Kids Who Protested the National Anthem Are Back (and Mad about Trump),” *Newsweek*, September 30, 2017, <https://www.newsweek.com/nfl-trump-protests-kaepernick-kneel-beaumont-bulls-672644>; Taryn Finley, “A Youth Football Team Protested the National Anthem. Now Their Season Is Canceled,” *HuffPost*, May 8, 2017, [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/youth-football-season-canceled-national-anthem-protest\\_n\\_580643e0e4b0b994d4c188bf](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/youth-football-season-canceled-national-anthem-protest_n_580643e0e4b0b994d4c188bf).



between basic scientific research, high-performance education, and publishing make outside ideas less likely to appear.

### *Advertising*

The second filter of mass media names an essential part of a news media's business model, which is advertising. For instance, a newspaper does not make money primarily from selling print editions but by the revenue from advertising. As profit-making is tightly bound to advertising, the news itself only plays a marginal role for the newspaper. There is a stronger focus on the advertisers' interests, articles and stories in print are typically based on the advertisers' likes and wishes. While it is often assumed that the products sold by media companies are their content, in truth the products being sold are the reading audience. That audience is being sold to advertisers. Herman and Chomsky analyze publications like *The New York Times* whose readers are considered educated and part of the decision-making classes.

In the youth sports and coaching industry, the concern for education certificates is marginal. This is true even now as certification requirements continue to increase. The educational courses are not the actual product sold, nor the primary source of profit. Coaches often have to be pushed by requirements or performance results to use online resources. While the online education formats are shown to be adequate to teach some topics and for some students, research shows that, especially for grassroots and scholastic coaches, the best learning environments are in non-competitive groups and close mentorship.<sup>154</sup>

The ultimate product for sale by HK and NFHS are not the certifications, nor are they the tactical and technical materials. The true "product" sold by these companies are the coaches themselves, or rather, their personal information. The coaches are truly a captive audience. To

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<sup>154</sup> Lemyre, Trudel, Durand-Bush, "How Youth-Sport Coaches Learn to Coach."

coach at Azusa High, I am required to take online courses from HK and NFHS to comply with certification and regulatory guidelines. Because these platforms require users to create an account and make a profile, the activity generates massive amounts of user data the organizations can then use and sell to third party companies. Imagine the quantity of data being generated when every single high school coach in California must take a course. A significant subset of coaches will also engage the online activity further by participating in forums, sharing news headlines, and outreach via multiple social media and email campaigns occurring throughout the competitive sports life cycle (off-season, pre-season, season, post-season). It is perfectly reasonable to imagine that these companies, as others have done, harvest data from a user's other social media accounts, internet browsing history, and user habits.

Demographic information, especially of the clubs, schools, leagues, and zip code information, are important and sophisticated data points informing that marketing algorithms that have been harvested from such user-generated data. Is it merely a coincidence that soon after one of my coaching peers from Azusa approached me to join in purchasing a sports analysis system that advertisements sent from NFHS were trying to sell me an extraordinarily similar product? I am not insinuating that corporations were literally listening in on our conversation. I do mean to suggest that such systems are routinely sold and marketed to sports coaches, now that the technology and analysis software has become more financially accessible for a broader and non-professional audience. To reiterate: the coaches' data are the product sold to third party companies for marketing purposes. The coaches are forced to submit at least basic information to the online systems before receiving their certificates. These private companies control the material, the delivery method, and the information of users, and do so with no supervision or the permission of the coaches/customers.

## *Sourcing*

Among the mass media, the sourcing of their information is also found to have a bias. Out of economic necessity, news media concentrates resources, such as personnel, in places and organizations considered to be the most legitimate. For instance, smaller and more local newspapers would subscribe to news feeds from national and international news outlets like the *New York Times* and *Associated Press* because, as a smaller newspaper, they do not have the resources to maintain personnel in a large number of venues. At the same time, news sites (those places considered to make legitimate news) are predominantly government offices, corporate headquarters, and comparable social institutions. Because credibility is already assumed, losing access to these sources can have a direct impact on profits. As access and legitimacy are often also sites of power (whether state or private), media agencies have an incentive not to endanger their access to the legitimate sources of news. Finally, because the number of legitimate sources of news are few, and are controlled by wealthy individuals and larger corporations, the range of viewpoints reported by those sources is by definition limited. The cycle reproduces itself as the narrow range of debate predetermines topics, scholars, and the scope of geographic and historical antecedents entered into consideration.

Coaches are forced to source their educational material from publishers like HK, NHFS, and sometimes national governing bodies. The degree to which educational material is accessible is a function of having access to the internet, needing free or paid resources, and the costs of site membership. On HK's website, users can pay a monthly or annual fee and have access to more than just the free material. Membership costs vary, depending on which resources one wants to access. Even top paying members do not have access to all the resources on the site. Indeed, most of the certifications needed to fulfill many youth coaching regulation systems are free (after

initiating an account), but the sheer volume of material available on HK's website, including text, video, audio, and physical copies sent via mail, provides a vast array of support to new coaches, experienced ones moving into new positions, and those transitioning between sports.

The background, basic scientific research that informs much of the educational materials available on HK conforms to the desires imposed by the funding agencies and publishing sources. Only specific research topics and projects will be funded, and only certain kinds of research are publishable. For HK, the company itself will initiate the beginning of an edited volume about a topic of interest (meaning, a product that conforms to their version of youth sports), while trying to find intelligent, critical, and appropriate scholars interested in commenting. The selection and curation processes from beginning to end predetermine research to follow the principle of choosing appropriate sports and coaching strategies, that is high-performance cis-heteronormative athletic settings. The current certification curriculum is developed from these scientific studies.

### *Flak*

The term “flak” describes a number of actions that put pressure on news reporters to model their story or topic to one which does not call into question the core nature and interests of the economic and political system controlling the major sources of information. It can be solicited or not (and most often is not solicited). Negative responses can be benign, such as phone calls, serious, like lawsuits or death threats, and total, as when an editor kills a news story or a reporter is assassinated. Flak can come from government, international, corporate, and individual parties. Flak is tied closely to the hierarchical structure of corporations whereby superiors are the ones invested in whom systems of power invest precisely to control ideological narratives. A theoretical point, flak is an especially important tool for what has been described in

sociology and anthropology as ‘boundary making’ or ‘boundary maintenance.’ An often-cited example is how gender norms are policed during specific settings, such as the workplace, family unit, or local neighborhood.<sup>155</sup>

I have experienced flak mainly informally (a crucial avenue of flak) over the years in my position. As a coach, I certainly have received flak from those who are in supervisory positions over me, such as the Athletic Director (AD) and the Vice Principal of Athletics (VP). My supervisors have used flak as a method to distract, not answer, or to answer certain questions with unnecessarily specific answers. For instance, I have asked questions and sought guidance regarding the following topics: disability access (both for athletes and spectators), transgender athletes on coed teams, social media interaction with students and parents, and emergency regulations during a police shutdown. In context, the responses have varied from dismissive to instructional.

### *Fear*

Chomsky and Herman’s fifth filter of the propaganda model is identified with anti-communism. In the model Chomsky suggested that the enemy or fear of this enemy was a reasonable justification for silencing critical voices. With this fifth filter being fear, Chomsky and Herman suggested that the mass media was colluding with the US government to vilify communism and stoke fear of the former USSR in the general public.<sup>156</sup> More recently, the model has been updated to reflect the War on Terror instead of communism.<sup>157</sup> This filter draws upon and increases fear of a common enemy to advocate on particular economic and political

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<sup>155</sup> Kristen Schilt and Laurel Westbrook, “Doing Gender, Doing Heteronormativity: ‘Gender Normals,’ Transgender People, and the Social Maintenance of Heterosexuality,” *Gender & Society* 23, no. 4 (August 1, 2009): 440–64.

<sup>156</sup> Schitt and Westbrook, 445.

<sup>157</sup> “The Propaganda Model after 20 Years: Interview with Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky,” accessed June 29, 2019, [https://chomsky.info/200911\\_\\_\\_/](https://chomsky.info/200911___/).

issues. An essential aspect of this filter is the strategic use of fear to silence critics of economic and political elites. Fear is used to generate compliance with desired norms. Like the previous filter, fear of a common enemy is part of boundary making and ‘othering.’<sup>158</sup>

Applying this filter to the youth sports industry highlights two fears used to generate compliance with coaching staff. The first is that coaches and school administrations are very afraid of lawsuits against them. As coaches, we are often warned never to be alone with students and never to give students a ride home in our personal vehicles. We are warned to guard our private communication with students and never to respond to text messages too early or too late in the day. We are reminded by administration that everyone has a cell phone camera and that we should therefore always expect others to be watching us. Just in the past ten years there have been multiple lawsuits alleging abuse against students by staff or faculty at Azusa High School. During meetings coaches commiserate about the perceived changes in oversight and regulation as compared to some unspecified time in the past. In this case, the fear coaches and administration have is of the potential of lawsuits.

The second way fear applies to the sports industry is the fear of losing. The fear of losing is a broader topic than the competitive athletic moment and intersects with other facets of everyday life. The fear of losing can influence more than sports results. Publishers like HK are also marketing and sales firms, specializing in tailored education programs, coaching apps, lectures, and courses covering all four sports seasons. Members of HK’s website receive frequent emails filled with ads tailored by sport and season. The fear of losing does prompt coaches to invest in their knowledge, especially after a losing season. Many rely on the education available at HK that is developed for high-performance settings. However, the fear of losing, instead of

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<sup>158</sup> Crenshaw, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex.”

instigating a search for new pedagogies more typically results in coaches resorting to harmful and abusive approaches to leadership. I expand on this last topic more fully in chapter four.

Overall, the propaganda model was used as a theoretical lens through which I examined Coaching Studies and the US sports industry. The propaganda model helped me to understand how the industry narrows the range of possible viewpoints on sports and coaching, how institutional and social forces control the narrative of media stories, and finally, it allowed me to make assumptions that have become the foundation to my current study. Deploying each of the five filters of the media onto the sports industry illuminated substantial conflicts of interest and gatekeeping by funding organizations and publishing outlets which unduly restrict their priorities.

## Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed several theoretical frameworks and conceptual models that have aided in analyzing the youth sports industry. Foucault, Cacho, and Davis all evaluated questions of regulation, power, and normativity. These three theorists form a broad foundation for understanding power and its reproduction throughout the dissertation. Following their lead, I understand coaching and sports are activities imbricated with power to discipline and enforce conformity for large groups of athletes. Traweek's conception of Ground States has been crucial in understanding and uncovering basic governing assumptions in the scientific research processes. Applied to my work, Traweek's theoretical descriptions helped pinpoint high-performance settings as the unquestioned research priority of sports science. Crenshaw's writing and the field of Intersectionality Studies have been an important interstitial method helping to bridge my analytical approaches across multiple research areas. Intersectionality was key to reconceptualizing my research priorities and choice of frameworks (both theoretically and methodological) as concomitant activities. In the following chapter I draw from this tradition to aid in a full critique Coaching Studies from a holistic vantage point. Finally, Chomsky and Herman's propaganda model decisively aided in deconstructing the ways the sports, coaching, and high-performance industry constrict knowledge making and the public narratives of sports. Conceived as a model for decoding the institutional power of the media, deploying the propaganda model as I did gave a non-conventional analysis of sports and coaching. Working with the model, I described the gatekeeping and biased publication houses of major private companies controlling basic sports and coaching research. Overall, this chapter discussed these distinct theories and analytic approaches with the intent of inspiring future interdisciplinary analysis applicable to sports and with a desire to protect athletes. Although the theories and



approaches I have covered are divergent, together they aptly illustrate current conditions for youth sports and coaching in the US.

# Chapter 2

## Coaching Science and the Limits of High-Performance Research

### Introduction

Researchers have discussed sports and sports participation as they pertain to athletic activities, pathways of development, and organizational relations of power. I too have observed and used such information to present an analysis on Coaching Studies and sports participation for this second chapter. Scholarship on sports and sports participation varies widely. Scholars of Feminist Studies, Ethnic Studies, and Disability Studies have examined and discussed the topics of sports, athletes, systems of sports governance, and sports-related social legacies. I show how current Coaching Science is premised on a narrow range of possible research questions closely defined by non-US systems of youth sports and coach education. I discuss the differences between typical Coaching Science methods, especially those focusing strictly on high-performance athletics.

The first section of this chapter relates the historical context for parsing the differences between scholastic and private sports coaching. I profile the different ideological rifts embedded in the approaches from each camp. The following three sections are drawn from the approach developed in my theoretical and methodological framing and provide a critical overview of the field and its major scientific research. I consider critiques of sports and coaching situations often marginalized within current research. The fourth part of this chapter analyzes the intertwined notions of humor, gender, and coaching using the foundational text of *Sports Coaching Cultures*:

*From Practice to Theory*.<sup>159</sup> Through a close reading, I show how the authors of that text use gender to explain the uses of humor by women coaches, not men. Part five introduces Megan Chawansky's article "That Takes Balls: Toward a Feminist Coaching Methodology" and her invitation to practice feminist principles while coaching in competitive settings.<sup>160</sup> I consider Chawansky's invitation and pose situations from own my ethnographic research. Furthermore, I link the creation of feminist coaching practices to the needs of marginalized athletes and describe some of those unique vulnerabilities.

### Competing Ideologies of Youth Sports Coaching

In tandem with the structural growth and changes in youth sports since the passage of Title IX, there have been ideological debates between proponents of the public school system and the private youth sports industry. The language of dichotomy is used to emphasize this divide, but naming the two of them is a symbolic move as each shares a related ideological connection to competition. Notably, there has been a growth of regulatory actions for grassroots and extracurricular coaching, which suggests to me that the two organizations have become concomitantly professionalized.

#### *The Coach as Educator*

This model has roots in the use of physical education (PE) for enforcing behavioral, philosophical, and heteronormative ideals.<sup>161</sup> Health education was a significant part of this history. These ideologies were vital in the development of American athletic values, such as

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<sup>159</sup> Jones, Armour, and Potrac, *Sports Coaching Cultures: From Practice to Theory*.

<sup>160</sup> Chawansky, "That Takes Balls: Toward a Feminist Coaching Methodology."

<sup>161</sup> Governali, Paul. "The physical educator as coach." *Quest* 7, no. 1 (1966): 30–33; Eitzen, D. (2000); Joseph Maguire, "Sport and globalization." *Handbook of sports studies* (2000): 356-369; Susan Birrell, "Feminist Theories for Sport," *Handbook of Sports Studies* (2000). 62-78; Nancy Theberge, "Gender and sport," *Handbook of sports studies* (2000): 322-333.; Sandy Grande, *Red pedagogy: Native American social and political thought*, Rowman & Littlefield, 2015.; Hokowhitu, "Tackling Maori Masculinity."

patriotism, nationalism, competition, teamwork, and access to sports and team positions. The themes of healthy bodies and moral values have led educational theorists to develop physical education.

The development of girls' sports also has a long history.<sup>162</sup> However, the majority of modern women's sports were never fully federally or institutionally supported.<sup>163</sup> Associations such as the GAA were the main regulatory organizations for women's sports before Title IX. Girls' sports organizations instituted philosophical objections to the operation of boys' sports organizations. The girls' organizations critiqued the male control of access to training facilities. At this time, the false ideology of women's physical inferiority to men (constructs of middle-class Victorian values) was not often critiqued.<sup>164</sup> As such, girls played adapted versions of boys' sports deemed appropriate for their biology.<sup>165</sup> The passage of Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 mandated that any institution receiving federal funding grant equal access to funds and programming. Sports access became a significant part of the outcome of Title IX for millions of women in the US.<sup>166</sup>

At the collegiate level, Title IX was initially opposed, but quickly enforced, and positions were opened for female athletes and coaches.<sup>167</sup> Previous women's-only athletic associations at the collegiate level began to be courted, invited, and subsumed by large, male-run, and

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<sup>162</sup> Hargreaves, "Women's Boxing and Related Activities: Introducing Images and Meanings; Hargreaves, "Gender on the sports agenda."; Theberge, "Gender and sport."

<sup>163</sup> Allen Guttmann, "The Development of Modern Sports," *Handbook of Sports Studies*. Ed. Jay Coakley, and Eric Dunning. London: SAGE Publications Ltd., 2000. 248-61. SAGE knowledge; Hargreaves, "Women's Boxing and Related Activities: Introducing Images and Meanings."

<sup>164</sup> Hargreaves, "Women's Boxing and Related Activities: Introducing Images and Meanings."

<sup>165</sup> Patricia Cain, "Women, Race, and Sports: Life before Title IX", 4 J. Gender Race & Just. 337 2000-2001.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> Nat'l Collegiate Athletic Ass'n. v. Califano, 444 F. Supp. 425 (D. Kan. 1978) (holding that the NCAA lacked standing), rev'd on the standing issue, 622 F.2d 1382 (10th Cir. 1980).

previously male-only sports associations.<sup>168</sup> At this time women's sports became increasingly akin to men's sports in terms of rules and styles of play. Women's sports also became commercialized (something women's associations actively denounced in men's sports), but media coverage, if existent at all, was, and still is, centered on embodied heteronormative gendered expectations of beauty and femininity.<sup>169</sup> Additionally, women's organizations argued that male-oriented sports operated under the assumption of the benefits of competition.

In high schools, substantial changes were delayed years after initial university compliance. Girls' sports organizations kept an ever-dwindling population of participating high school teams. The expansion of girls' sports meant many initial training positions went to female PE teachers, but the disjuncture between high school and collegiate rules for women's sports eventually led to several lawsuits.<sup>170</sup> Mainly on behalf of white middle-class athletes, these lawsuits forced the last women's only associations to disband and join historically male-only sports organizations. The lawsuits stated that girls forced to adopt different rules and playing styles in high school were at a disadvantage when evaluated by collegiate recruiters, and thus were less likely to receive college scholarships.<sup>171</sup> By the late 1980s, all scholastic sports were under the administration of originally male-only organizations.

The dominant narrative surrounding Title IX assumed that women and girls have benefited from the passage of the law. Many women and girls have gained benefits from the enactment of Title IX. However, the implementation of Title IX has not benefited all women

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<sup>168</sup> Cain, "Women, Race, and Sports: Life before Title IX."

<sup>169</sup> Mary Jo Kane, and Jo Ann Buysse, "Intercollegiate media guides as contested terrain: A longitudinal analysis," *Sociology of Sport Journal* 22, no. 2 (2005): 214-238.

<sup>170</sup> Messner, *It's All for the Kids: Gender, Families, and Youth Sports*; Griffin, *Strong Women, Deep Closets: Lesbians and Homophobia in Sport*; Cain, "Women, Race, and Sports: Life before Title IX."

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

equally.<sup>172</sup> The majority of scholarships and training staff were in historically white women's sports, like volleyball. The greatest funding increase also went to these sports. This line of inquiry is rich in illuminating the ways Title IX has failed poor, working-class women, and women of color.<sup>173</sup> I now turn to the second typology of youth sports coaching: that of the coach as a professional.

### *The Coach as Professional*

The professional coach is a product of the needs of modern sports. European colonial projects first globalized certain sports as vehicles for indoctrinating (called 'educating') indigenous peoples on expected norms of civility.<sup>174</sup> In this way, sports became integral to colonial projects as spaces to display and educate proper colonial power relationships through gender, race, and able body heteronormativity. The improvement of long-distance communication and travel within empires eventually allowed for the standardization of game-related rules.<sup>175</sup> The standardization of rules and improved transportation methods resulted in increased competition between local and national sports teams. Standardization included commercialization of sports.<sup>176</sup> New technology led to increased scrutiny of athletic achievement and sporting bodies. However, only European and American men were considered legitimate competitors and athletic ideals became linked to their bodies.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> Robertha Abney, and Dorothy L. Richey, "Opportunities for minority women in sport—The impact of Title IX,." *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance* 63, no. 3 (1992): 56-59.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> Stanely Eitzen, "Upward mobility through sports? The myths and realities." *Sport in Contemporary Society: An Anthology* (2005): 256-262; Hokowhitu, "Tackling Maori Masculinity."

<sup>175</sup> Maguire (2000)

<sup>176</sup> Ibid,

<sup>177</sup> Davis, Lennard J. "Constructing normalcy." *The disability studies reader* 3 (1997)., Hargreaves (1997), Messner (2009).

In the US, coaching became professionally institutionalized at the same time as public school scholastic sports. To be considered a successful practitioner one must be preoccupied with competition and winning. Winning is intimately tied to earnings. This has become the guiding principle of professional sports, yet coaches are still expected to educate athletes on positive moral and civic qualities.<sup>178</sup> Necessities of competition have molded the professional coach.

Private youth sports have historically restricted access to girls but gaining access after Title IX doubled the athlete pool for public schools and private sports leagues. Even with Title IX legislation girls and their advocates had to take private youth sports leagues to court to gain full access.<sup>179</sup> Initially, women became coaches for girls' teams, but as these sports became more prestigious, lucrative, and legitimized this changed, women were pushed out of the profession and men took over.<sup>180</sup> Now, at every competitive level, men constitute the majority of coaches. Female trainers are mostly hired at the beginner's level and mainly for girls' teams. Research has shown that as the age and competitive level of the players increased, many women were removed from positions, often under suspicious circumstances.<sup>181</sup> For instance, Messner's work on youth sports indicated that male head coaches chose male assistants without experience over women with extensive experience. He found that women were often denied coaching positions as a way of normalizing men as coaches and women as team moms.<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> Eitzen (2000)

<sup>179</sup> For example: Nat'l Org. for Women, *Essex Cnty. Chapter v. Little League Baseball, Inc.*, 318 A.2d 33, 35

<sup>180</sup> Griffin, P. (1992). Changing the game: Homophobia, sexism, and lesbians in sport. *Quest*, 44, 251–265.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>182</sup> Messner, Michael A., and Suzel Bozada-Deas. "Separating the Men from the Moms the Making of Adult Gender Segregation in Youth Sports." *Gender & Society* 23, no. 1 (2009): 49-71.

These same leagues deployed a narrative of coaching that teeters between professional and educator models yet continued programmatically to enshrine the value of competition in league mission statements as an important feature of athlete development.<sup>183</sup> These same leagues rely heavily on volunteer participation, yet those volunteers are subject to background checks, continuing online education, skills clinics, and increasing scrutiny by parents and administrators.<sup>184</sup> Volunteering has become progressively more regulated, and requires specialized knowledge through education courses tailored for specific sports.<sup>185</sup> These regulations have forced youth sports coaches, volunteer or not, to follow professional models, and in this way, this *type* of coach has become firmly institutionalized.

Secondary to the instilling of moral and civic qualities, a practitioner is expected to link professional interests and commercial interests. For instance, the AYSO youth soccer program, an international organization based in Torrance, CA, brought in \$76,125,779 during 2015.<sup>186</sup> The youth sports industry is lucrative and closely associated with two main publishing corporations. The larger corporation is *Human Kinetics* (HK), which produces education programs for all youth sports, including public schools.<sup>187</sup> Although ostensibly volunteering (either because they give free labor or receive very small payment), coaches are nonetheless highly specialized and educated. These coaches are professionalized by the regulatory system. Coaches are undergoing

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<sup>183</sup> Messner (2009)

<sup>184</sup> Taylor, Piper, Garratt (2014). "Sports coaches as 'dangerous individuals' – practice as governmentality." *Sport Education, Society.*, Cushion (2014); Messner (2009).

<sup>185</sup> Taylor, Piper, Garratt (2014), Messner (2009)

<sup>186</sup> AYSO IRS 990 form -

<https://www.charitynavigator.org/index.cfm?bay=search.profile&ein=956205398>

<sup>187</sup> [www.humankinetics.com](http://www.humankinetics.com)



a screening and educational process which claims moral value in youth sport participation via an emphasis on winning within a commercialized sports industry.<sup>188</sup>

### Coaching Studies: A Survey of the Field

Significant coaching research began during the mid-1980s, and researchers focused on quantifying the components of successful coaching and modeling these as clearly as possible.<sup>189</sup> Successful coaching refers to elite (national and international), professionalized (private or professional) sports organizations or leagues), and coaches with experience in these venues and at these levels.<sup>190</sup> Recommendations for *best practices* were arrived at by quantifying coaching into discrete actions, each learned in linear sequences.<sup>191</sup> Yet by the late 1990s, coaching research showed that creating formulaic and universal models for coaching did not help elite coaches win.<sup>192</sup> Elite and professionalized sports coaches considered formalized coach education a hassle. Most coaches found that their experiences with mentors and small, friendly, communities of coaches were more influential than their educations in an institution.<sup>193</sup> In response to the mismatch between coaching research and practice, a new cohort of sociologists suggested the use of different research tools.

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<sup>188</sup> Messner (2009), Taylor, Piper, Garratt (2014).

<sup>189</sup> Jean Côté and John H. Salmela, "The Organizational Tasks of High-Performance Gymnastic Coaches," *The Sport Psychologist* 10, no. 3 (1996): 247–260; Jean Côté, John H. Salmela, and Storm Russell, "The Knowledge of High-Performance Gymnastic Coaches: Competition and Training Considerations," *The Sport Psychologist* 9, no. 1 (March 1995): 76–95, <https://doi.org/10.1123/tsp.9.1.76>.

<sup>190</sup> Côté and Salmela, "The Organizational Tasks of High-Performance Gymnastic Coaches."

<sup>191</sup> Andy Abraham and Dave Collins, "Examining and Extending Research in Coach Development," *Quest* 50, no. 1 (February 1998): 59–79, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00336297.1998.10484264>.

<sup>192</sup> Christopher Cushion and Robyn L. Jones, "Power, Discourse, and Symbolic Violence in Professional Youth Soccer: The Case of Albion Football Club," *Sociology of Sport Journal* 23, no. 2 (2006): 142–161; Jones, Armour, and Potrac, *Sports Coaching Cultures*.

<sup>193</sup> Cushion, Christopher J., Kathleen M. Armour, and Robyn L. Jones, "Locating the Coaching Process in Practice: Models 'for' and 'of' Coaching," *Physical Education & Sport Pedagogy* 11, no. 1 (February 2006): 83–99, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17408980500466995>.

Researchers have focused on discrete actions from elite coaches. Regarding coaching as a social event, researchers focused on the uniqueness of each coach's practice. Coaching researchers have reported descriptive, individualized narratives from extended ethnographic studies of elite and professionalized sports teams and coaches.<sup>194</sup> Sociologists have defined coaching as embedded within relationships that shape each coach and practice. For instance, sociologists suggest that instead of counting how many times a coach says a positive or negative phrase during an event, researchers should seek to understand coaching practices and changing their relationships within social environments.<sup>195</sup> Oral history and ethnographic methods have become standard coaching research protocols.<sup>196</sup> Conceptions of best practices have also shifted away from graduated steps in coaching proficiency.<sup>197</sup> Therefore, best practices are no longer clear but considered *muddy*.<sup>198</sup> Instead of progressive, successive steps, researchers have found coaches evaluate their practices in reference to a changing set of possibilities (different players, other coaches, institutions, game time *vs.* practice, and gym *vs.* weight room).<sup>199</sup>

Such nuanced situational knowledge has become central to understanding coaching. Ethnographic and oral history researchers have defined coaching practice as a spontaneous, heterogeneous, and improvisational activity, and have concluded that such idiosyncratic practices

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<sup>194</sup> Cushion, Armour, and Jones.

<sup>195</sup> Ronald Gallimore and Roland Tharp, "What a Coach Can Teach a Teacher, 1975-2004: Reflections and Reanalysis of John Wooden's Teaching Practices," *The Sport Psychologist* 18, no. 2 (June 2004): 119–37, <https://doi.org/10.1123/tsp.18.2.119>.

<sup>196</sup> Jones, Armour, and Potrac, *Sports Coaching Cultures*.

<sup>197</sup> Côté, J, Salmela, J, Trudel, P, Baria, A and Russell, S (1995), Côté, J, Salmela, J and Russell, S (1995)

<sup>198</sup> Côté, Salmela, and Russell, "The Knowledge of High-Performance Gymnastic Coaches"; Côté and Salmela, "The Organizational Tasks of High-Performance Gymnastic Coaches."

<sup>199</sup> Pierre Trudel et al., "Character Development in Youth Sport: The Perspectives of Ice Hockey and Baseball Coaches" 1, no. 2 (2007): 15; Jones, Armour, and Potrac, *Sports Coaching Cultures*.

occurring during specific situations can lead to coaching success.<sup>200</sup> For instance, researchers found the relationships between coaching personnel at large club soccer teams to vary within the coaching group, coaches, and their players; each set of relationships influences the other.<sup>201</sup> Through long-term participant observation with multi-sport elite coaches, researchers have defined best practices as uniquely individual and learned through interactions over time within shifting dynamics, such as between coach and athlete.<sup>202</sup> Thus, the definition of best practices has evolved from a simple formula to a set of localized interactions.<sup>203</sup>

Within the field, some have theorized this kind of ethnographic data as reflecting embodied structural power. Yet, these studies are not mainstream; for instance, a recent publication theorized the effects of rising coach credentialing requirements in the UK and EU:

The tacit acceptance of this new, performative regime of truth (Foucault, 1980) defining the modern professional [sports coach], both confuses and conflates the issue of increased regulation and control with a discourse of improvement and standards of best practice. Furthermore, in the act of translating policy into practice, the coach becomes aligned with the mechanism of governmentality. The focus is a campaign for continuous self-improvement, of on-going corrective training, for which subjects become active agents in the manifestation and development of well-managed, regulated interaction.<sup>204</sup>

In this passage, the author describes best practices as a decoy for state regulation disguised as professional controls. Researchers have interviewed coaches regarding their relationships within established systems of power. However, within the discipline of Coaching Studies, there are very few studies related to this subset. This emphasis on the coach as an agent of power is significant

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<sup>200</sup> Cushion, Armour, and Jones, “Locating the Coaching Process in Practice.”

<sup>201</sup> Cushion and Jones, “Power, Discourse, and Symbolic Violence in Professional Youth Soccer.”

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid..

<sup>204</sup> William George Taylor, Heather Piper, and Dean Garratt, “Sports Coaches as ‘Dangerous Individuals’—Practice as Governmentality,” *Sport, Education and Society* 21, no. 2 (February 17, 2016): 183–99, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2014.899492>.

for my study. It is consequently imperative that my research maintains a methodological critique of elite and professionalizing narratives.

### Imperatives of Performance and Normalizing Athletes

Most coaching research focuses on competitive, for-profit sports and the most efficacious methods to educate and train coaching staff. In the scholastic setting, coach education materials draw from that same for-profit, private, adult-run research. These coaching models primarily advocate for increasing winning athletic performances, which researchers and business leaders have linked to generating and increasing profit margins.

Coaching researchers have focused on improvements within a competitive sports model premised on increasing wins and decreasing losses. There is a significant amount of research in Coaching Studies focused on investigating and improving the competitive sports model.<sup>205</sup> As such, these researchers have suggested the primary method of developing a successful coaching model is through use of metrics paired with ethnographic research. In this dissertation this model is referred to as a subfield under the umbrella of Coaching Studies and is termed Coaching Science. More so than any other scholarly community, this subfield is dedicated to developing and supporting coaches in pursuing improvements within a competitive sports model. This process, which is completely entangled with the objective of monetizing winning athletic performance, I term the imperative of performance. Coinciding with the pursuit of increasing athletic performance, the field continues to be dominated by research on the outside of the education system and within privately run sports clubs or high level, national sports centers. The overriding factor in such sports is to improve athletes' performance while increasing and emphasizing the drive to succeed.

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<sup>205</sup> Jones, Armour, and Potrac

Elite, high-performance, and private corporate-run sports institutions monopolize Coaching Studies. Research subjects range from early 1970s UCLA men's basketball coach, John Wooden, to Portuguese national team coaches.<sup>206</sup> However, the context of elite, professional sports coaches have stayed consistent. Given that the aim of coaching research involves finding better ways to coach and win, the focus on elite athletic performance is unsurprising.<sup>207</sup> However, researchers within Coaching Studies are more prone to focus and prioritize elite athletes and, along these lines, set performance standards for all athletes and coaches. By using ethnographic and oral history to study coaching, researchers can obtain richer data relating to the coaching process. Focusing on athletic norms, performance standards, and specific competitive environments of elite and professional sports limits researcher's exploration on such standards. However, the use of this richer data continues to be viewed through a narrow lens. Although researchers are able to obtain finer data about this range within Coaching Studies, they nonetheless continue to reproduce an artificial focus on a wide range of topics, protocols, and environments without changing the parameters of their studies.

One example of the imperative of performance is Christopher Cushion's research on youth soccer clubs.<sup>208</sup> Contradicting my characterization of coaching research, Cushion underscored power and history. Players would retaliate against the coaching staff for not being included in club wide decision making by employing disruptive behaviors, such as deliberately running slowly in drills. They used these actions in response to a hierarchical sports and

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<sup>206</sup> Gallimore and Tharp, "What a Coach Can Teach a Teacher, 1975-2004.": Sofia Santos, Robyn L. Jones, and Isabel Mesquita, "Do Coaches Orchestrate? The Working Practices of Elite Portuguese Coaches," *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport* 84, no. 2 (June 2013): 263–72, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02701367.2013.784722>.

<sup>207</sup> Jones, Armour, and Potrac, *Sports Coaching Cultures*.

<sup>208</sup> Cushion and Jones, "Power, Discourse, and Symbolic Violence in Professional Youth Soccer."

coaching environment.<sup>209</sup> The coaches had their own systems of ranking and power issues between themselves, and both groups were tied to the institutional force of the club with its authority to fire and hire both coaches and athletes.

Yet, certain questions are outside of Cushion's conflict of debates on power within the club. For instance, when determining power, we might ask how certain kinds of athletic performance come to be policed by locker room behavior or coaches' punishment of athletes? We might ask how social distinctions like class, race/ethnicity and or disability are configured differently and consistently during practice and games?<sup>210</sup> Does homophobia demand certain kinds of athletic performance?<sup>211</sup> To answers to these questions requires a grounding in historical context, yet most coaching research lacks such history. This, I find, is a rather serious liability for sports science generally and the field Coaching Studies specifically.

An example of the way that historical abstraction truncates research is in *Sports Coaching Cultures: From Theory to Practice* by Robyn Jones, Kathleen Armour, and Paul Potrac.<sup>212</sup> The authors collected oral histories from eight elite coaches, who included six men and two women. These researchers reoriented Coaching Studies toward sociological and ethnographic methods. Offering a deeply descriptive analysis, participants defined coaching as a heterogeneous practice, arguing against modular understandings of past research. Toward the end of the book, several chapters include topics and disciplines not usually associated with

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<sup>209</sup> Cushion and Jones.

<sup>210</sup> "Time for Rugby World to Realise: Plundered Pacific Islands Need a Helping Hand | Stuff.Co.Nz," accessed February 13, 2019, <https://www.stuff.co.nz/sport/rugby/opinion/86651839/time-for-rugby-world-to-realise-plundered-pacific-islands-need-a-helping-hand>.

<sup>211</sup> Sandra L. Kirby, Guylaine Demers, and Sylvie Parent, "Vulnerability/Prevention: Considering the Needs of Disabled and Gay Athletes in the Context of Sexual Harassment and Abuse," *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology* 6, no. 4 (January 2008): 407–26, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1612197X.2008.9671882>.

<sup>212</sup> Jones, Armour, and Potrac, *Sports Coaching Cultures*.

coaching. Sociologist Robyn Jones authored the chapter “Coaches’ Roles.” Jones draws on sociological *role theory* to define coaches’ different methods or roles for engaging athletes.<sup>213</sup> For instance, coaches switched roles depending on whether they built rapport with athletes or instructed athletes about technical skills.

Jones recounted the stories of two male coaches and one female coach, demonstrating ways that humor could be a coaching technique to increase athletic performance. Jones defined humor as one method coaches could use to communicate with athletes.<sup>214</sup> Jones’ short analysis of gender differences was the only section that named gender as an important factor for understanding coaching. Later in this chapter I discuss gender within normative sports coaching and how the system maintains the imperative of performance.

#### Critical Social Sciences and Sports Coaching Research

In this section, I address key texts from sports and coaching research in the following disciplines: Gender Studies, Disability Studies, LGBTQ studies, Ethnic Studies, and Sociology of Sport.<sup>215</sup> I expand upon such theoretical, epistemological, and methodological resources to investigate how Coaching Science serves to expand, enrich, and shift the field of Coaching Studies.

Sociologist of sport and gender, Michael Messner, has produced ethnographic research on sports and coaching. Messner discussed the ways that sports and coaching maintain and reproduces heteronormative gender roles and the pernicious influence these stereotypes have on youth sports. In his ethnographic study of youth sports in South Pasadena, California, Messner

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<sup>213</sup> Jones, Armour, and Potrac., p166-133

<sup>214</sup> Jones, Armour, and Potrac., p166-133

<sup>215</sup> LGBTQ is acronyms for the community of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer individuals. Sometimes the acronym is shortened to LGBT on account of the wording from a particular author or reading.

described ways that leaders kept women from coaching elite little league baseball and softball teams.<sup>216</sup> Contrary to notions that women choose to leave coaching, Messner showed that women were actively and institutionally ousted from coaching positions. Examples cited by Messner included female coaches being denied advancement in their coaching careers; male coaches infantilizing their female peers; power harassment; sexual harassment; ridicule from athletes, fans, sports institutions, and other coaches; parental pressure; and sabotage by assistant or lower level coaches.

The concentration of women's coaching talent at the grassroots level often goes unrecognized. Messner showed that youth sports coaching positions were given to men over women, regardless of familiarity with the sport or competitive experience; this was especially true with the more competitive teams and leagues. Instead of being asked to coach, women are typically designated as team moms based on widely held ideas from wider society. Messner documented how heterosexual cisgender stereotypes influenced who became a coach. Coaches and league administrators, Messner argued, should educate youth through sports by providing equitable opportunities for men and women to coach.

Team mom and coach are based on heterosexual family structures. Messner explained this process as a kind of social sorting:

In short, people's gendered sense of identity, their informal gendered interactions and language, the gendered divisions of labor in their organizations, and their commonly held beliefs about gender and families together fuel a tremendous inertia that tends mostly to make the profoundly social sex-category sorting process appear to be natural.<sup>217</sup>

The father figure is the coach, making strategic plans with his primary focus on preparing athletes to win competitive events. The team mom brings snacks, coordinates extensive parent

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<sup>216</sup> Michael A. Messner, *It's All for the Kids: Gender, Families, and Youth Sports* (Univ of California Press, 2009).

<sup>217</sup> Messner, 47.



participation, provides basic first aid, and provides emotional support for young athletes.

Messner recounted that when he asked league administrators and coaches about the ways they barred women from coaching, the participants claimed women left coaching or never began coaching due to gender differences and individual life choices.

In the United States, the discrimination against female coaches, athletes, and sports has a long history. Researchers have uncovered institutional discrimination against women and LGBT athletes and coaches, including Victorian-era gender ideals reflected in late nineteenth-century sports. One notable break in the rhetoric of the myth of female fragility occurred with female boxers between 1930 and 1940.<sup>218</sup> Hargreaves analyzed women's boxing during this period and found that, "[a]t first glance ... [women boxers are] a radical intervention which blurs the traditional male and female images, identities and class alliances" of sports history.<sup>219</sup> In the years following World War II, one could witness education systems, government policies and practices, and managers of private businesses push women, especially middle-class women, out of the workplace and gym into domestic labor.<sup>220</sup>

Following the enactment of Title IX, feminist theorists of sports have shown that White, middle-, and upper-middle class women gained the most from such rights-based approaches.<sup>221</sup> These authors also detailed the surge in women's sports, female athletes, and female coaches in sports programs from US high schools to universities. Over time, the increase in women coaching began a downward spiral for two main reasons; first, as women's sports gained prestige

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<sup>218</sup> Theberge, "Gender and sport."

<sup>219</sup> Jennifer Hargreaves, "Women's Boxing and Related Activities: Introducing Images and Meanings," *Body & Society* 3, no. 4 (December 1997): 33–49, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1357034X97003004002>.

<sup>220</sup> Jennifer A. Hargreaves, "Gender on the Sports Agenda," *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 25, no. 4 (December 1990): 287–307, <https://doi.org/10.1177/101269029002500403>.

<sup>221</sup> Title IX of 20 U.S.C.A §168; Patricia A. Cain, "Women, Race, and Sports: Life before Title IX Commentary," *Journal of Gender, Race and Justice* 4 (2001 2000): 337–52.

and commercial value female coaches were driven away through heteronormative, violent, coaching experiences. Due to this issue, leadership opened opportunities for male coaches to coach women's teams. Second, a kind of national backlash against lesbian athletes and coaches precipitated many athletes leaving their teams and ending their sports careers.<sup>222</sup>

Griffin's foundational text *Strong Women, Deep Closets* showed that lesbian women in college sports developed a series of methods to survive, which helped some lead successful careers, despite harassment.<sup>223</sup> A nationally recognized coach educator on issues concerning LGBT and sexual minorities in sports, Griffin studied ways to educate collegiate sports program leaders about practices that damage all athletes. She explored ways that lesbian athletes were targeted, and showed how this negatively influenced overall competitiveness and that marginalizing lesbian athletes stressed entire team ecologies and drove talented athletes to quit. Current researchers have confirmed that Griffin's analysis remains valid to this day.<sup>224</sup> Leaders should enhance the diversity of their sports teams to increase competitiveness and thus move toward the social goal of full inclusion.

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<sup>222</sup> Cain; Shari L. Dworkin and Michael A. Messner, "Introduction: Gender Relations and Sport," *Sociological Perspectives* 45, no. 4 (December 2002): 347–52, <https://doi.org/10.1525/sop.2002.45.4.347>; Ruth L. Hall, "Shaking the Foundation: Women of Color in Sport," *The Sport Psychologist* 15, no. 4 (2001): 386–400.

<sup>223</sup> Pat Griffin, *Strong Women, Deep Closets: Lesbians and Homophobia in Sport*. (Human Kinetics Publishers, 1998).

<sup>224</sup> Lynne McPherson et al., "Children's Experience of Sport: What Do We Really Know?," *Australian Social Work* 69, no. 3 (July 2, 2016): 348–59, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0312407X.2015.1055508>; Sylvie Parent and Kristine Fortier, "Comprehensive Overview of the Problem of Violence Against Athletes in Sport," *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 42, no. 4 (August 2018): 227–46, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0193723518759448>; Chawansky, "That Takes Balls"; Megan Chawansky, "The Recruit," *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health* 3, no. 1 (March 2011): 1–8, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19398441.2010.541930>.

Reflecting on issues of diversity in sports and coaching, seminal authors Olenik, Matthews, and Steadward conducted extensive oral histories with female winter Paralympians.<sup>225</sup> They showed the influence of sexism and disability discrimination on elite female para-athletes noting that “[s]ports that are more appealing to women are not promoted by governing organizations to the same extent as traditionally male oriented sport. Likewise, ... sports traditionally popular with able-bodied women were not necessarily the “sport of choice” for women athletes with a disability.”<sup>226</sup> Other Disability Studies sports researchers have corroborated their findings, indicating that coaches and their staff consistently fail to accommodate athletes with disabilities.

Researchers Kirby, Demers, and Parent found a lack of qualified coaches for diverse athletes. When analyzing US and Canadian athletic safety policies, Kirby, Demers, and Parent explained that current coach educators did not consider the particular needs of LGBT and disabled athletes.<sup>227</sup> Findings indicated that sports participation was low for gay and disabled athletes (especially in organized sports), and there were high rates of abuse toward LGBT and disabled individuals in the general population. Researchers would do well to continue addressing this gap in the literature, as LGBT athletes may face sexualized hazing and harassment from teammates and coaches. Both sets of athletes confront a hierarchical sports culture that normalizes heterosexual, cisgender, able-bodied, male athletes. Therefore, “a serious schism in organized sports awareness [exists] of who is at risk for sexual harassment and abuse.”<sup>228</sup> The need to develop coach education responsive to such athletes is important given the rise of LGBT

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<sup>225</sup> Lisa M Olenik, Joan M. Matthews, and Robert D. Steadward, “Women, Disability and Sport: Unheard Voices,” *Canadian Woman Studies* 15, no. 4 (1995): 4.

<sup>226</sup> Olenik, Matthews, and Steadward. p55

<sup>227</sup> Kirby, Demers, and Parent, “Vulnerability/Prevention.”

<sup>228</sup> Kirby, Demers, and Parent., p422

and disabled athletes within popular culture and on the elite athletic stage despite significant difficulties and social barriers.<sup>229</sup>

Disabled athletes experience physical touch and assistive handling at much higher rates than able bodied athletes. The authors explained that higher rates of touch also increased opportunities for inappropriate touch to occur, including during transportation, drug administration, testing, equipment setup, and in establishing locker room needs, with athlete's vulnerability to abuse increasing within specific spaces, in particular in locker rooms and on overnight travel.

### Extended Analysis: Humor, Gender, and Feminist Coaching

This section includes an analysis of critical sports research to bring those disciplines into conversation with Coaching Studies research. I explore questions and implications of adhering to the imperative of performance. I broaden the scope and methodological direction of coaching science to include a diverse range of athletes and coaches. First, I analyze how humor is addressed and presented in a canonical coaching study. I further discuss Chawansky's feminist coaching methodology and describe potential vulnerabilities that marginalized athletes may encounter.

#### *Humor and Coaching*

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<sup>229</sup> "MLB Changes the 'disabled List' to the 'Injured List' after Lobbying from Disability Rights Advocates - The Washington Post," accessed February 13, 2019, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/sports/2019/02/08/baseball-got-it-disability-rights-advocates-hail-mlbs-decision-shelve-disabled-list/?utm\\_term=.71818415abe7](https://www.washingtonpost.com/sports/2019/02/08/baseball-got-it-disability-rights-advocates-hail-mlbs-decision-shelve-disabled-list/?utm_term=.71818415abe7); "Leeds Dad Nominated for a Top Sports Award for Work with Disability Sports - Yorkshire Evening Post," accessed February 13, 2019, <https://www.yorkshireeveningpost.co.uk/sport/leeds-dad-nominated-for-a-top-sports-award-for-work-with-disability-sports-1-9582063>; "Chris Mosier Is the First out Trans Athlete to Compete in an IOC-Regulated World Championship Event," accessed February 13, 2019, [http://www.espn.com/endurance/story/\\_/id/16558785/chris-mosier-first-trans-athlete-compete-ioc-regulated-world-championship-event](http://www.espn.com/endurance/story/_/id/16558785/chris-mosier-first-trans-athlete-compete-ioc-regulated-world-championship-event).

In *Sports Coaching Cultures: From Practice to Theory*, Robyn Jones described humor as a method coaches could use for communication with their athletes.<sup>230</sup> Jones studied the stories of two male coaches and one female coach to show how humor could enhance training sessions and increase athletic performance. Jones relates how one male coach allowed athletes to mimic his speaking style and assume the coach position when changing drills during practice. That coach believed he could increase morale, while decreasing the monotony and pressure of high-performance sports training. Another male coach relied on an impromptu style of humor, which actually seemed premeditated, during competition. When his team was *flat* on defense (showing little movement or anticipation), he yelled to the players “something like... ‘do you want to show a play-boy full frontal or what? Give yourself an angle!’”<sup>231</sup> Jones stated that these two coaches were good examples of how high-performing practitioners used all their teaching tools to engage athletes and create effective coaching environments.

Coaches used different types of humor; one coach engaged his athletes in a kind of collaborative playfulness by inverting power relationships between coach and athlete, while humanizing athlete experiences and reinforcing connections with each other and temporarily inverting the hierarchical coach-athlete structure. The other coach relied on heterosexualized gendered imagery to elicit increased competitiveness and energy during a game. Jones showed that coaches and those managers who run and support sporting programs could implement humor as a performance-enhancing tool. Jones also indicated that some coaches chose not to use humor.

Jones discussed one female coach’s views on humor. Di Bass was an elite swimming coach working with diverse athletes, including beginners, juniors, elites, national, adults, and

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<sup>230</sup> Jones, Armour, and Potrac, *Sports Coaching Cultures*.

<sup>231</sup> Jones, Armour, and Potrac., p128

athletes with disabilities. She was the only coach included in Jones' entire book who worked with athletes with disabilities. This is an unrecognized finding and was important for fully understanding her explanation of humor and coaching. Jones explained that Di Bass saw her male colleagues incorporate humor successfully into coaching; however, she chose not to use humor because, she says, "as a female, she could not emulate that style successfully."<sup>232</sup> Jones only briefly analyzed gender differences through this specific case. Unpacking Jones' analysis requires contextualizing important issues regarding sports coaching and gender, including how these uphold the imperative of performance.

The lack of attention given to differences like gender indicates the importance of such categories in Coaching Studies. On Di Bass's use of humor, Jones stated,

[i]n this regard, [she] is in a unique situation, one where gender sensibilities kick in. Her response mirrors her reflective, thoughtful and socially aware coaching style, and her appreciation that coaching is, at heart, a socially context-bound activity.<sup>233</sup>

Jones's study lacked historical and contextual analysis of humor as coaching pedagogy. Of the three coaches profiled on humor, only Di Bass's response was labeled as displaying *gender sensibilities*. Jones did not consider Di Bass' diverse coaching experience as an effect of gender. Nor did he consider that her views on humor might equally have been a product of having coached a range of athletes, which might have prompted her to develop a unique coaching approach. The emotional, intellectual, and physical differences of her athletes surely were as significant as the fact that she is a woman within the community of high-performance sports coaching. Neither did Jones find *gender sensibilities* to be a factor in the two examples of male coaches using humor, despite one using heterosexist imagery during a regular season game

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<sup>232</sup> Jones, Armour, and Potrac., p128

<sup>233</sup> Jones, Armour, and Potrac., p127-128

coaching an all-girls basketball. Jones may have displayed bias when studying Di Bass.

Therefore, there is a gap in the research regarding exploration of diverse coaching methods.

*Feminist Coaching Methodology and Athlete Vulnerability*

Megan Chawansky studied Pat Griffin's research on lesbian athletes, coaches, and administrators inside collegiate sports. That work shows that Griffin explored feminist coaching pedagogies. In "That Takes Balls: Toward a Feminist Coaching Methodology," Chawansky cited Griffin as a model for her own feminist pedagogy:

I wondered whether I could incorporate Griffin's ideas and practices with those of my own team. I also wondered how my experiences might be different and what might be the same ... [in the] attempt to springboard from Griffin's feminist coaching paradigm to conceptualize and apply my own feminist coaching methodology.<sup>234</sup>

Chawansky described the historically male-dominated world of competitive coaching and her desire to incorporate feminist principles during a two-year stint as head coach of an NCAA Division II women's basketball team.<sup>235</sup> She stated that feminist educators had found ways of addressing differences of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation while working toward principles of social justice. Chawansky defined coaches as teachers on the court.

Chawansky reports that she consistently confronted the stereotype that all coaches were male during player recruiting meetings. Parents, players, administrators, and assistant coaches questioned her qualifications. Chawansky also described a lack of literature and institutional personnel supporting coaches to develop feminist coaching pedagogies:

I have seen little work elsewhere on the possible fusion between feminist pedagogies and coaching and the real-life application of such a method, I support the documentation of any attempt at feminist coaching so that experiences, insights, critiques, and

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<sup>234</sup> Chawansky., p108

<sup>235</sup> The NCAA stands for the National Collegiate Athletic Association. The organization classifies member schools into three different levels of competition, Division I & II schools offer athletic scholarships, Division III does not.

shortcomings will be available to others wishing to incorporate feminist coaching tactics.<sup>236</sup>

Similar to Chawansky's inspiration from Pat Griffin's work, I am encouraged by her outline of feminist coaching and her request for scholars to continue developing models of justice within competitive sports. In this dissertation I document my attempts and those of others implementing feminist coaching pedagogies. I set the stage for expanding coaching science from prioritizing single sex and gender sports contexts to those that are mixed by various configurations of race, ethnicity, gender, LGBTQ status, disability, and class. I follow Chawansky's inquiries that push back against established disciplinary doxa.<sup>237</sup>

When developing her feminist coaching methodology, Chawansky encountered situations with athletes who defied her efforts to integrate theory and practice.

[I] attempted to decenter power by being transparent about my understanding of proper communication between coaches and athletes ... I differentiated between "yelling at" them and "yelling to" them while they performed on the court and in practice. I told my team that while they could expect me to yell instructions to them while they played, I would not yell to embarrass them and would expect the same when they interacted with their teammates. I felt this to be pretty reasonable, but my certainty in the matter faced a challenge one day when one of my players said to me, "I need you to yell at me more. The only way I get motivated [for games] is when my coaches yell at me." After hearing this, I suggested that she think about why yelling was considered a viable way to motivate people in the athletic arena but not elsewhere and I tried to remain steadfast in my application of what I considered an important aspect of feminist coaching, but her comments weighed heavily on my mind. Was I doing my players a disservice by attempting to impart a style that failed to meet their (self-perceived) needs? Was my response to my player akin to designing an offensive game plan with no clear understanding of my players' skills and abilities? What does a feminist coach do when her players display little or no interest in her feminist politics and just want to play ball?<sup>238</sup>

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<sup>236</sup> Chawansky., p117

<sup>237</sup> Pierre Bourdieu and Terry Eagleton, "Doxa and Common Life," n.d., 11; Lisa Hunter, "Bourdieu and the Social Space of the PE Class: Reproduction of Doxa through Practice," *Sport, Education and Society* 9, no. 2 (July 2004): 175–92, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1357332042000175863>.

<sup>238</sup> Chawansky, "That Takes Balls.," p116



Chawansky notes that her chosen coaching style may have influenced her players and therefore her team's competitiveness on the court. Her comments reflect an acknowledgement of the difficulty of disrupting and changing the imperative of performance. I have often pondered this dilemma when reflecting on my youth coaching experiences.

Chawansky draws on her experience coaching NCAA women's basketball as the foundation for her theoretical proposal. Within the section highlighted above, Chawansky faced athlete push back due to bias toward feminist principles in general and their strangeness within coaching strategies more particularly. The situation could have been predicted with considerable accuracy. My historical ethnographic research expands upon Messner's previous work, I found highly competitive young athletes have faced years of high-performance cultures; these cultures work to maximize single gender athletic achievement and the potential profits.

I agree with Chawansky's approach of asking the player to reflect on her own assumptions of appropriate verbal support on and off the court. I also agree that she did a disservice to her athlete. She likened her issue to failing by designing game plans without knowing all skillsets of the athletes. Chawansky questioned everything, even her own feminist coaching convictions. Beyond the strength of her convictions and truth of her principles, the durability of competitive collegiate athletics exists; moreover, every coach is a replaceable actor. Chawansky's text has numerous examples outlining the difficulty of practicing feminist principles when confronted by administration and sports leaders that expect coaches to pursue competitive success. In other words, she confronted the imperative of performance.

On the topic of coaching pedagogy, Kirby, Demers, and Parent critiqued violent hetero-masculine sports culture and gaps in current coach education.<sup>239</sup> They gauged the potential

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<sup>239</sup> Kirby, Demers, and Parent, "Vulnerability/Prevention."

vulnerabilities that LGBT and disabled athletes faced. For athletes with disabilities, the authors revealed that “[i]n reviewing the sport disability literature, we were startled by some of the specific vulnerabilities...for example, physical handling, drug administration, and drug testing for athletes living with disabilities are likely unique and there may be many opportunities for inappropriate touch to occur.”<sup>240</sup>

The authors considered how “a physically or mentally disabled athlete who regularly busses back and forth to training” could experience multiple instances of their bodily sovereignty being violated.<sup>241</sup> The authors described how current anti-sexual harassment, abuse education, and protection programs offered to coaching staff and supervisory personnel typically only focused on normative athletes.<sup>242</sup> That training, they argue, did not consider the needs of LGBT or disabled athletes, nor did that training give suggestions on how to handle such situations institutionally. The authors explained that the educational failures existed within a competitive, hierarchical sports culture that normalized straight, male, able-bodied athletes. The LGBT and disabled athlete essentially does not exist within the coach education literature; “identified [as] a serious schism in organized sport’s awareness of who is at risk for sexual harassment and abuse in sport and a gap in the harm prevention policies and programs that exist.”<sup>243</sup>

The vulnerabilities found within the needs of disabled and gay athletes in the context of sexual harassment and abuse have prompted the question of why there is such a dearth of literature on this topic. For most athletic programs, all participants expected to be treated equally. But such equal treatment is not always the reality. Even though the US has such policies as Title

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<sup>240</sup> Kirby, Demers, and Parent., p411

<sup>241</sup> Kirby, Demers, and Parent., p417; Questions of legal power and the recognition of people with disabilities deciding for themselves is not problematized in this article

<sup>242</sup> Kirby, Demers, and Parent, “Vulnerability/Prevention.”

<sup>243</sup> Kirby, Demers, and Parent., p422

IX and the American with Disabilities Act, discriminatory practices continue within many athletic arenas. Specifically, there continues to be bias and outright neglect and harassment from coaching personnel towards athletes with certain disabilities. Kirby et al. also claim that 80 percent of all women who have a developmental disability have been harassed and even sexually assaulted at some point in their athletic career.<sup>244</sup>

My own experience with the regulatory apparatus of youth coaching is partially covered by the previous critiques of sports. All coaches at Azusa High School must take a one-time, district and state-sanctioned, online coach education course.<sup>245</sup> After taking the exam, I commented to my athletic director that I did not feel prepared to coach athletes with disabilities. She responded that we would handle such circumstances as and when they arose but offered no suggestions in the meantime. The online exam emphasized that coaches should focus on the similarities between students, not the differences. The exam addressed LGBT status and disability quickly and with lots of explanations about the potential legal risks associated with coaching. One of the implications of Kirby et al.'s article is the connection between lack of coach education about non-normative athletes and the focus on elite coaching environments in Coaching Studies. The elite and professional sports environment normalizes straight, male, able-bodied athletes. Even Olenik et al.'s oral history research and Chawansky's search for a feminist coaching methodology were tied to elite sports.

### Conclusion

In this chapter, I analyzed the scope and limit of current Coaching Science. Through critiquing Coaching Science, I found the research focused on ways to increase athletic

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<sup>244</sup> Ibid, 410

<sup>245</sup> [http://www.asep.com/asep\\_content/org/CIF.cfm](http://www.asep.com/asep_content/org/CIF.cfm);

performances at all levels of coaching pedagogy at all costs. I drew from gender and disability scholars to historicize current coaching practices and sports cultures, as well as to develop critiques to decenter the competitive objective. Finally, I reviewed key coaching theorists and notes from my ethnographic fieldwork.

In the subsequent chapters, I study embedded, contextual data from my ethnographic research at Azusa High School, Long Beach Polytechnic High School, and school sites in Japan. I addressed the material culture and political economies of my field sites, including their implications for future research. I then returned to studying the imperative of performance on organizing coaching practice and the difficulties of changing coaching pedagogies within the typical hierarchical, high-performance settings. From this understanding of coaching science, the requirements to conform and opportunities to disrupt popular coaching narratives hold implications for reorienting the field. Only by profiling and elevating those like Di Bass and her rich experience with diverse athletes can coaching begin to make the changes needed to accommodate new generations of participants and practitioners. Meanwhile the imperative of performance continues to shape research and normalize only the narrowest range of athletic and coaching ability and type.

In the following chapter, I present a detailed description of Azusa High School.<sup>246</sup> I focus on the outdoor and gym areas of the campus. I recount the journey from the parking lot to the school, which involves several barriers, checkpoints, sign-in sheets, and administrative procedures. I explain the ways that this school infrastructure influences coaching.

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<sup>246</sup> Joseph G. Ponterotto, "Brief Note on the Origins, Evolution, and Meaning of the Qualitative Research Concept Thick Description," *The Qualitative Report* 11, no. 3 (2006): 538–549; Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," in *The Cultural Geography Reader* (Routledge, 2008), 41–51.; Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," in *The Cultural Geography Reader* (Routledge, 2008), 41–51.

# Chapter 3

## Material Ecology and Circulation Patterns at Azusa High

### Introduction

My examination of current youth coaching issues in the US was based primarily on the setting at Azusa High School. In this chapter, I explain the layout of the Azusa High School campus, its infrastructure, and the student population's interactions and travels through the school. I inspect the physical landscape, paying attention to ways population circulatory patterns are created by the interaction between normative gender expectations, administrative control (or lack thereof), and the physical and social environment.

The first section gives background information about the city of Azusa. The second examines the main office and its administrative spaces. I document the class photos and inspirational posters covering the walls with a tour of the main offices and restrooms. Moving on to the main campus, the third section describes the general layout of the school. I cover the location of the different classrooms housed in separate quads and the difficulty of getting keys to these spaces as a walk-on coach. This section ends with a discussion of the older buildings and empty pool that are located outside and behind the gym. The fourth and fifth sections concentrate on the gym. I document the space and some of its uses by different groups. This includes issues with restrooms, locker room doors, and control over the snack bar. Inside of the gym, I highlight the sports banners on the walls, equipment lockers, and the arrangement of drinking fountains. The final section is a detailed accounting of how the gym is used by the badminton team during regular practices. The specific lockers, closets, and doors badminton uses are profiled along with the distribution of coaches and players per team.

Of particular importance in organizing this chapter is the condition of the school's infrastructure, the use of its spaces, and questions of control. To orient the discussion of these elements in this chapter, I borrow the concept of *late industrialism* from anthropologist Kim Fortun and use it as a lens through which to describe the physical and material conditions at Azusa High.<sup>247</sup> Fortun reports:

In late industrialism...disaster[s] are everywhere, eminent and normal...emergent from [the] tight coupling between natural, technical, political-economic, social, and discursive systems, all of which are aging, often overwrought, ossified, and politicized. Deteriorating industrial infrastructure, landscapes dotted with toxic waste ponds, climate instability, incredible imbrication of commercial interest in knowledge production, in legal decisions, in governance at all scales—this is late industrialism.<sup>248</sup>

The grounds, buildings, artwork, sports equipment, administrative procedures, and general state of Azusa High School's infrastructure can be described as "late industrial." Referring to the work of Fortun allows me to speak of the connections between the built environment of the high school and the circulation and management of bodies within the conditions of an ailing site. The campus itself was built in 1956 and shows signs of neglect and disrepair. The staff are forced to conduct daily business with often antiquated or inadequate approaches. At times the administration of the school struggles with responding to the needs of students while also maintaining a safe environment, such as the case of locking the boys' gym restroom as a fix for graffiti described in depth later in this chapter. The deteriorating yearly class photographs hanging in the main office, murals painted in hallways, and sports banners hanging in the gym exemplify the ossification of late industrial material ecology. As I will show, these observations are especially true of Azusa High's sports infrastructure.

Azusa, CA

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<sup>247</sup> Kim Fortun, "Ethnography in Late Industrialism," *Cultural Anthropology*, 27, no. 3 (2012): 446-464; Kim Fortun, *From Latour to Late Industrialism* (University of Chicago Press, 2014). 310.

<sup>248</sup> Kim Fortun, *From Latour to Late Industrialism*

In order to understand Azusa High School, it is important to have background understanding of the city. In my ethnographic and coaching experience, the city of Azusa is widely known for two reasons. The first is that the city is the southern gateway for all major access to the Angeles National Forest through the San Gabriel Canyon. California Highway 39, or Azusa Avenue, runs south from the canyon and crosses the entirety of the east San Gabriel Valley eventually ending in Huntington Beach more than fifty miles south. Many people even forget that Azusa is a city and instead think only of Highway 39.

According to the most recent census estimates, Azusa's total population is 49,958.<sup>249</sup> The median income is \$52,000 and 20 percent of the population live below the federal poverty line. In total, 63 percent of the population identifies as Hispanic or Latino, 20 percent as White, 12 percent as Asian, with African Americans, Native Americans, and Pacific Islanders making up the remaining 5 percent. The Azusa Unified School District provides the city with K-12 education and runs eleven elementary schools, three middle schools, and three high schools, including Azusa High.<sup>250</sup> Historic Route 66 runs through the middle of the city and parallels the mountains. The city is also home to an EPA Superfund site declared in 1985 because the weapons manufacturer Aerojet (now Northrop Grumman) was found responsible for contamination of the aquifer under the city and eventually of the San Gabriel Valley groundwater basin.<sup>251</sup>

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<sup>249</sup> US Census Bureau, "Fact Finder," *US Census Bureau*, 2019, <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF>.

<sup>250</sup> US Census Bureau, "Quick Facts: Azusa City, California, United States," *US Census Bureau*, 2019. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/azusacitycalifornia,US/PST045218>.

<sup>251</sup> EPA, "Brownfields Property Progress Profile," *EPA* 2019, <https://obipublic.epa.gov/analytics/saw.dll?PortalPages>; "\$250-Million Deal OK'd to Treat Basin's Water," *Los Angeles Times*, May 10, 2002, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2002-may-10-me-water10-story.html>.

Second, Azusa is recognized for the increase in criminal activity that has attracted media attention. While there are normal occurrences of criminal activity in Azusa, a mass shooting within the city made national headlines in 2019. During this incident a young boy sitting on his family's front porch was shot in the chest by two individuals. Near his home are one elementary and one high school, and a gated community where many Azusa Pacific University (APU) students live. According to government statistics, Azusa experiences violent crime like almost every other city in the United States and in that is comparable to neighboring cities.<sup>252</sup>

The neighborhood where the shooting occurred is known in Azusa as “Little TJ” or “The Projects.”<sup>253</sup> The small neighborhood has one street entrance and exit. Little TJ has a reputation; everyone considers it a dangerous area. Never mentioned in these discussions is that Azusa Pacific University (APU) ran a homework help clinic in the neighborhood since 1997 without a problem.<sup>254</sup> The clinic volunteers are predominantly White, Midwestern, and Christian, in contrast with the city's inhabitants at large.

### Azusa High School

#### *Location*

Azusa High School is situated on a rectangular plot of land measuring a half mile from north to south and a quarter of a mile from the east to west. Built in 1952, the high school is a structure of post-World War II visions of educational efficiency. The front office and main

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<sup>252</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigations, “Table 8 - California,” *FBI*, 2014, [https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2014/crime-in-the-u.s.-2014/tables/table-8/table-8-by-state/Table\\_8\\_Offenses\\_Known\\_to\\_Law\\_Enforcement\\_by\\_California\\_by\\_City\\_2014.xls](https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2014/crime-in-the-u.s.-2014/tables/table-8/table-8-by-state/Table_8_Offenses_Known_to_Law_Enforcement_by_California_by_City_2014.xls).

<sup>253</sup> Aaron Castrejon, “Azusa Leaders Begin Improvements to Address Violence-Plagued Neighborhood,” *SGVCityWatch.Com* (blog), February 2019, <http://www.sgvcitywatch.com/7/post/2019/02/azusa-leaders-begin-improvements-to-address-violence-plagued-neighborhood.html>. Accessed August 25, 2019.

<sup>254</sup> Neighborhood Homework House, “About Us,” *Neighborhood Homework House*, 2018, <https://www.neighborhoodhomeworkhouse.org/about-us>.



entrance are both on the east side of the property, along Cerritos Avenue. There is a large parking lot, which accommodates the vehicles of teachers and campus visitors. The shape of the parking lot is like an uppercase “L” with the long side paralleling the north-south street of Cerritos Avenue. The shorter side of the parking lot extends west into the campus and is shaped like a cul-de-sac. Before the school day begins and at 2:50 p.m. in the afternoon, several imposing security guards patrol the parking lot while also directing traffic. During those time slots, the guards restrict access to the main parking lot for non-school employees; they never recognize me at first glance, although I have worked at Azusa for ten years and attended the school between 1997 and 2001.

The main parking lot is on the west side of the campus off Cerritos Avenue. Entering the campus, one is confronted by a big sign that directs visitors to enter through the main office. This room has floor-to-ceiling windows that face the parking lot. The administrative occupants of the room therefore have the ability to view everything that occurs outside. The old main office entrance had no windows beyond small slits in the doors similar to a window slightly ajar. It is cramped and busy, and because everyone passes through it, there is a constant sound of opening and closing doors. Both the principal and the assistant principal still have offices in the older space.

### *Fencing*

New fencing was installed in 2018 and is roundly considered more intimidating than the previous version. The bars on the old fence, rusting, irregular, and painted beige, were a familiar presence. All the buildings on campus were also painted the same color, so that from far away, the fence faded into the school landscape. The campus photos in the main office attest to this fact as they document the change in students and school architecture over years. The new fence is

taller than the previous one and is gleaming with black rubber coating. From far away the fence is very visible against the backdrop of the beige buildings. Enclosing the entire property, including the sports fields, the fence is the most obvious boundary between campus and the surrounding neighborhood.

Students, teachers, staff, administrators, parents, and neighbors have opinions about the fence that are both positive and negative. Many opinions stress safety and the importance of keeping bad actors off campus. A minority of opinions stress that the fences intimidate students from ditching classes during the school day. The on campus security officers emphasize that beyond any physical protection the fence provides, it also brings them peace of mind from outsiders entering to do harm. When I mention that parents often congregate outside the fence to hand lunch to their children, never entering the school or main office—which could be a risk to student safety—the security guards shrug their shoulders in acknowledgement. The fence is a curious boundary functionally porous in some ways and impenetrable in others.

### *Demographics*

Similar to many older alumni, I remember Azusa High as having a Latinx majority student body. Only teachers and coaches who have been on campus for more than thirty-five years can personally attest to the demographic changes. Based on the class photos adorning the walls, one may think the change from mostly White students in uniforms to Latinx students with no uniforms was as dramatic as the switch from black and white film to color. As the demographics of the campus change from majority White students to more mixed and a majority Latinx population, the photo technology moves from black and white photos to color.

As the current study's focus is on gender, it is important to point out that the administrative roles are commonly held by men while women occupy assistant or secondary

positions. For example, Azusa High School currently has one male head principal with two assistant principals, one a woman who has worked at Azusa High for over ten years in several different administrative positions. The second assistant principal is a man who graduated from Azusa High during the 1980s and has only recently taken this position. While the two share the role of assistant principal, by observing daily activities it is clear that most of the staff approach the male assistant principal for assistance and answers first. On staff there are over fifty teachers, of whom 42 percent are men, and of this percentage 90 percent are teachers in one of the sciences, technology, engineering, or math (STEM) classes. The female teachers are educators in the liberal arts and less than 10 percent teach in areas associated with STEM courses.

In my time at Azusa High, I have never once encountered a man working in a clerical position. While women have occasionally stepped into the principal's role, not one man has been an administrative assistant, a receptionist, or a clerk. I have often wondered what the school culture would be like if women filled all administrative positions, and men filled the programmatic, front office positions. Male coaches and physical education (PE) teachers to whom I posed this possibility discounted any benefits, although they did concede the overall culture of the school would change. They explained that an all-women's administrative team would be a nightmare, claiming that women leaders would not be capable of enforcing restrictions on student behavior or requiring higher academic standards from students and teachers, and suggesting that they would be too relaxed when having to reprimand faculty. The same critiques are not leveled at male administrators.

I also spoke with the few female coaches and PE teachers about their views on an all-female versus all-male administration. Their views were more direct than their male counterparts. Each believed an administration of all women would have a positive benefit.

However, several explained that having all women would not be ideal. These women commented on the possibility of issues arising in an all-female space, comparing an all-female administration to a “catty” all-girls volleyball team. Because this stereotype is used to explain the negative effects of having women fill every administrative position, I am certain that the gendered stereotypes feminist scholars have observed in sports over the past forty years remain vibrant at Azusa High across campus, in sports and administrative settings. I never once heard a teacher or coach characterize an all-male administration as being like a sports team.

### The Main Office

Admittance onto campus begins in the main office. Upon entering from the parking lot, on the right are the principal's office, the secretary's office, employee mailboxes, the assistant principal's office, the aging public address system, and the staff restrooms. The principal and assistant principal's offices have large windows facing the parking lot. From outside, the windows are tinted so that no one can peer in. Together with the glass doors of the main office, the windows in the principal's and assistant principal's offices offer the administration a complete view of activity in the parking lot.

Buttressing the walls in the main office are large, wall-height filing cabinets that archive permission slips, attendance sheets, district-community monthly bulletins, daily bulletins, and notices of school, district, and community events. Next to these cabinets are two large posters with the campus dress code and student code of conduct, with a smaller poster explaining the right to enroll in public education, regardless of race, class, gender, disability, or immigration status. Seats line the walls in the office, which also doubles as a waiting room for visitors.

### *Restrooms*

While there are definitely issues associated with gender equity within the school, there certainly is no gender discrimination in the school's restroom aesthetics: they are both equally dismal. Such areas as the men's and women's restrooms appear to be from a different era, echoing the time the school was built. I often enjoy visiting the restroom just to wash my hands because the experience is like visiting a museum. The first element noticed is the cramped space itself. In fact, if a person stands at the sink, they are most likely to be hit by the door as it opens. The tile is in good condition, except for a few holes that show that stall dividers have been installed and reinstalled a few times. According to other staff who like me were also students at Azusa, the tile still has the characteristic dullness that it did in the 1960s, '70s, and '80s, with the beige color remaining visible as none is obscured with graffiti. To my untrained eye, the men's restroom seems to have undergone little renovation, remaining inaccessible to larger bodies, anyone in a wheelchair or with a mobility device, or more than one person at a time. Reports from the women's restroom say the conditions are worse, with even less space than the men's. These are the only restrooms in the main office. The closest accessible restrooms are next to the band and choir room, about fifty feet away.

### *Hallways and Photographs*

The halls provide an interesting visual archive of Azusa High School. Down the hallway, past the restrooms, and on toward the principal's office are senior class photos and panorama shots of the graduating class aligned to stand in the shape of their graduating years. Thus, my class was shaped into "01" to stand for 2001. The photos on the left side of the wall range from the 1990s to the 2000s. The class photos on the opposite wall are from the late 1970s through the 1980s. Switching back and forth between the two walls, fashion trends, hairstyles, clothing, and faces create a unique mosaic every year. My aunt, with her Gloria Estefan-inspired hair and

makeup, is lost in a sea of large bangs, dark lipstick, and jean jackets. Differences in style of the graduating classes clearly change every five years.

Left of the main office front desk, and through a doorway, is a second waiting room. Several smaller offices branch from this central room. All the traffic moves through this room, connecting the school with the outside world. There is an equipment closet to the left when first entering, followed on the right by the attendance office, then the International Baccalaureate program administration office, followed by the athletic director's office (AD). On the far wall of the waiting room there are inspirational photos of past Azusa High School athletes, clippings of action shots taken during sporting events, and news articles of other sporting events showing successful endeavors of previous Azusa athletes. The other walls continue the theme of class photos. This collection is either all black and white or faded color prints. The photos were taken between the late 1950s and the early 1970s.

The earliest photos show all boys clean shaven, with short, cropped hair, wearing white, button-up shirts tucked into their light-colored trousers and all wearing dark ties. Continuing the "Sunday's best" style, girls were seated on the grass in front of the boys. They wore dark colored skirts, light colored sleeveless sweater vests with various intricate patterns, and numerous 1950s "updo" hairstyles. Aztec-inspired names adorn each class photo. Early photographs show these words emblazoned across the bottom, highlighted and celebratory. Over time, these captions were shrunk and made to blend into the photo more seamlessly.

The photos also document changes in the school's built environment. For instance, studying the photos chronologically, one notices there was no fence built around the school until the late 1980s. Changes in landscaping and the conditions of buildings are also noticeable. In almost all the class photos there is one specific main office wall visible that has always had

artwork. Beginning in the 1950s and through the present, that wall has hosted diverse work. Elements of the school's material ecology, such as the buildings and murals, are key to unearthing ways race, gender, and administrative power operate more broadly on campus.

### *Mascot and Murals*

As represented in the earliest class photos, since the founding of the school in 1956, Azusa's mascot has been a caricature of indigenous Aztecs. The depictions of the mascot have changed over time to include women, but, though updated, there has not been a similar increase in sensitivity to ethnic, racial, and gender stereotypes. The first versions of the mascot were drawn simply. No major bodily differences between the drawing and the students were visible. Only stereotyped clothing, which covered most of the body, were what made the drawing stand apart from the students. In the 1960s, and once female images were included in the depictions, the drawings began to rely more heavily on gendered stereotypes. Differences in body size, musculature, and demeanor accentuated the loss of clothing. Now, men are sketched as outlandishly muscled, scantily clad, and grasping raised weapons. Images of women are depicted in a cartoonish manner, being non-muscular, also scantily clad, and clutching the man's arm or leg.

There are more than twenty murals and large drawings on campus, but not all incorporate the school's mascot. Some, like the murals adorning the science and auto shop classrooms, include images of tools or famous persons. Of the few murals that represent women, the only one on campus that depicts a woman alone, fully clothed, and in command of a weapon is in the girls' locker room. The painting was commissioned by the Athletic Director from the art department and painted by my sister, Victoria Duke. The mural is permanently hung above the locker room office, showing a woman holding a bow under tension ready to let the arrow fly.

The woman is by herself on an open plain with the sun above her; the bow and arrow are pointed toward something off the canvas and, according to Duke, the woman is smirking in the same direction. The style and content are unique among murals on campus, skewing the bodily misrepresentation of most artwork.

On the stage wall at the front of the gym there is a large mural depicting a single male Aztec person stoically facing the mountains brandishing a spear and shield. This particular mural, not covered by roof or tree and located in an especially high traffic area of campus, is continually repaired from the effects of graffiti and weather. The changes are often readily noticeable because of the new paint, though the stereotyped image itself is recycled. As the years have passed, more murals have been created down many of the school's hallways. Each new mural depicts certain changes in styles, often with less stereotyped depictions of men and women. These changes occurred most often when the student body was involved in the decision making and creation of such murals.

However, to this day the representation of gender is still one sided with most sports murals focusing on boys' sports. The most common mural that has been refreshed, revised, and redone over the years is about the sports of football, basketball, and baseball. One year a mural was placed on the wall outside the athletic department with a painting of a baseball bat, a baseball glove, ball, and the playing diamond in the background. Other images in the mural included a basketball and hoop, a football helmet and end posts, a soccer ball, a golf ball and set of clubs, wrestling ear guards, a tennis ball and tennis racket, and cleats and a high jump bar.

Since this mural was painted in 2015, I have been curious to know who made the final decisions about the sports imagery. Why was there no clear depiction of badminton? There is no evidence of shuttle, nets, court, or racket. Inquiring about these deficiencies in representation, I



have been told by several administration officials that they consider the single tennis racket to represent badminton as well as tennis. The lack of a shuttle in the mural is explained as a mistake and, I am told, should be no problem to fix. In 2017, competitive cheering became an officially sanctioned high school sport. I asked then about the lack of representation of cheering in the same mural. Again, I am told this is a simple issue to fix. Over the last four years the mural has been repaired, but badminton and cheer have still not been included.

### *Inspirational Posters and the Athletic Director's Office*

Most of the inspirational sports posters on campus are purportedly aimed at students and emphasize that success and personal qualities are attainable through sports participation. Even though posters and other visual imagery are often used to coax students into participating in football, baseball, basketball, tennis, or other sports, many coaches complain about the attitudes of their current team players. I often wonder if coaches talk negatively about every new generation of young athletes, as I have heard others say that modern kids lack ambition, unlike older generations. Perhaps the adults, working for years under the gaze of the aging sports propaganda on the walls, have succumbed to the messaging. Decontextualized inspirational sports quotes on the stock images of athletes engaged in competition bombard PE teachers and sports coaches. Many posters are located inside the coaches' and teachers' offices, unavailable to students but always in view of adults in charge. Of the inspirational material easily accessible, there is only one poster of an Azusa graduate.

In the second waiting room next to the main office, there is a large photo of Ruth Wysocki finishing the LA Marathon in the 1980s with a big inspirational message across the top and bottom of the photo. The redeeming quality of this poster was that she was an Azusa graduate; otherwise, the imagery and message were indistinguishable from the others. This

message states, “Never stop believing in yourself”<sup>255</sup> Ruth is an alumna from Azusa’s class of 1974. She eventually competed internationally for the US, reaching the Olympics, as a marathoner. As a student at Azusa, she set records for middle distance track and field, and was a standout performer in the 800-meter race.<sup>256</sup> During her foremost years at Azusa, Wysocki became the California State champion in the 440- and 880-meter runs.<sup>257</sup> Unfortunately, I only learned about her when I became a coach, more than a decade after graduating high school.

Wysocki’s story is one of talent, determination, and scandal. In 1988, she joined a small contingent of mostly American track and field athletes who traveled and competed in apartheid South Africa. In exchange, she received both money from the sponsors and an initial ten-year ban on international competition due to a US sports blockade on South Africa to pressure regime change.<sup>258</sup> I have never met an adult on campus that knew Wysocki’s athletic history. When learning about Wysocki, other coaches are usually shocked that she participated in sanctioned events.<sup>259</sup> I have seen her poster and read the caption countless times over the years, as a student and then as a coach, and thought of it as part of the aging inspirational sports posters that adorned the walls of the AD’s office with inspirational messages about the marvels of *hard work, determination, perseverance, and preparation.*

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<sup>255</sup> Albert Caruana, “Catching up with 1984 Olympian Ruth Wysocki...,” February 2010, <http://www.crosscountryexpress.com/2010/02/catching-up-with-1984-olympian-ruth.html>.ruth.

<sup>256</sup> Caruana “Catching Up.”

<sup>257</sup> Caruana, “Catching Up”

<sup>258</sup> Owen S Solomon, “The Politicization of Amateur Athletics: South Africa and the American Athlete’s Legal Dilemma of Participation” 14 (n.d.): 53; “South Africa Tour May Lead to Suspensions,” *Los Angeles Times*, September 10, 1988, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1988-09-10-sp-1474-story.html>; “A Group of Mostly American Track and Field Athletes,...,” UPI, 2019, <https://www.upi.com/Archives/1988/10/22/A-group-of-mostly-American-track-and-field-athletes/2263593496000/>.

<sup>259</sup> A limitation of this section is that I do not at the moment consider the lasting effects of Wysocki’s decision to compete in South Africa on the school population at large. The legacies of her career on students of color and women are not listed.

Inside the AD's office, the walls are covered with Azusa athletic awards and photos. There is a huge message board, mostly covered with carefully placed photos, newspaper clippings, and calendars of Lizette Salas (the most successful golfer to have played at Azusa).<sup>260</sup> She was offered a full scholarship to play collegiate level golf at the University of Southern California and now competes regularly on the professional circuit. Her jersey, along with her photo, hang in the gym, canonized for all to view. Other photos include successful athletes from across the four decades that the AD has worked at the school: basketball players who have competed in college; track athletes at state finals; black and white photos from the mid-1970s when the AD was the athletic trainer in action at a football game; wrestling champions; and softball, baseball, and volleyball athletes. No racket sports, not tennis or badminton, are represented on the walls.

The AD has stated that she will retire in the next year. No one believes her because they have said the same thing for many years. Even as a student at Azusa I remember her mentioning retirement in the near future. Over time, my relationship with this person has had turbulence. As a student-athlete, I recall at least one stern lecture from the AD about my time mismanagement and the importance of representing the school in competition with pride and dignity. As a coach, I was once again given a stern sermon, but this time on respecting the administrative hierarchy. During the 2015 repainting of the gym floor lines (discussed in further detail later in this chapter), and the ensuing debacle regarding the fixing of the incorrectly painted badminton boundary lines, I pressed my case for remedy around the recommended paths and directly to the school principal. The badminton boundaries were eventually fixed, but the security of my position as head coach felt vulnerable.

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<sup>260</sup> LPGA, "Overview LPGA Ladies Professional Golf Association," *LPGA*, 2019, <http://www.lpga.com/players/lizette-salas/88510/overview>.

The main office, with the various administrative offices and large waiting rooms, is the first building most students, staff, faculty, and visitors move through on their way into and out of campus every day. The photographs hanging in the hallways and in view for those in the waiting areas give small windows into the changing student body and some of the major overhauls of buildings on campus. Other elements of importance in this section include the discussion of the aging restrooms and the archeology of murals on campus. The next section moves from the main office and into campus.

### Main Campus

Past the AD's office is the door that leads into campus. After opening the door, three brightly painted lines begin, in colors of blue, white, and red. The front office staff usually ask visitors to follow a particular color, as each line leads to a different administrative building, which includes the guidance, activities, and career centers. The blue line leads to academic counseling and guidance office, the white line to the library, and the red line to the activities office. Starting from this point, this section discusses the significant structures on campus, questions of access and control regarding keys for these areas, and iconic school furniture.

Across from the door is the entrance to the main food service area and toward the right are the classrooms for music, band, and chorus. The passageway between the main office and lunch counter is heavily trafficked and often has a security guard present. During the day, all traffic moves through this corridor. During lunch time, the queue of students wraps around this area, and during the evening, the band students occupy the space to practice in small, single instrument groups. The time of day is always a good indicator of who and what groups make use of a given area of campus. In the case of band, the students have remarkable autonomy to move their small group practices all over campus, many times without direct adult supervision. Band

members will practice late into the evening, fueling stories about rule-breaking students although many of them are the academically top performing students.

### *The Blue Benches*

Littered across an asphalt clearing, the tables or *the blue benches* as they are called by everyone at the high school, are a nexus of activity throughout the day. Through my ethnographic research at Azusa High, LB Poly, as well as my personal experience coaching across Los Angeles, these blue benches are a standard at every school site. At Azusa, these benches seem to be the same ones that I remember as a student during the late 1990s. Since that time, metal roofing was installed that covered the benches, adding lots of shade during the day and has created a central meeting place at all times. The dimensions of the covered area are 30ft by 35ft. When I returned to Azusa as a coach in 2011, I inquired with security guards (who spent most working hours outdoors) and coaches about the roofing over the benches. I asked if they believed it was a good use of school funds versus other essential repairs. Their answers remain the same in 2019 as they did in 2011; the addition of roofing in this specific area was an excellent use of budgeted monies that had a positive impact for everyone on campus.

The blue benches have become a central meeting location for all sports teams. For instance, athletes will gather there to wait for the bus when they have an away game. At the beginning of each season, teams will have informational meetings at the blue benches. If a practice is rained out, coaches will sometimes move the benches and train under the coverings. Later in the evening, the blue benches house random students waiting for rides from parents or friends, doing homework, or hanging out and listening to music.

On the north side of the gym, directly east from the blue benches, is the outdoor stage. The backdrop of the stage is a painting directly on the gym wall. The painting changes every few

years, but the iconography is typically the same: gendered stereotypes of imaginary indigenous peoples. Much as described earlier, the men are depicted in macho poses with the women shown as damsels in distress. I often wonder if the pervasiveness of such images are really a subtle but consistent pathway of disciplining students' perceptions, both of who they are and who they might be. In any event, many groups use the stage. Athletes regularly engage in physical fitness routines there, and the cheer squad runs specific routines from the stage. The stage itself is raised about three feet off the floor. Along the top portion of the gym walls, significantly above the stage, is a large blue, black, and white (the official school colors) painted banner with a sizeable digital clock in the middle. Around the clock it is written, "Gift of the graduating class of 2011 & 2012." Because that is the only outdoor clock on campus, students, faculty, and staff regularly reference it throughout the day. Facing north from the stage starts the largest open area of the campus. The area has numerous large trees and several concrete benches. About one hundred yards directly north is the library. Between the gym and the library and bordering the large open area on the east and west are the entrances to the four main quads on campus.

### *Quads, Classrooms, and Key Access*

Moving away from the gym stage toward the mountains, the school's 1950s modernist and industrially efficient school architecture becomes very clear. Built in 1956, Azusa High's buildings epitomize the "truly modern [aesthetic] in that they were one-story, flat-roofed structures enclosed in ... concrete wall systems."<sup>261</sup> There are four major quads on campus that house classrooms and administrative buildings. The structure of each quad and the layout of the classrooms, architecturally known as the *finger-plan*, force pedestrian movement across large quads which are needed to accommodate the style of buildings. In the 1950s post-war "building

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<sup>261</sup> C. K. Tanner and J. A. Lackney, *Educational Architecture; School Facilities Planning, Design, Construction, and Management*. Retrieved September 23, 2008, from [Http](http://www.azusa.edu), 2005, 12.

boom ... the concept of the *finger-plan* school gained popularity ... where corridors spread out across the plan, forming fingers off which each classroom extends.”<sup>262</sup> Imagine a view of campus from above, each quad appears practically identical. On the ground, the highly standardized buildings can make explaining directions difficult to anyone not already familiar with the school layout. To avoid confusion, most of the school use the gym as a reference point and give direction based on a person or location being left or right of the gym.

The first quad and set of buildings on the left houses the foreign language classrooms, as well as some science and math classrooms. The next quad houses the rest of the sciences and math classrooms, along with auto shop and the activities office. The main indoor cafeteria is also in this series of buildings. The guidance offices, language arts, history, economics, government, wood shop, art, ceramics, and drama classrooms are located on the right side in buildings that mirror the others.

In the middle of each quad are a few large planters with trees where students spend time together during lunch and after school. Next to the auto shop on the west side of campus, the gardening club makes and remakes the green spaces. Each quad is lined with 9in x 14in x 24in personal lockers stacked three high, one assigned to each student at the beginning of the year.

After the regular school day, access to some quads is restricted to anyone without proper keys. Each quad, housing eight to ten classrooms, can be locked to restrict access. As a non-staff coach, I am only allowed the key for the gym. The training room with the ice machines is in the same quad as language arts. Every year, I ask for a key to the athletic training room. I argue that as the head coach I should have a key to this room, especially in the case of an emergency if no administrator or custodian is present on campus to open the room. At least once a week, I must

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<sup>262</sup> Lindsay Baker, *A History of School Design and Its Indoor Environmental Standards, 1900 to Today* (National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities, 2012), 11, <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED539480>.

access the training room, usually for ice or athletic tape needed for injury prevention and management, always by asking administrative personnel to use their key. For students, the need for coaches to ask school administration for access to the training room is normal. As walk-on coaches, we are not teachers nor are we on campus for most of the school year so asking those at the top of the school hierarchy is the norm. For us as a coaching staff, it makes our job more difficult. Besides the ever present risk of injury in sport (thus the need for quick access to emergency equipment in the training room), the process of finding administrative officials to open the training room costs of valuable time at practice and can negatively affect the day's planned training regimen.

I am usually told there are not enough keys for everyone, or that I am not certified for the responsibility of holding the keys to the quad, and I should simply approach one of the two night custodians to unlock the room. The only other answer I have been given is to bring ice to practice every day to avoid needing the key. The same scenario is replayed regarding access to the weight room. As can be imagined, the rules concerning how keys are given and denied to certain personnel is often confusing. There is a new person in control of dispensing keys almost every year. For coaches of indoor sports like volleyball, basketball, badminton, pageantry and winter guard, and cheering, the keys are circulated amongst us. Often at the beginning of badminton season, there are no gym keys available due to basketball coaches not returning theirs in a timely manner. Across the boys' and girls' basketball programs, there are a total of eight basketball coaches. Of those, six have gym keys. The basketball coaches do not occupy any privileged status allowing them to withhold returning their keys. Rather, the answer to my question of why there are never gym keys available at the start of the season exemplifies Fortun's treatise.



Sports and the high school's monthly pay cycle never align perfectly. Every year I begin coaching badminton in the middle of February and end early June. I receive my paycheck for February in March after our first official game. I receive my last paycheck in July, a month after the championship tournament has ended and girls' volleyball spring training had begun. The volleyball coaches need my gym keys to begin their practices before I have received my final check. The system of distributing gym keys only works when coaches promptly return them at the end of their season of play. The school district does not print new keys and leaves each school campus to monitor its key usage. Complications arise in that many coaches are walk-ons with full-time jobs outside of the school site. Having a non-school job makes arriving at the school during normal hours (8 a.m. to 3 p.m.) difficult. Every one of the basketball coaches are walk-ons. Because of that, basketball practices are typically held much later than other sports to accommodate the coaches' schedule. As their season ends in the first two weeks of February badminton begins. Often the school is willing to mail checks to those coaches that cannot pick them up from the office during open hours. According to the front office staff, the surest method they have found to secure keys from coaches that have failed to return them is to hold a coach's final paycheck at the front desk until they return their keys. The process of printing checks for the seasonal employees can be used as a direct form of coercion. Yet, in this setting, the integration between the aging technology (forcing paper checks, antiquated key replacement process) and everyday duties of a group of rotating personnel (between curricular and extra-curricular activities) make this particular method of enforcement resolves the key issue, even if delayed. The procedural and normally expected institutional forms of interaction and accountability, the expectation of prompt key return, are disrupted by late industrial conditions that include a twin deterioration in physical infrastructure and governance strategies.

### *Behind the Gym*

On the south side of the gym are an empty swimming pool and three small storage buildings. The pool has not been filled with water since the early 1980s. When last inspected, the pool's plumbing needed to be completely replaced. For the past thirty years, the pool has been nothing more than an open pit where stray cats live, trash collects, and weeds grow in between cracks on the pool floor. Alongside the pool are three older red brick buildings. These are the only buildings on campus made of brick, all others are concrete. In the first building, closest to the gym, is the PE department's industrial washer and dryer. In the same space, the PE department houses teaching equipment such as tennis rackets, pickle ball rackets, and softball bats. There is a large open drainpipe in the middle of the room where the grey water from the washing machine empties; sandbags corral the water across the floor into the drain. The floor is layered with lint. During my ten years of experience at Azusa, the setup of this room has not changed.

I do not know the ages of the washer and dryer. When I asked the locker room staff, they did not know when the machines first came to Azusa. All that is known is that there have been periodic repairs to them. All sports programs are welcome to use the washer and dryer for their needs. Badminton washes the floor towels here. The boys' locker room attendant washes all the football jerseys here too. On Friday nights, the custodian staff wash their personal clothes in the machine. Their use is a public secret because, for while it violates school policy, clothes have continued to be washed for more than twenty years, far outlasting any high school administration.

The other two red brick buildings house landscaping equipment used to maintain the extensive set of sports fields. Beyond the pool, moving south away from the main campus and

stretching a quarter mile to the boundary with the 210 freeway, are all the sports fields. There are two baseball fields, two softball fields, a dirt track, one soccer field, and the JV and freshman football fields. The varsity football team plays games at the local community college. In total area, the sports fields are larger than the classrooms. It is my interpretation that this size difference is based on two factors: modernist architectural classroom efficiency and the larger number of field sports used at the time. This section pinpointed some major issues regarding my access to safety materials as a walk-on sports coach. It also covered more elements of the school's modernist architectural history and current furniture including the iconic blue benches. The next area to be outlined is the gym.

### The Gym and its Spaces

The exterior of the gym has four access points corresponding to the four directions. The north and south entrance are long sets of metal doors with small square port holes. Each port hole has its own character dictated by the etchings and engravings carved into the glass that also serve to obstruct a person's view through the window. Most students enter the gym through the doors closest to the blue benches. On the east and west sides are the boys' and girls' locker room entrances, respectively. There are only two regular sized doors with no windows that open into the locker rooms, and they are controlled by the staff and PE teachers. The girls' locker room door opens to a view of the cafeteria near the main office and is part of the main thoroughfare for student traffic to the sports fields and student parking lot that doubles as the pickup location for busing to away games. The boys' locker room doors open toward the tennis courts. The distance of the tennis courts from the girls' locker room force athletes to travel around the entire gym to access restrooms and changing facilities. The entrance to the laundry room is also within feet of the boys' locker room door facilitating the ease of washing PE and boys' sports laundry. Because

of the added distance, the girls' locker room staff cannot wash laundry during the short time periods between classes. They are forced to wash laundry before or after the regular school day.

After entering the front doors of the gym, one is in a foyer running across the length of the gym. The foyer has a large awards display case in which an assortment of plaques, helmets, footballs, jerseys, and trophies are placed. There is no order to how the awards are displayed. The earliest are from the 1960s, the most recent from 2019. The boys' and girls' restrooms are on the same sides as the locker rooms, along with a single drinking fountain. At each end, stairs lead to the upper seating area. A second set of doors open to the gym floor. Across from the trophy case are two sliding doors extending from floor to ceiling. The sliding doors hide a snack bar and ticket counter. The room has a large glass display case, an old unplugged refrigerator, and door-less cabinets lining the walls adorned with trophies from various sports whose arrangement is as chaotic, dusty, and eclectic as those in the foyer.

## *Sports and Fundraising*

The snack bar is only accessible from inside the foyer. Two large wooden sliding doors, taller and thinner than typical, extend from the floor to ceiling and close the space off from the foyer. The snack bar is physically on the edge of the gym. Such a marginal space, seemingly without educational value or purpose outside of generating funds, holds many possibilities. At times, the snack bar seems to reproduce typical adult run activities present in the rest of the school. During other times, the snack bar fosters student-directed organizing and price-setting effects that disrupt adult-run activities assumed in the school structure.<sup>263</sup>

The opportunities to fundraise through the snack bar are auctioned off during the spring semester. Interested groups vie through a voting system to obtain ideal dates. Volleyball and basketball seasons bring the most competition for use of the snack bar. For instance, the volleyball league finals tournament and the basketball homecoming game are well attended; therefore, these generate funds from ticket sales and snack bar sales. During girls' volleyball season, the boys' baseball team usually runs the snack bar as a fundraiser. Conversely, only a few people attend badminton games. No one asks to operate the snack bar during the badminton season. The badminton team therefore reigns over the snack bar in ways that other sports do not because of sparse audience attendance. Over the entire spring season, the badminton team can fundraise slowly and consistently without competing for the space. The politics of the snack bar consume year-round sports programs and those academic programs that require high monetary investment. I have often avoided the meetings when fundraising schedules are decided, knowing that the badminton season flies under the funding radar.

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<sup>263</sup> Sarah M. Brackmann, "Community Engagement in a Neoliberal Paradigm," n.d., 32.

The foods at the snack bar and how these are sold make the biggest difference to students. Every group running the snack bar must include the perennially favorite dish at Azusa, a variation on nachos: melted nacho cheese ladled directly into an open bag of Flamin' Hot Cheetos. The snack bar does not have cooking facilities, but teams can bring all sorts of crockpots, toasters, warmers, and microwave ovens. Some teams bring specially made chili or gourmet donuts. Other teams focus on fruits and granola bars. Pizzas, hotdogs, and instant noodles are all perennial favorites, along with Gatorade, water, juices, and sodas. Teams must decide what to sell, which is often an ad hoc affair, depending on deals at the local supermarket. The badminton team runs the snack bar during the competitive season and for our annual tournament. The issues outlined above also affect us. Additionally, activity in the snack bar, with its congregations of students and liminal setting within the gym, has a tendency to eschew the competitive setting the competitions take.

As the adult in charge of the badminton program, I encourage the initiative of the students to direct the snack bar menu. At other times, parents of badminton athletes have run the snack bar, including my own mom, Maria. The adults often set the menu, focus on the most profitable options, and control the pricing, while students do the cleaning. I can report that of the different approaches to running the snack bar, students favored the approach of adults like Maria. At one time, she ran the snack bar during our annual badminton tournament more than five years in a row. Every year, students ask if my mom will return to the role. Maria always brought large poster boards and markers, getting students to create menu signs. Maria assisted students in defining prices and organizing assembly lines for nachos and hot dogs. As a registered nurse, she made rules enforcing sanitary use of gloves and disinfectant gel. The menu was expansive, and she really pushed the number of diverse items for sale, including different brands of chips, sizes

of granola bars, cold sports drinks, hot teas and coffee, bagels, English muffins, peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, instant cup-of-noodles, hot dogs, snow cones, and nacho cheese and hot sauce to drizzle on everything. Maria brought a boom box and would require that students select the music. With her, their input was always welcome.

During the annual badminton tournament, the snack bar often becomes a desirable hangout spot for students and athletes. Students run the snack bar, playing music, and are often louder than typical in the competitive atmosphere of the gym. Athletes use the space to escape from stress of the competition. I have walked into the snack bar and been confronted with explicit music, dance offs, impromptu fashion shows (many students are part of the fashion club on campus), and much laughter. When I enter the snack bar during these times, I do not apologize for interrupting. Instead I purposefully and awkwardly join in the singing (interestingly the range of music to which students listen spans several decades), joking, laughing, or menu setting. My go-to line is something like, “There is entirely not enough enjoyment happening here. Let’s pick it up folks,” while giving my students a warm smile. As the adult in charge, I need to check in on students regularly, but their activities as regards the dominant norms of the space do not abide by set parameters. Rather, they are informally negotiated.<sup>264</sup>

### *Restrooms in the Gym*

The gym foyer holds no furnishings, except for the old wooden trophy case and single water fountain. At opposite ends of the hallway, staircases lead to the second floor of bleacher seating. Next to each staircase, also on opposite ends of the foyer, are the boys' and girls' restrooms. These restrooms share some of the functional 1950s aesthetic of the restrooms in the

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<sup>264</sup> I address my coaching pedagogy more thoroughly and directly in chapters 1 and 4.

main office, but because they are open to everyone, the tiles, stalls, and fixtures show their age. In the boys' restroom, the tile walls expose the replacement of multiple bathroom stalls through series of holes, some with broken screws wedged inside. Graffiti is also carved into many tiles, the mirrors, toilet seats, paper towel dispensers, and metal stall doors. Some graffiti has withstood the test of time and an onslaught of cleaning solutions. Markers, pens, white-out, pencils, and sometimes paint are the preferred mediums by taggers. Gym staff try their best to remove it before major competitions or whenever the administration decides there is too much.

During the 2018 to 2019 academic year, to reduce graffiti in the boys' restroom the administration began keeping the door locked and not even staff had the key. This posed a problem for the badminton team and members of other indoor sports teams. Just like the issue of accessing the training room or weight training room, coaches are not given the restroom key. We are told district safety policies block non-faculty like us from checking out this key. While this might seem illegal or at least dangerous, the administration has dismissed these possibilities explaining that there is usually a staff member on campus during practices times that could be reached to open the doors of the training room. More than once when the badminton team needed to access the training room, the particular staff member on campus did not themselves have keys to the training room. As it turns out, not all staff have access to the entire campus. Incredulously, despite years of making the same points to administration, staff, and teachers, there is still no change to this policy.

The girls' restroom is typically the only restroom left open after school. The doors to the restroom do not lock without a key. To facilitate everyone using the one restroom, instead of having the boys leave the gym and visit the port-a-potty across the school near the baseball field, we instituted a buddy-lookout system based on student input; athletes of only one gender can use



the restroom at a time, and a buddy (of any gender) must wait outside to make sure this rule is followed. This situation was not desired, nor were we given adequate time to formulate a careful response. That fact that we have yet to encounter problems with students sharing the restroom and using the buddy system is a testament to the ability of students to collaborate in response to shared problems. As coaches, we try to facilitate practice with moments such as these, the kinds of opportunities to follow athletes' decision making.

The access and politics of the restrooms in the gym, much like other aging school infrastructure, represent Fortun's late industrial model. While the restrooms are not a disaster in the sense of a factory explosion, the disaster moves at a slower pace. In the boys' restroom, stall walls break and loosen themselves from their anchors in the tile, graffiti accumulates, and the only fixes are harsh chemical cleaners and closing the restroom from use. Furthermore, as noted, the decision to close off access is an administrative one. Here we witness the imbrication of material, infrastructural, social, and political aspects of late industrialism in the state of the restrooms. Turning from discussing the first entrance of the gym, we now enter a kind of competitive sports sanctuary including the celebratory banners across the walls.

#### On the Gym Floor

Moving through the second set of doors and onto the gym floor, one encounters two sides of the gym filled with old repaired wooden sliding benches. The benches are folded flat and collapsed against the wall, thereby creating a vertical wall of wooden slats. When needed, the bleachers can be opened to accommodate a large number of students. From the same vantage point of the gym floor, above the benches are fifteen gym length rows of stadium style seating. The stadium seating allows for a fabulous view of the activity on the gym floor from almost any

seat. Both levels of bleachers are used to seat students during different school rallies throughout the year; each class (freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors) sits in a different section.

On the other two sides of the gym are forty-foot walls from floor to ceiling and from which hang league and California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) championship banners.<sup>265</sup> The north wall holds the league championship banners for all sports, as well as the only clock inside the gym. This clock is crucial for all indoor gym sports as game times and practices are measured by this clock. Unlike the one on the outside of the gym, this clock is not digital but analog. Each banner consists of the name of the sport, the phrase “League Champs,” and the year for a given championship embroidered onto the banner. Each banner can support twenty different embroidered years. When the badminton team won its twenty-first league championship in 2018, an extension was added to the current banner. Very few sports have required an extension to their banner. The CIF banners hang partially on the north and south walls. The largest banners are for CIF championship years. These banners are five feet by four feet in size and dominate the wall space. Smaller banners proclaim CIF finalists (second place finishes). Badminton holds three of these runner-up positions for 2003, 2011, and 2019.

Three large painted reliefs also adorn the walls peering down at students seated in bleachers and those on court. The lyrics to Azusa’s Fight Song are painted on the north wall. On the south wall are the other two paintings. On one side of the wall are the lyrics to the school’s “Alma Mater” and the other side a large mural of a male Aztec head surrounded by the words “Azusa High School.”<sup>266</sup> These large reliefs are not painted by students but by a professional

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<sup>265</sup> “California Interscholastic Federation,” <http://www.cifstate.org/landing/index> CIF describes their mission as “govern[ing] interscholastic athletics, promoting equity, quality, character and academic development.” Smaller, regional, school specific sports associations exist but do so on the margins.

<sup>266</sup> “Azusa High School,” 2018, <https://ahs-ausd-ca.schoolloop.com/>. Accessed May 15, 2019; The lyrics are “Marching proudly ever forward/To victory and to fame/Azusa High, our alma mater,/Glorious is thy

company while ten to twenty feet off the ground in a special crane. As a result, the Aztec caricature is cartoonish, lacking the seriousness of the war ready depictions found around the rest of the school. With the song lyrics and bubbly Aztec inspired paintings on two walls, and the bleachers and benches along the other two, the view from the gym floor is expansive.

Beyond the walls of the gym, there are six movable basketball backboards hanging from the ceiling around the edges of the gym. Sometime during the late 2000s, the school leadership installed an electronic pulley system to raise and lower the backboards. Throughout the badminton season and while competing, we raise the backboards as high as possible to avoid interference. During games, issues with gym infrastructure are dealt with by making specific rules for each possible interference. Besides the backboards, there are a series of things that can interfere with the flight of the shuttle during badminton games, such as air conditioning ducts, speakers, lights, gymnastic rings, climbing rope, and load bearing crossbeams. Standard California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) rules state each school can make their own redo (in badminton jargon, a “let”) rules. At Azusa, when a shuttle hits something in the air (below thirty feet), there is one let per person or team per game. Many other schools share this rule with only slight variations.

### *Old Floor and New Lines*

The gym still has the original wooden floor from the 1950s. It has been repainted only once since I was a student, more than twenty years ago. The most recent repainting occurred in 2015. Repainting the gym floor costs several thousands of dollars and almost one month to complete. First, the layers of sealant applied every year for upkeep are eliminated, and then the floor is sanded down 1/16th of an inch to remove the old paint. Any repairs and changes to the

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name./Through the years our/Hearts will cherish/Time we spent with you./Memories will never perish./We're forever true!"

wooden floor are done at this time. Then new lines are painted, and several layers of sealant are applied. The gym hosts many sports and events that require individual sets of painted lines. On campus, we have several competitive levels (freshman, junior varsity [JV], and varsity) of the girls' volleyball, boys' and girls' basketball, and coed badminton teams. Additionally, physical education classes use the gym every day, and competitive cheering and winter guard teams use it as a practice space. Sometimes, district wide events will be hosted in the gym, along with sports, academic rallies, and occasional dances. Therefore, the painting of the floors is a significant event—and even intrusion or complication—for many parties. In other words, the repainting process is a major occurrence, one that should in theory meet all parties' expectations, but as usual, badminton was not adequately considered.

Before the one-time painting and also during the process, I met with the athletic director to request confirmation that the company hired to paint the lines had considered badminton. Other indoor sports coaches did the same. We were all reassured. Unfortunately, the badminton lines were not painted correctly. My subsequent lobbying for the paint job to be fixed was one of my most tenuous times at the high school. The painting company made a mess of the badminton lines, adding lines in the wrong places and forgetting to paint entire boundary lines on two courts. I explained to the administration that we could not play sanctioned games because the badminton lines were incorrect. When there was no change on the subject, I threatened to cancel each game until the situation was remedied. The school administration did not like my position on the newly painted lines. The problems were eventually fixed. And while the painting company was blamed by administration, the school still had to pay for the company to fix the lines.

Like many multi-use gyms, the number of different lines resembles an abstract painting. There are eight badminton courts, one full basketball court, four basketball half courts, and three volleyball courts. Additionally, in the middle of the floor is a large, male, Aztec head painted facing east. The badminton and full-length basketball courts are oriented north-south, while the half courts and volleyball courts are placed east-west. The color of the lines makes a big difference because the bolder lines are more readily seen from further away. The basketball lines are a solid dark black color, the volleyball lines dark red, and the badminton lines soft grey making them the most difficult to notice from a distance.

#### *Locker Room Access and Drinking Fountains*

At each corner of the gym floor is a door to enter one of the locker rooms; the doors on the east lead to the boys' locker room, while the girls' have doors on the west. The doors stay locked except during practice times when we open those on the south side for badminton athletes to access the locker rooms. The reason we open the south side doors is mainly for security. In the past, there have been issues with unauthorized persons entering through these doors. The main gym doors that open to the quads and blue benches are on the north side of the building near the restrooms. Anyone on campus can enter these doors. By only opening the locker room doors on the south side, we can ensure that only badminton athletes enter the locker rooms. More than once, students and community members have entered and tried to open the locker room doors without asking permission. Furthermore, in the last five years, multiple thefts have occurred in the gym. Sports equipment and computer technology were stolen from storage closets in the locker rooms. At regular intervals, the school administration reminds the coaches of gym sports that they are the first line of defense against further break-ins and to monitor the locker rooms during practices.

Next to each of the two north end locker room doors are the inner gym's only two water fountains. Along with the fountain in the foyer, these are the primary drinking fountains in the entire building. The next closest fountains are outside between the blue benches and the flagpole or in the students' respective locker rooms. During practice, the coaches give "water breaks," typically between one to five minutes in length. We recommend that students have a water bottle with them near the courts, but the short walk to the drinking fountain is often a welcome respite. Of the six drinking fountains accessible to athletes during the short water breaks, only the one in the girls' locker room has cold water. The two fountains inside the gym have good pressure, while the fountains in the boys' locker room and foyer have low pressure, and those outside are just too far to be usable.

In my experience as an athlete during the late 1990s and early 2000s, none of the fountains had cold water. However, in the mid-2000s, a series of repairs to the plumbing system for the school's facilities led to installing a new drinking fountain in the girls' locker room. With access to cold water, the change in this one drinking fountain has altered the circulation of bodies during after school sports. For instance, volleyball coaches describe players now entering the locker room during breaks more often. Often, one athlete will be asked to fill bottles of all their peers, which can delay that player returning to the courts from break. The least impacted by the cold water fountain in the girls' locker room are boys' sports as they have no access to the drinking fountain. Coed activities, such as badminton and winter guard, often encounter situations like the girls' volleyball team. In the next section I specifically consider badminton practice and bring the above mentioned issues with the gym floor to bear in my analysis.

## Practice

Badminton practice is from 3 p.m. to 6 p. m. Monday to Friday and 9 a.m. to 12 noon on Saturdays. The JV and varsity teams' practice at the same time (except that JV begins Saturday practices at 10 a.m.). Between both teams and coaches, there are usually a total of thirty to forty people at practice. Of the eight courts, the four courts on the north side are reserved for JV, while the four on the south side are for varsity. There are usually between twelve and sixteen players practicing on the varsity side, with the remaining athletes on the JV side.

### *Coaches at Practice*

The coaching staff consists of the head coach, varsity assistant, JV head coach, and any volunteers that attend. I have served as the head coach for the past eight consecutive seasons. Every season, a few former players ask to be volunteer coaches. Even those volunteering must pass through the same screening process as all other coaches. Because all badminton coaching staff are non-teacher or walk-ons, outside work schedules and personal matters often interfere with attending practices or games. On days with a smaller staff, we combine varsity and JV practice sessions, thereby engaging in “intergenerational transfers of knowledge” and feminist coaching practices.<sup>267</sup> This approach is aimed at building bonds between teammates while also enabling the more experienced players to introduce badminton concepts, strategies, and team norms to newer players.

Both teams join forces at the beginning of practices when fixing the nets, cleaning the courts, and going through the general physical fitness portion of practice sessions. The teams

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<sup>267</sup> Cathrina Murphy, “Transferring Knowledge and Life Experience Between Generations: The Potential of Community Based Intergenerational Projects,” *Dublin Institute of Technology*, 2012; Seppo Suominen, “The Intergenerational Transfer Effects on Sport Activity,” *Athens Journal of Sports* 2, no. 2 (May 31, 2015): 69–84. I comment more thoroughly on these and similar feminist coaching practices in chapter 2, my literature review of Coaching Studies, and chapter 4 when addressing ways to disrupt impacts of competition during training.

split after this, each with its own set of practice shuttles and rackets. Varsity players have access to more advanced rackets; the team loans a limited number of those rackets to players. The JV team has more than thirty beginner rackets that players can use. Many athletes also buy their own rackets. The best practice shuttles are reserved for varsity; old or poor-quality shuttles are culled and given to JV. At the end of a shuttle's or racket's lifespan, JV gives them to the PE class along with any rackets that are not adequate for learning the competitive version of the sport. The hierarchy I described in this section, between varsity, JV, and PE, is best characterized as a system of recycling emphasizing the stature and importance given to athletic talent in competitive settings.

#### *The Varsity Side During Practice*

Next to the girls' locker room door, and on the varsity side of the gym, is the badminton equipment storage closet. This closet is seven feet tall and holds thirty beginner rackets, ten advanced rackets, fourteen heavy training rackets, forty tubes of shuttles, tournament equipment, new shuttles for games, setup equipment for the nets, game materials, twelve jump ropes, several books on stretching and body weight training, an emergency kit, any student emergency information, dumbbells, towels to clean the floors, and other miscellaneous materials. This locker is a constant center of activity as all badminton supplies, inclusive of practice and game equipment, are stored there. There are two levels of the cabinet, each with its own set of doors and combination lock. Within the cabinet, the materials are divided between JV and varsity. The JV rackets and varsity rackets are kept in different racket bags; the JV and varsity shuttles are in different boxes. Every practice session begins by opening the cabinet and ends by closing and locking it. Most players and coaches access this closet every day.



On the varsity side, there is a closet directly in the middle of the south wall that houses the poles and nets for badminton and volleyball. The same closet also houses PE equipment and a lawn mower-like machine that assists in opening the bleachers. To the east side, closer to the boys' locker room, all of the coaches usually congregate, leaving their bags and belongings, grouping together before and after practice. Boys and girls usually put their belongings closer to the girls' locker room. This particular corner of the gym has the most activity; all female players going into and out of the locker room enter from this door, players access the badminton storage closet on this side, and anyone who wants cold water will congregate in this corner. In effect, the girls' locker room door and the varsity girls' team become arbiters of who has access to the badminton equipment and cold water. The circulation patterns of athletes amid changing environmental and physical environments help to locate gendered interactions within the overall infrastructure of the school.

### Conclusion

This chapter exemplifies many aspects of Fortun's conceptual model of late industrialism. Azusa High's built environment, a jumble of architecture from different time periods, repair cycles, and changing faculty and student body, is in various stages of disrepair. The restrooms, empty old pool, and blue benches are three examples profiled to show the mechanisms of late industrialism

In this chapter, I described the physical infrastructure of Azusa High School. I chronicled some important features of campus life regarding the badminton team and practices. I also explained the conditions under which student athletes play gym sports. These conditions not only included the physical structures that athletes often encounter but noted where the student culture and the

administrative approach to infrastructure differ. Focused on the use of space, I also documented the circulation paths of students and coaches on campus more widely.

As a former student and member of the badminton team at Azusa High, and as the current head coach, I am quick to think about ways of coaching and doing research that impact my students. Although the spaces highlighted in the school seem to be already full of activity, the interactions encouraged by the physical environment and personnel can disrupt expected administrative rules. Badminton practice is one of the sites that can clearly disrupt those rules, and I will explore this more fully in the next chapter.

# Chapter 4

## Everyone's Bodies and Everyday Violence: High-Performance Professionals in Action

### Introduction

Publicity over violence and abuse in the everyday experiences of young athletes has created an incredible outcry from the public.<sup>268</sup> A growing number of coaches now have their actions closely scrutinized by parents, school administrators, and the athletes themselves. Chapter four puts into perspective how widespread abuse and violence has become normalized within the youth sports industry using examples from the Nassar scandal and the incredible success of the national women's gymnastics team. The chapter's focus is a reinterpretation of how such abuse and violent actions from coaches and other individuals in positions of power become part of the infrastructure of sports.

The chapter is organized into four sections. The first describes the Nassar scandal from the perspective of high-performance sports. It deconstructs Nassar's own research on sports injuries and his administrative position on the athlete safety commission. This section also makes the claim that the success of the women's gymnastics team cannot be disentangled from Nassar's abuse. The second section draws from Veena Das' work on ethnography, violence, and trauma to reorient the narrative surrounding the Nassar scandal. Instead of the current focus on the highest profile victims, the focus should be on the thousands of girls Nassar abused of whom there is no record. I use these cases as evidence to support the claim that abuse is endemic to high-performance sports. The third section draws from martial arts and performance studies to

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<sup>268</sup> In this dissertation the term *abuse* refers to physical and emotional maltreatment of an individual or group.

theorize possibilities for disrupting normative understandings of competition in the practice environment. The last section details my ethnographic relationship with Long Beach Poly's head badminton coach Steve Meckna. I critically engage with his analysis of sexism in youth sports that is scheduled to be published in the local press.

#### Bodies and Research:

##### Larry Nassar, High-Performance Women's Gymnastics, and Athlete Safety

The universe of high-performance sports is one of extremes. For instance, in the sport of wingsuit base jumping, athletes jump from a stationary object, usually a mountainside cliff, with only a wingsuit and a small base-jumping specific parachute. Sports leaders developed wingsuits for commercial use in the late 1990s, which have since advanced into several varieties of wingsuit sports. A wingsuit adds a specialized webbing material, usually between a participant's legs and arms, thereby enlarging the body's normal surface area and allowing for a sustained gliding effect.<sup>269</sup> Specially designed air ducts become inflated once rushing air is funneled into the suit after jumping; these add rigidity for better flight control. Wingsuit base jumping is one of the most dangerous sports in the world, with slim margins for error.

Big wave surfing is another extreme sport. It refers to surfers trying to catch a wave typically taller than twenty feet. Like all surfing, big wave surfing originates from the technological innovations and cultural practices of Pacific Island and Polynesian indigenous peoples.<sup>270</sup> Native Hawaiians commercialized the activity after American imperialism brought

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<sup>269</sup> "Watch: Pilot Pioneers Harrowing, Low-Level Wingsuit Flights," accessed July 8, 2019, <https://news.nationalgeographic.com/2015/05/150526-wingsuit-base-jump-moab-national-parks-blm-potter/>.

<sup>270</sup> Augustin Krämer, *The Samoa Islands: An Outline of a Monograph With Particular Consideration of German Samoa : Constitution, Pedigrees and Traditions With 3 Plates, 4 Maps and 44 Illustrations* (University of Hawaii Press, 2000).

non-Hawaiian tourists to their islands.<sup>271</sup> It was only during the latter half of the twentieth century, however, that surfing was challenged by women demanding equal access to this very competitive circuit. Until recently women have been denied entry to major big wave competitions. Sports leaders included women once Californian government officials threatened to cancel the event's permitting due to these issues of gender inequality in the sport.<sup>272</sup> Now, board riders come from all over the world to participate in these competitions where skill, bravery, and luck are on display. However, few surf spots are capable of supporting big waves.

A favorite place for big wave surfing is off the coast of the northern Portuguese town of Nazaré. This section of coastline is named Praia do Norte. Waves at Praia do Norte routinely reach one hundred feet in height. The geomorphological features of the ocean bed in the surrounding waters are the secret to this surf spot. The sea floor rises rapidly close to shore meaning wave accelerate at an increased rate compared to a normally sloping shoreline. The Nazaré Canyon, an underwater ravine in the direction from the open ocean toward the shore, pulls a wave's energy and funnels it through steep walls to a small spot where the canyon ends. A natural water channel feeds into the developing wave right before it hits land, thereby augmenting its height even more. In the language of physics, the waves at Praia do Norte experience *constructive interference*, which refers to the cumulative effects of each natural, structural element that contributes to raising the height of a wave.<sup>273</sup>

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<sup>271</sup> Dexter Zavalza Hough-Snee and Alexander Sotelo Eastman, *The Critical Surf Studies Reader* (Duke University Press, 2017).

<sup>272</sup> "Maverick's Challenge Faces Permitting Issues (Again)," *Surflines*, August 31, 2018, <https://www.surflines.com/surf-news/mavericks-challenge-faces-permitting-issues/33545>; Lindsey Adler, "Mavericks Surf Contest Begrudgingly Allows Women To Compete," *Deadspin*, accessed July 6, 2019, <https://deadspin.com/mavericks-surf-contest-begrudgingly-allows-women-to-com-1788124628>.

<sup>273</sup> Editor at *SurferToday.com*, "The Mechanics of the Nazaré Canyon Wave," *Surfertoday*, accessed July 6, 2019, <https://www.surfertoday.com/surfing/the-mechanics-of-the-nazare-canyon-wave>.

Explaining the background physics of dangerous waves, in *Modelling a “Rogue Wave”—Speculations or a Realistic Possibility?* Kristian Dysthe discussed the role of *spatial focusing*. The particular geomorphological features that create the waves at Praia do Norte are hidden underwater: “Spatial focusing...due to refraction by bottom topography or current gradients...is a well-known reason for dangerous waves in coastal waters.”<sup>274</sup> Surfers enjoy these dangerous coastal waves along Portugal’s extended North Atlantic coastline. From my interpretation, the specific conditions at Praia do Norte work as a team, the height of the wave being directly related to the depth of the Nazaré Canyon. The narrow and steep canyon walls are key to the amazing waves that world class surfers ride.

I found the extreme waves at Praia do Norte a well-suited metaphor for rethinking the associations that make high-performance sports possible. The dizzying heights of the waves are only possible due to the depth of the canyon and the amount of water being pushed through the steep and narrow space. If the crest of the wave represents an Olympic gold medal, world championship, or comparable international sporting accomplishment, the depth of the Nazaré Canyon symbolizes the public health crisis of athletic abuse by coaches and training staff.<sup>275</sup>

*Laser Focus: Abuse, Athletic Success, and Deconstructing High-Performance Research*

As leading sports and coaching scientists have normalized the concept of exceptional performance, they also neutralized the arduous pathways athletes endured to attain those standards. In the current study this meant neutralizing the abuse Nassar committed. In a review of the recently released HBO documentary, *At the Heart of Gold*, Sophie Gilbert explained the enormity of the problem:

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<sup>274</sup> Kristian B. Dysthe, “Modelling a” Rogue Wave”-Speculations or a Realistic Possibility,” *Rogues Waves 2000*, 2001, 2.

<sup>275</sup> This point recalls the Aspen Institute report on youth sports discussed in the Introduction to the dissertation.

What's hard to comprehend, now, is how much of Dr. Larry Nassar's sexual abuse of more than 300 preteen and teenage girls was conducted in plain sight...*At the Heart of Gold*, includes excerpts from instructional videos Nassar posted online for other sports doctors to observe. In them, he runs his hands over girls' bodies clothed in leotards; points out (and touches) one athlete's gluteus muscle; massages one girl's chest; pats yet another on the butt. Nassar went even further in private sessions with athletes, giving procedures he called "intravaginal adjustments" with ungloved hands and without prior warning. Often, when he did this, the girls' parents were standing in the same room, watching while Nassar abused their daughters, listening as he talked nonstop the whole time...[he] was uniquely positioned to get away with what he did. He was a trusted, even beloved figure in his Michigan community, volunteering at his church and at local high schools, and offering free therapeutic sessions to girls who were cheerleaders, rowers, dancers. He had almost unchecked access to young athletes in his role as a sports doctor for USA Gymnastics and Michigan State University. And, crucially, he was operating within a sport in which girls are primed from the beginning to silently endure what happens to their body, one with a philosophy of "athletic Darwinism" where only the strongest and most stoic will go all the way.<sup>276</sup>

Gilbert focused on ways that Nassar was an integral part of US gymnastics (USAG) and Michigan State University's (MSU) high-performance athletic programs. Prior to her reporting, the degree to which Nassar's abuse permeated the entire system was not adequately understood. Nassar began operating within the USAG in 1986 as an entry level athletic trainer. According to court documents, he assaulted his first victim in 1992, a twelve-year-old at the time.<sup>277</sup> He then became the medical coordinator for the 1996 gymnastics Olympic team. The USAG requested he reprise his role in the 2000 and 2008 games. He was relieved of his MSU duties in August 2016 and first charged with assault in November of the same year. Between 1986 and 2016, Nassar participated in and later led the US women's national gymnastics team athlete safety commission

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<sup>276</sup> Sophie Gilbert, "A New Film Reveals How Larry Nassar Benefited From a Culture of Silence," *The Atlantic*, May 2, 2019, <https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2019/05/new-film-exposes-how-larry-nassar-was-able-abuse/588571/>.

<sup>277</sup> "Victims Share What Larry Nassar Did to Them under the Guise of Medical Treatment," *Indianapolis Star*, accessed July 6, 2019, <https://www.indystar.com/story/news/2018/01/25/heres-what-larry-nassar-actually-did-his-patients/1065165001/>.

by volunteering without pay. He both literally and figuratively authored the book on gymnastics' training and athlete safety.<sup>278</sup>

Martin took time to examine and review the one-hour interview of Nassar by well-known gymnastics' podcast, GymCastic. Martin's examination revealed a specific explanation of Nassar, claiming he

display[ed] his complete understanding of how to operate within the gymnastic community, by appearing as an athlete-focused doctor while also politicking with coaches, administrators, and parents well enough to climb up the USAG ladder. In retrospect, it can be sickening; at the time, it was a relief to hear the program was supposedly making a change.<sup>279</sup>

This comment represented the truth of the situation. For more than twenty years, Nassar cultivated his athlete-first, medically knowledgeable self by expressing concern for athletes stating, “[w]e protect our athletes. That’s what we learned ... Not just physically but mentally, you have to protect your athletes. You have to let them know you care.”<sup>280</sup> While he participated in writing the athlete safety directives of USAG, he published academic research regarding various diagnostics and treatments that he used on female gymnasts and their particular sports injuries.

Nassar published peer-reviewed articles and a book describing symptoms, evaluations, treatments, and recoveries from ankle and knee injuries, headaches, and many other common

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<sup>278</sup> A. B. C. News, “Video: Top Athletes Recall Nassar Molesting Them during Treatment: Part 2,” ABC News, accessed July 6, 2019, <https://abcnews.go.com/2020/video/top-athletes-recall-nassar-molesting-treatment-part-52644201>; James Dator, “A Comprehensive Timeline of the Larry Nassar Case,” SBNation.com, January 19, 2018, <https://www.sbnation.com/2018/1/19/16900674/larry-nassar-abuse-timeline-usa-gymnastics-michigan-state>; “Victims Share What Larry Nassar Did to Them under the Guise of Medical Treatment.”

<sup>279</sup> Martin, “In One Interview, Larry Nassar Laid Out Exactly How He Gained Gymnasts’ Trust.”

<sup>280</sup> Nick Martin, “In One Interview, Larry Nassar Laid Out Exactly How He Gained Gymnasts’ Trust,” Deadspin, accessed July 6, 2019, <https://deadspin.com/in-one-interview-larry-nassar-laid-out-exactly-how-he-1794176276>.



high-performance gymnastic injuries.<sup>281</sup> Nassar coordinated the USAG athletic safety commission and wrote policy from his own scientific publications from his position as a licensed medical doctor. Regional and local USAG gymnastics club leaders and their affiliates across the United States used these same materials.

Nassar specialized in low back pain management and treatment in young, high-performing female gymnasts. Whenever parents, staff, or police confronted Nassar, he stated the treatments were appropriate. He would say that he was a sports medical specialist, and that the patients (victims) did not understand the procedures; he was a famous Olympic level doctor after all. In a scene reminiscent of a Hollywood movie, Nassar gave a PowerPoint presentation in his defense to authorities at a police station, during an interview regarding an assault he was alleged to have committed. In that presentation, representing himself as USAG's medical professional, he explained the "treatment" using examples from published sports and medical research journals.<sup>282</sup> The most current internationally recognized research on "intravaginal adjustments" for low back pain in women showed that no evidence existed that this procedure had an effect beyond a placebo.<sup>283</sup> In at least one of Nassar's published research, a study on low back pain in

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<sup>281</sup> Larry Nassar, "Gymnastics," in *Foot and Ankle Sports Orthopaedics*, ed. Victor Valderrabano and Mark Easley (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2016), 473-77, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-15735-1\\_55](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-15735-1_55); Dennis J. Caine and Larry Nassar, "Gymnastics Injuries," *Epidemiology of Pediatric Sports Injuries* 48 (2005): 18–58, <https://doi.org/10.1159/000084282>; Margaret Chilvers et al., "Foot and Ankle Injuries in Elite Female Gymnasts," *Foot & Ankle International* 28, no. 2 (February 1, 2007): 214-18, <https://doi.org/10.3113/FAI.2007.0214>; Larry Nassar, Joseph Albano, and Douglas Padron, "Exertional Headache in a Collegiate Gymnast," *Clinical Journal of Sport Medicine* 9, no. 3 (July 1999): 182.

<sup>282</sup> Staff and agencies, "2004 Larry Nassar Investigation Dropped after Doctor's PowerPoint Presentation," *The Guardian*, January 31, 2018, sec. Sport, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/jan/31/larry-nassar-sexual-abuse-sentencing-hearing>; Staff and agencies.

<sup>283</sup> Albin Guillaud et al., "Reliability of Diagnosis and Clinical Efficacy of Visceral Osteopathy: A Systematic Review," *BMC Complementary and Alternative Medicine* 18, no. 1 (February 17, 2018): 65, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12906-018-2098-8>; "DRKS - Deutsches Register Klinischer Studien (German Clinical Trials Register)," accessed July 11, 2019, [https://www.drks.de/drks\\_web/navigate.do?navigationId=trial.HTML&TRIAL\\_ID=DRKS00010416](https://www.drks.de/drks_web/navigate.do?navigationId=trial.HTML&TRIAL_ID=DRKS00010416);

high-performing female gymnasts, he focused on the exact procedure he used to abuse his many victims. The procedure was part of the methodological design establishing the ground state for all other comparative steps of the study.<sup>284</sup>

In 2006, Nassar and two board-certified radiologist colleagues jointly-published a study of low back pain in high-performing female gymnasts.<sup>285</sup> This research is the epitome of sports and coaching science. The researchers focused on high-performing athletes, who worked with high-performance coaches and trainers, to recognize and treat injuries in the service of readying the athlete's body for international competition. The study tried to triangulate degenerative disk issues in young, high-performing female gymnasts with and without self-described low back pain. Nassar and his colleagues decided to limit the study to "nineteen Olympic-level female gymnasts (ages 12 to 20 years, average age 16 years) who were invited to attend a specific weeklong national training camp."<sup>286</sup> The event was held at the infamous Karolyi Ranch. The ranch served as the USAG national training center from 2001 to 2018. The USAG only broke with Karolyi Ranch because of ties to Nassar.<sup>287</sup>

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John C. Licciardone, "Osteopathic Manipulative Treatment During the Third Trimester of Pregnancy," *The Journal of the American Osteopathic Association* 117, no. 5 (May 1, 2017): 289–90, <https://doi.org/10.7556/jaoa.2017.050>; John C. Licciardone et al., "Osteopathic Manipulative Treatment of Back Pain and Related Symptoms during Pregnancy: A Randomized Controlled Trial," *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology* 202, no. 1 (January 2010): 43.e1-8, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajog.2009.07.057>.

<sup>284</sup> "2004 Police Report: Teen Felt 'Uncomfortable,' 'scared' after Nassar Appointment," *Lansing State Journal*, accessed July 6, 2019, <https://www.lansingstatejournal.com/story/news/local/2018/01/30/meridian-twp-apologize-woman-whose-nassar-complaint-never-sent-prosecutors/1078230001/>.

<sup>285</sup> D. Lee Bennett, Lawrence Nassar, and Mark C. DeLano, "Lumbar Spine MRI in the Elite-Level Female Gymnast with Low Back Pain," *Skeletal Radiology* 35, no. 7 (July 2006): 503–9, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00256-006-0083-7>.

<sup>286</sup> Bennett, Nassar, and DeLano, 504.

<sup>287</sup> "Karolyi Ranch out as USA Gymnastics Training Site - HoustonChronicle.Com," January 19, 2018, <https://www.houstonchronicle.com/olympics/article/Karolyi-Ranch-out-as-USA-Gymnastics-training-site-12509076.php>.

A significant number of interviews with national team members and victims described the Karolyi Ranch as, essentially, Nassar's hunting ground. Bela and Martha Karolyi emigrated or defected to the United States from Romania in 1981. They had worked as high-performance gymnastic coaches in Romania. The Karolyis opened their facilities on a secluded Texas ranch in 1984. They maintained a rigorous and harsh environment while isolating athletes from parents and families.<sup>288</sup> They considered families distractions. The Karolyis generated a golden era of US women's gymnastics. Nassar was integral to the entire operation, especially in his role as a national team doctor and medical coordinator.

The Karolyis claim not to have known the abuse was occurring. Although unbelievable, if athletes had a high degree of fear of the Karolyis (as described by many athletes), compounded by the Karolyis absolute trust in Nassar, it is reasonable to assume that some athletes would never have disclosed their experiences. Athletes did tell lesser status coaches; often, those trainers downplayed or dismissed their experiences. For those reasons, I question whether the participants in the study were *invited* to the training camp as cited. From my experience as a Puerto Rican national badminton team member, an invitation to a national training camp should be considered more like a subpoena to appear in court before a judge; athletes serious about qualifying or maintaining their positions on the team rarely miss these kinds of events. Only the invited nineteen athletes joined the camp. On closer evaluation, the athletes in this study might be better described as a captive population.

If my analysis of the athlete's situation is correct, then the legitimacy of the internal review board approval for this study is in question. The authors did not explain any safety

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<sup>288</sup> Emilia Benton, "There's Some Major Info About Bela And Martha Karolyi Missing From HBO's New USA Gymnastics Doc," Women's Health, May 5, 2019, <https://www.womenshealthmag.com/life/a27307279/bela-martha-karolyi-ranch-usa-gymnastics-larry-nassar-abuse/>.

procedures taken regarding the internal review process or describe consideration for the vulnerable population in the study (many of the athletes in the study would have been considered vulnerable because of their age), nor any precautions for the safety of the athletes, such as chaperones in the examination room. The authors' only explanations of the review and ethical dimensions stated that the

[i]nternal review board approval was obtained for this prospective controlled study. The informed consent forms used for this study were also reviewed and approved by our institution's internal review board. Written informed consent appropriate for age was obtained for all participants after the nature of the procedure had been fully explained and understood.<sup>289</sup>

In the 2006 article on low back pain, the ages of the nineteen gymnasts recruited for the study ranged from twelve to twenty, with an average of sixteen. Nassar faced accusations of assaulting girls as young as six, yet most of the athletes who confronted him in public testimony stated his abuse began when they were between twelve and sixteen.<sup>290</sup> In the study, two radiologists carefully evaluated the MRIs of each athlete's lower spine. Nassar performed a medical exam prior to each MRI for the purpose of establishing a baseline as the key contrast to the imaging. The authors wrote of his role as the following, using Nassar's initials to name him, "Each of the gymnasts underwent a history & physical exam by a primary care sports medicine physician (LGN)."<sup>291</sup> Most likely, he performed all nineteen examinations the same way many victims described. The researchers did not state whether chaperones or supervisors were in the room

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<sup>289</sup> Bennett, Nassar, and DeLano, "Lumbar Spine MRI in the Elite-Level Female Gymnast with Low Back Pain," 504.

<sup>290</sup> Char Adams, "Larry Nassar's First Known Victim Says Father Didn't Believe Her — and Guilt Led to His Suicide," PEOPLE.com, accessed July 6, 2019, <https://people.com/sports/kyle-stephens-larry-nassar-sexual-abuse/>.

<sup>291</sup> Bennett, Nassar, and DeLano, "Lumbar Spine MRI in the Elite-Level Female Gymnast with Low Back Pain," 504.

during the examinations. However, public testimony indicated that even having an audience did not curtail his actions.

I often wonder how Nassar was actually caught. He was key in the success of the Karolyi center, he wrote the USAG athletic training and safety materials, and published many peer-reviewed articles legitimizing the procedure he used to assault women. Additionally, he covered his tracks by sustained involvement in multiple institutionally powerful roles within the governing, training, and educating wings of the USAG. He seemed to have found perfect alibis. The gravity of this case was explained flatly by Bill Plaschke in an article in the *Los Angeles Times*, “The Nassar ... scandal is, by numbers, larger than the Jerry Sandusky child molestation case.”<sup>292</sup> Nassar controlled information regarding athlete safety, while preying on those same athletes. His academic research and publications rest on his physical examinations of his study participants. His actions, backed by the sports and medical establishments, recalls other examples of egregious medical malpractice in the US, most often targeting women and people of color.

J. Marion Sims investigated and treated the condition of vesicovaginal fistula beginning in 1845. Until recently, Sims remained the esteemed *father of gynecology*.<sup>293</sup> Sims developed the first-known technique to repair a vesicovaginal fistula. He perfected his technique over the course of four years using the bodies of enslaved women; he would rent them from their plantation owners. He never used anesthesia and operated almost twenty times on some women. From his own records, he attributed names to three main women on whom he experimented

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<sup>292</sup> Bill Plaschke, “Parents of Young Athletes Must Face the Disturbing Truth in Light of Larry Nassar’s Crimes,” *latimes.com*, accessed July 6, 2019, <https://www.latimes.com/sports/la-sp-gymnastics-placshke-20180123-story.html>.

<sup>293</sup> Brynn Holland, “The ‘Father of Modern Gynecology’ Performed Shocking Experiments on Slaves,” *HISTORY*, accessed July 30, 2019, <https://www.history.com/news/the-father-of-modern-gynecology-performed-shocking-experiments-on-slaves>.

calling them Anarcha, Betsy, and Lucy. During surgery, Sims would often have other doctors and scientists view the procedure while giving lectures and explaining his techniques. He regularly had more than ten attendees during surgeries.<sup>294</sup> Sims published his technique and his experiments in established journals, some of which remain in circulation today.

*Research Bodies, High-Performance Bodies*

Nassar and Sims, in my analysis, did the same. Sims experimented and profited, along with slave owners and White women, from the experiments on bodies of Black enslaved women. Anarcha, Betsy, and Lucy's bodies made his successes possible. The bodies and the experiences of the racially diverse, in some cases captive, young female gymnasts that Nassar used as data to validate his research haunt those publications, and directly contributed to his financial and social profits and standing. In much the same way that scholars have contended with the historical residue of Sims, researchers must likewise challenge Nassar's legacy.

Although there are no public lists of all women who have come forward about their abuse by Nassar (and doubtless there are many more that have not come forward), enough are named in press records to develop startling interpretations. Between 1999 and 2016, the years that Nassar headed the USAG office of athlete and medical safety, the abused athletes won multiple world championships and Olympic medals as both individuals and as a team. From the perspective of the team, the statistics of abuse were astounding. When comparing the names of publicly known victims to the names of the members on world championship and Olympic teams, the depth of Nassar's abuse is exposed. In Table 1, I quantify the number of victims based on the number of total athletes on a given team and the medals achieved. Not all years are represented because,

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<sup>294</sup> C. Riley Snorton, *Black on Both Sides: A Racial History of Trans Identity* (University of Minnesota Press, 2017), <https://minnesota.universitypressscholarship.com/view/10.5749/minnesota/9781517901721.001.0001/upso-9781517901721>.

unfortunately, not all of Nassar’s victims are known. As the Ropes and Gray investigation into the entire case stated, “Nassar committed thousands of sexual assaults between the early 1990s and the summer of 2016.”<sup>295</sup> The following short discussion of medals and athletes exposes the structural elements in youth sports that funneled young people into situations where they were vulnerable to abuse. The same channel is typically the only pathway to high-performance success.

Table 1: Year: Victims of Team -- Performance

World Championships	Olympics
1999: 3/6 - 5th place	2000: 2/6 - Bronze Medal
2001: 3/6 - Bronze Medal	2012: 5/5 - Gold Medal
2003: 3/6 - Gold Medal	2016: 4/5 - Gold Medal
2010: 2/6 - Silver Medal	
2011: 4/6 - Gold Medal	
2014: 5/6 - Gold Medal	
2015: 5/6 - Gold Medal	
2018: 1/5 - Gold Medal	

The 2012 Olympic team is the most striking case: 100 percent of the team members were victimized by Nassar. For eight of the eleven years profiled, his victims comprised half or more than half of all team members. The difference in years represented was because the Team World Championships occur every year, whereas the Olympics is only every four years.

Nassar’s abuse was integral to the athletic success of the US women’s team. His actions must have influenced the team’s performance and victory. Taking the stories and abuse seriously, I am positing a different frame to understand Nassar’s actions. Regardless of whether one was proud of the accomplishments of the women’s national team, Nassar abused many more than the few who won medals at the highest level of international competition. Instead of

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<sup>295</sup> “Independent Investigation,” Executive summary 1, accessed July 8, 2019, <http://www.nassarinvestigation.com/en>.

focusing on these select women as the only victims, their stories should instead propel us toward reconceptualizing the extent of abuse in women's gymnastics as a whole.

By speaking publicly and documenting their experiences, these victims provided a detailed understanding of the practical ways that Nassar operated. Additionally, they explained the breakdown of current safety protocols invested in by major sport leaders. The independent investigators from the Ropes and Grey law firm stated the following in their extensive report:

Nassar thrived in [a] loose governance model. The USOC had minimal interactions with him and deferred to USAG, which in turn permitted Nassar to create a personal fiefdom where he wrote the rules and set the tone for the medical treatment of the women's gymnastics program for close to 20 years – overseeing medical care at USAG events, serving as the point person for approval of any outside medical providers, and participating in drafting rules governing sexual misconduct by the medical staff. USAG engaged in essentially no oversight of Nassar throughout the lengthy period of his serial sexual assault of gymnasts.<sup>296</sup>

The situation is not much different in many other sports. For decades there have been many analogous scandals of child abuse, concealment, and regulatory oversight occurring in US swimming, taekwondo, badminton, volleyball, and several other sports.<sup>297</sup>

While it is true that Nassar abused each of the 2012 gold medal winning Women's Olympic gymnastics team members, hundreds of their peers attended the same training camps

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<sup>296</sup> "Independent Investigation," Executive Summary 11.

<sup>297</sup> "As USA Swimming Grapples With Sexual Abuse, Athletes Cite Lack Of Female Coaches," NPR.org, accessed July 8, 2019, <https://www.npr.org/2018/07/04/623540000/as-usa-swimming-grapples-with-sexual-abuse-athletes-cite-lack-of-female-coaches>; "Athletes Outraged as Banned Taekwondo Coach Reinstated," *USA Today*, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/sports/olympics/2018/08/17/olympics-athletes-outraged-banned-taekwondo-coach-reinstated/1022861002/>; Chris Thompson, "Taekwondo Coach Reinstated By SafeSport Following Brief Ban Over 'Decades Long Pattern Of Sexual Misconduct,'" *Deadspin*, accessed July 8, 2019, <https://deadspin.com/taekwondo-coach-reinstated-by-safesport-following-brief-1828440155>; "Volleyball Coach Rick Butler Hit with Class-Action Lawsuit amid Sexual Abuse Allegations," July 2012, [http://www.espn.com/espn/story/\\_/id/22601702/volleyball-coach-rick-butler-hit-class-action-lawsuit-amid-sexual-abuse-allegations](http://www.espn.com/espn/story/_/id/22601702/volleyball-coach-rick-butler-hit-class-action-lawsuit-amid-sexual-abuse-allegations); Bay City News Service, "Well-Known Badminton Coach Arrested On Suspicion Of Molesting 17-Year-Old," *SFGate*, July 20, 2018, <https://www.sfgate.com/news/bayarea/article/Well-Known-Badminton-Coach-Arrested-On-Suspicion-13090333.php>; "Jeff Dyrek Supporters Resign from USA Badminton Board," *Daily News* (blog), June 5, 2019, <http://www.ocregister.com/jeff-dyrek-supporters-resign-from-usa-badminton-board>.



and practiced in the same gyms, thereby also facing exposure to Nassar in the process to qualify for the team. Furthermore, Nassar volunteered at a local high school, at regional gymnastics gyms, at the athletics department at MSU, at the US national gymnastics' center, and at various national and international tournaments, giving him access to a major segment of the US female athlete talent pool. Over the course of decades, he had unfettered access to young girls at all levels of gymnastics' competitions and even non-gymnastic sports.

With his long-term access to developmental pathways of high-performance gymnastic talent, a small group of athletes, of whom he abused, rose through the ranks. Given the size of US youth gymnastics, it is possible that coaches, USAG officials, parents, and other medical doctors trafficked or funneled potentially thousands of young gymnasts and other athletes to Nassar. The World Championship Team competition is held almost every year, thereby increasing the number of potential open spots for athletes to win the opportunity of representing the United States internationally. The wider range of competitors at World Championships versus the Olympics show the depth of the US gymnastics talent pool and Nassar's reach. Surprising national media, male gymnasts have also accused Nassar of sexual assault during supposed medical treatment.<sup>298</sup> Because Nassar's abuse was pernicious and supported by key officials, I presented a different frame of reference to conceptualize the larger issue facing professional sports and athletes. Researchers have yet to acknowledge the ways that his abuse influenced both their findings and the everyday experiences of athletes.

#### Reflections on Everyday Violence: Methodological and Research Implications

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<sup>298</sup> Joe Difazio On 3/6/18 at 10:17 AM EST, "First Male Athlete Speaks out against Larry Nassar," Newsweek, March 6, 2018, <https://www.newsweek.com/larry-nassar-sexual-abuse-jacob-moore-usa-gymnastics-832370>.

It is difficult to write about violence and trauma. Veena Das explained her struggle to write an ethnography of violence in her book, *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary*.<sup>299</sup> Her fieldwork included “urban Punjabi families” who were displaced or had migrated from Punjab region due to the “traumatic riots of the Partition in 1947” and with “survivors of the riots against Sikhs in Delhi in 1984.”<sup>300</sup> In searching for research methods to assist and lead me in theorizing about relationships after trauma, I studied Das.

In her research Das recorded histories, stories, and experiences of the day of violence, as well as the hours, days, weeks, months, and years after. She defined violence as part of the “complicated pictures of what it is to make and remake a world.”<sup>301</sup> From the experiences of her fieldwork and her theoretical sense of subjectivity, Das reflected on her writing style of short vignettes:

[T]hese pictures are tied up with questions of what it is to write an ethnography of violence – one that is not seen as bearing an objective witness to the events as much as trying to locate the subject through the experience of such limits.<sup>302</sup>

Das continued, “What is it to pick up the pieces and to live in this very place of devastation? This is what animates the description of lives and texts in this book.”<sup>303</sup> These two sentences are clear descriptions of Das’ method concerning ethnography.

Some athletes endured Nassar’s abuse their entire professional careers. Ropes and Gray found major problems with athlete safety at all levels of the USAG. Additionally, they found confidentiality problems and conflicts of interest among the governing board members, while

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<sup>299</sup> Veena Das, *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary* (Univ of California Press, 2006).

<sup>300</sup> Das, 2.

<sup>301</sup> Das, 5.

<sup>302</sup> Das, 5.

<sup>303</sup> Das, 6.

documenting that athletes had to train in the same violent conditions for years. In her articulation of the ways that the subjects dealt with the violence, Das revealed another methodological tool: “My interest ...is not in describing these moments of horror but rather in describing what happens to the subject and world when the memory of such events is folded into ongoing relationships.”<sup>304</sup> As guiding principles, her words were grounded in place, space, and time. Das continued to describe how she came to her method:

My engagement with the survivors of riots also showed me that life was recovered not through some grand gestures in the realm of the transcendent but through a descent into the ordinary. There was, I argue, a mutual absorption of the violent and the ordinary so that I end up by thinking of the event as always attached to the ordinary as if there were tentacles that reach out from the everyday and anchor the event to it in some specific ways.<sup>305</sup>

In describing Nassar’s use of power over athletes through Foucauldian analytics, one might use the word *tentacles*. To grasp the complexity of the social relationships developed after the experience of widespread social terror, Das did not dwell on the events of traumatic violence (e.g., ethnic cleansing by one neighbor against the other) to understand lingering effects of that violence. She used ethnographic fieldwork to understand the process by which society normalized violence.

If I attune my methods along the parameters indicated by Das, then the headline notoriety of Nassar, his trial, and his most famous victims is disrupted. Instead, following Das would mean that the stories of abuse create a framework for us to rethink how a predator operates. Mainstream coaching researchers have not considered pervasive violence, definitely not the kind Nassar perpetrated. The mandated court reporter certificate that I must update each year to work at Azusa High did not educate me to evaluate or even consider this kind of situation. The child

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<sup>304</sup> Das, 2.

<sup>305</sup> Das, 7.

abuse recognition course has not changed in ten years. In these kinds of online education, the curriculum explained abuse as most often being individualized, terminal (has a start and end date), top-down (e.g. from coach to athlete or parent to child), and considered an extreme situation that should be stemmed as early as possible. I do not agree with these conclusions. Because coaches were trained to notice individual, terminal, hierarchical, and extreme abuse, they made the Nassar scandal possible. Learning from this case would mean changing notions to account for abuse that is shared, indeterminate, variable, and prevalent. The coaches, potentially unwittingly, set the conditions of possibility for this humiliating situation.<sup>306</sup>

The classification schemes and reporting requirements could not support coaches in identifying and reacting appropriately to everyday violence. In this study, I explore the concept of violence as not being tied solely to sexual assault. Understanding the complexity of the problem meant that the conditions during training, such as bullying from coaches, captains, or peers, contributed to the everyday violence that athletes faced. Likewise, abuse included inappropriate training methods for athletes, such as demanding adult standards of young children. Although Nassar's assaults on athletes were horrific, it was also the coaching tactics and techniques, along with the lack of mentorship and absolute athletic competitiveness, that created the conditions for Nassar's abuse of athletes to thrive. A significant part of the problem with coach education is that, much like the case against Nassar, researchers focused on simple, single category analysis.

Drawing from the analysis of Coaching Studies from chapter two, we see that sports and coaching science is usually correlated to single category analysis. For instance, researchers used

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<sup>306</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (Routledge, 2005), xxii. "...what I am attempting to bring to light is the epistemological field, the *episteme* in which knowledge, envisaged apart from all criteria having reference to its rational value or to its objective forms, grounds its positivity and thereby manifests a history which is not that of its growing perfection, but rather that of its conditions of possibility..."

data from a single high-performance event, single gender, ethnicity, race, team, athlete, league, or sport. Even when studying the effects of abuse on high-performing athletes and their perceptions of coaches, Stirling and Kerr did not address the larger influence of a coach's abuse and the effect on trainers, teammates, and assistant staff.<sup>307</sup> Furthermore, the subjects included only current or former high-performance athletes. The focus on high-performance, single category sports research mirrors the imperative of performance (the process of pursuing improvement within a competitive sports model by monetizing winning athletic performances, while pursuing ever-increasing performance and profit) reproducing, in the words of Foucault, a "regime of truth" about what constituted appropriate and possible research topics, in so doing constricting available options.<sup>308</sup>

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<sup>307</sup> Ashley E. Stirling and Gretchen A. Kerr, "Abused Athletes' Perceptions of the Coach-Athlete Relationship," *Sport in Society* 12, no. 2 (March 2009): 227–39.

<sup>308</sup> Lorna Weir, "The Concept of Truth Regime," *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 33, no. 2 (2008): 367–89.

## *Regimes of Truth and the Education-Competition Paradox*

Within the current regime of truth, everyday sports experiences are marginalized in favor of idealized myths. Foucault famously defined his concept arguing that “Each society has its regime of truth, its ‘general politics of truth...the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true from false...the way each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures which are valorized for obtaining truth.”<sup>309</sup> For Foucault, the society he was describing was dominated by the scientific method, and incorporated all aspects of life.

In earlier chapters, I discussed that Coaching Studies was dominated by a narrow focus on high-performance settings, individuals, and methods. I used Foucault’s description of truth as a historically located ideological system to understand Coaching Studies. Foucault commented, “By ‘truth’ is meant a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution and circulation of statements.”<sup>310</sup> Scholars and administrators desiring clear (truthful) advice on how best to construct training environments in the pursuit of success necessarily draw from source material impacted by high-performance research, such as Larry Nassar’s.

It is in this way that I have understood the process of developing, regulating, educating, and circulating secondary level coach education materials to public schools and private clubs across the country. This understanding was important for my own growth as a practitioner. The better understanding led my critique of the field in search of more grounded and applicable pedagogy. Returning to my claim that there exists a regime of truth regarding the normative

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<sup>309</sup> Michel Foucault, “The Political Function of the Intellectual,” trans. Colin Gordon, *Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham Working Papers in Cultural Studies*, no. 10 (April 1977): 13; Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: An Introduction* (New York: Vintage, 1978); Michel Foucault and François Ewald, “*Society Must Be Defended*”: *Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-1976* (Macmillan, 2003).

<sup>310</sup> Foucault, 14.

youth sports experience, regrettably we have to concede that the actual normative experiences of athletes included abuse.

Coaches have been a major impediment to fighting abuse in sports and changing the culture of competitiveness. Scholarly researchers described a paradox in sports coaching that corresponded to my own ethnographic research in Los Angeles. Researchers have stated that trainers learn best outside the classroom and in informal settings with mentoring from more experienced peers. Contrary to the best conditions for learning, researchers have shown that coaches sabotage their opportunities to learn. Many avoid educational topics that are not linked to the immediate goals of successful competition, while others dismiss educators and curriculum completely. The more highly competitive settings lead to fewer coach interactions, which can negatively influence athletes and the industry.<sup>311</sup> Coaches instead tend to disengage from educational opportunities and become antagonistic in group settings when competition is prioritized.

Most athletes are not elite or high-performance but average; their familiarity with high-performance is based on abstract standards, not personal competitive experience. Coaches are similar; most do not work in high-performance sports settings and experience elite sports more from spectatorship than involvement. Although most coaches are minimally educated, many wish they had greater access to further education in their field and to mentoring positions.

### Disrupting Competition

In the context of current sports and coaching culture, research, regulation, and education, critical sports scholars have tried or found ways to disrupt or disengage from the ideological ties

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<sup>311</sup> Christopher Cushion and Robyn L. Jones, "Power, Discourse, and Symbolic Violence in Professional Youth Soccer: The Case of Albion Football Club," *Sociology of Sport Journal* 23, no. 2 (2006): 142–161; François Lemyre, Pierre Trudel, and Natalie Durand-Bush, "How Youth-Sport Coaches Learn to Coach."

of competition. In actuality, there are many moments when activity in the gym or on the field does disrupt normative expectations of competition and high-performance. For instance, in my own short career as a right fielder while playing organized little league baseball, I was often too slow running toward the ball, never found myself in the direction of the ball, and never threw the ball far or fast enough to make important plays. My own body disrupted the expectations of high-performance. Although these kinds of examples momentarily disrupt the overwhelming force of the imperative of performance, these also represent moments of discipline and reincorporation. As I explained, my baseball career was short, only long enough for my coach to bench me permanently, and a more competitively capable player replaced me. My momentary disruption was disciplined, and control was reintroduced, thereby reincorporating the loose fragments, the questioning of the coach's managing skills, that validated or excused my performance.

Parallel points could be made about other sporting spaces, such as practice spaces, coach meeting rooms, or locker rooms.<sup>312</sup> I found that sports settings and settings within sports events could be relatively exterior to normative athletic expectations and more inclined to include values disruptive to competitive environments. In chapter three, I discussed some of those spaces, such as the snack bar, which facilitated a transition in function. In the case of the snack bar, entering the threshold of the space broke the boundary from the gym. Inside the snack bar, the space was often left under student control. Students would select and play music would play,

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<sup>312</sup> Timothy Jon Curry, "Fraternal Bonding in the Locker Room: A Profeminist Analysis of Talk about Competition and Women," *Sociology of Sport Journal* 8, no. 2 (1991); Amy E. Lyndon et al., "The Role of High School Coaches in Helping Prevent Adolescent Sexual Aggression: Part of the Solution or Part of the Problem?" *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 35, no. 4 (November 2011): 377-99; Brian Wilson, Nicolien Van Luijk, and Michael K Boit, "When Celebrity Athletes Are 'Social Movement Entrepreneurs': A Study of the Role of Elite Runners in Run-for-Peace Events in Post-Conflict Kenya in 2008," *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 50, no. 8 (December 2015): 929-57.



and athletes entered and exited the space to visit with each other. Snacks were sold, but this was a secondary reason for the space. Many times, athletes who had just played their matches would turn to their friends at the snack bar to talk and decompress from the stress of the match, especially when a player (or player's team) had lost.

Leaving aside obvious spaces of exteriority, like the snack bar, whether "practice" can be exterior to the competitive environment remains contested terrain. By practice, I mean the time, space, and focus of energy allotted for learning or refining skills, strengths, and strategies of sports. Practice is integral to every sports program. However, not every moment of practice follows the same principles. In my earlier discussion of Azusa High, its material environment, and its uses, I gave several examples within the gym. The reader might recall how the girls' locker room and the west side of the gym generally become nodes of activity. Many times, the activity belied competitive focus and stumbled into everyday interactions of friendship and mutual support. The circulation of bodies in the competitive space is not always focused on improving competitive routines and can even disrupting such performances. Some is accepted by the system; other times, I witnessed coaches and administrators clamping down on certain actions, voices, individuals, or activities to focus on learning of competitive sports. For example, a coach can yell at a player to get their attention suddenly. The momentary disruption of activity might bring the athlete's focus back to the task of more closely following coaching directives.

Drawing from my own experiences and fieldwork, I claim that *mixed sports* environments are ideal for disrupting many problems plaguing youth sports today. By mixed sports, I mean those that do the work of integrating athletes, training staff, and facilities with respect to intersectional oppression (racial, gender, sexuality, disability, and economic discrimination). I coach coed badminton, and as a leader I direct my staff to work as best as they

can without regard to gender. I want the coaching directives to focus on events instead, such as singles, doubles, or mixed doubles. Although this strategy might seem perfectly appropriate to an outsider, many coaches would agree that they were not educated for mixed settings. As I analyzed before, coaching science has normalized single category sports research and education; therefore, mixed gender sports settings, and mixed settings generally, have typically not been studied. This subject must be considered more fully if athletic training staff are to understand how to work in mixed settings. The 2020 summer Olympics and Paralympics will add fifteen new mixed sports or events (there already are several such long-standing mixed events in the summer and winter games).

As an example, consider the disruption of normative gender expectations that is commonplace in badminton singles training. To play competitive singles, one must keep a rally going; to keep a rally going, a player must return an opponent's shots back over the net with consistency, while not letting the shuttle hit the floor and keeping volleys within the boundaries of the court. This ability requires a full range of skills, the least of which involves moving under pressure from an opponent for prolonged periods. This is a basic skill required for all competitive matches. At the highest international level, rallies routinely last for twenty to fifty shots. At the average high school level, a rally of ten shots is long. To practice this ability, common ideas of competition must be disrupted.

To keep a rally going efficiently, athletes must practice against their peers. A typical drill will incorporate a discrete set of shots or possible shots with each of the two athletes having to make different shots at different times. The overriding goals with these drills, as I explain to the athletes, is to extend the rallies as long as possible with a minimum of ten shots. I often tell athletes that if they became bored with these kinds of drills, then they are doing them correctly;

doing the same series of shots for five or ten minutes *is* boring, as I know from personal experience. Adhering to the objective of extending the rallies leads to my second point making the disruption most clear. I tell athletes that as they become more adept at these kinds of drills, they can put increasing pressure on their training partners; unlike a game, the aim of the drill is to find the balance between putting on too much pressure and the rally ending or too little pressure and the rally not helping athletes develop their skill. I ask the athletes to cooperate in developing competitive skills. During practice, all singles players train like this together, with and against each other, irrespective of gender. The disruption to the competitive directives of sports coaching just happen because the athletes must prioritize noncompetitive, intersubjective elements in order to meet their target, executing precision movement and control of the racket while moving under pressure from an opponent in game-like conditions.

Cooperative development between boys and girls in equally positioned physical activity outside of school hours while on school property is an important educational activity. Engendering these kinds of collaborative interactions shows ways that coaches educate youth beyond sports-specific knowledge. In the case of the singles drills, when done at a competent level, many athletes stated they entered a kind of *zone*. These athletes felt as though they were on auto-pilot, that effort was rewarded instead of outcome. Not all drills are as theoretically enticing as these, yet many incorporate the same concept. A common word used for this kind of drill is *sparring*. O'Shea's interdisciplinary research in martial arts, performance studies, and cognitive sciences explored the disruptive potential of sparring. She described the function of sparring in martial arts as one that disrupts the imperative of performance by prioritizing learning and failure instead of winning. In response to the notion that athletes should never fail or be afraid of failure,

she stated, “Failure in process is not the same as failure in outcome.”<sup>313</sup> I borrow O’Shea’s argument to buttress my own— that during practices there were many moments, drills, and opportunities in which competition must be elided in the service of establishing cooperative and more equal interactions between athletes.

Disrupting the norms that incentivized Nassar and many local level sports professionals to commit their crimes also means sexual assault and aggression need to remain issues coaches more fully address. In popular self-help coaching literature, practitioners are routinely cited as one of the most important role models in a young person’s life and are told that therefore they must model interactions and discuss topics like sexual assault.<sup>314</sup> This class of literature often contains spiritual or theological aphorisms. Regardless, the intent is correct, as coaches especially need to address these topics.

The youth coach has an important role, one that has a potentially lifelong influence on their athletes’ lives. Lyndon, Duffy, Smith, and White found current practitioner education and knowledge of sexual assault severely lacking.<sup>315</sup> Through open-ended individual and group interviews, the authors showed that practitioners and administrators influenced athletes, resisted education and training regarding sexual assault, lacked correct information regarding rates of incidence of assault, and endorsed rape myths while minimizing assault as a problem. I worked with coaches in Los Angeles and Japan and confirmed these findings. Coaches often understood their influence on the lives of their athletes, but most remained unaware that “they may be

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<sup>313</sup> “Beyond Winning | Janet O’Shea | TEDxUCLA - YouTube,” accessed July 13, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MWrRkzluCPo&t=46s>.

<sup>314</sup> John Wooden, *Coach Wooden’s Pyramid of Success: Building Blocks for a Better Life* (Christian audio, 2010); Joe Ehrmann, *InSideOut Coaching : How Sports Can Transform Lives* / (Simon & Schuster, 2011); Micah C. Gilmer, ““ You Got to Have a Heart of Stone to Work Here’: Coaching, Teaching, and Building Men” at Eastside High” (PhD Thesis, 2009).

<sup>315</sup> Lyndon et al., “The Role of High School Coaches in Helping Prevent Adolescent Sexual Aggression.”

transmitting values and beliefs that support and condone sexual aggression of their athletes.”<sup>316</sup>

Therefore, the authors asserted that all training staff must be given sexual assault and violence prevention training, even if they do not want such instruction.

White and Smith argued that preventive education for and enforcement against high school aged students committing sexual assault reduced rates of assault at the university. They wrote, “Young men who first perpetrated [sexual violence] during adolescence were far more likely to reoffend during the 1st year of college...However, preventing adolescent perpetration would reduce collegiate victimization by about 25%.”<sup>317</sup> For me, this finding settled the conversation on the potential of youth coaches positively influencing changes in their athletes. The methods White and Smith rely upon make positive impacts and disrupt normative expectations of gendered and sexualized violence inside and outside of sports. This kind of disruption, like others profiled in this section, create cognitive and physical dissonance with the messages disseminated in popular sports mythologies; that winning and competition were the ultimate goals. However, the lack of education and the informal attitude between coaches, administrators, and staff about inappropriate interactions with athletes leaves them more vulnerable to certain kinds of violence compared to if they had not joined the sport.

In this section I have called attention to the massive levels of abuse in youth sports. I carefully deconstruct key elements of the Nassar case and move to analyzing his published works. Das instructed researchers to focus on the way life continues after great violence and trauma. It is this method that assisted me in recognizing the tremendous range of Nassar’s abuse

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<sup>316</sup> Lyndon et al., 377.

<sup>317</sup> Jacquelyn W. White and Paige Hall Smith, “Sexual Assault Perpetration and Reperpetration: From Adolescence to Young Adulthood,” *Criminal Justice and Behavior* 31, no. 2 (April 1, 2004): 199.

and turn away from media hype about a select group of victims. To combat abuse in sports I promoted disrupting competition through carefully constructed practices sessions.

### Comments from the Gym

Azusa High School's 2016 badminton team was strong. That season I had several multi-year varsity players on the squad. In 2016, the team won first place in the league and qualified for the Southern California badminton team championship tournament. Because of our undefeated record, the team was entered into the top competitive level of the team tournament. Although my team's record was excellent, it does not fully encapsulate their competitive standing.

There are several ways that a team's competitiveness is measured and debated. The first is the win-to-loss ratio, a form of quantifying a team's or athlete's competitiveness. Records in high school badminton derive from league competition. In 2008, the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) changed some long-practiced rules to limit the number of tournaments and preseason games possible. The rule changes forced a conversation about how to understand the relative strength of a league or team when opportunities for competition between teams became more restricted.

Take Azusa's experience, for example. The high school is in the Montview League. Games between teams were close and competitive, and several teams were in the running for first place. However, when teams from our equally competitive league played outside of their league, they were often beaten badly. Many high school coaches consider the Montview League the most competitively equitable league—meaning the range of skill and competitiveness between teams was not that large. This was not the case in all leagues or for all teams. Long Beach Polytechnic High School (Poly) in Long Beach, California is in the Moore League. The

Moore League is much more competitively unequal. Poly is typically a top contender in that league, while some teams have never won a game. In this example, Azusa and Poly might each have a winning record in their respective leagues, yet these results will not reflect the competitive differences between the teams or leagues.

Another way that relative competitiveness is determined is through debate during CIF badminton board meetings.<sup>318</sup> Each league has one representative on the board, usually a coach (although the person could be an athletic director with experience in badminton), and these representatives meet several times a year to develop new badminton rules, recommendations, and tournament calendars. The board at that time was all volunteer and not elected. The facilitator, Dean Schoppe, has been continuously involved with high school badminton in Los Angeles and Orange County since the beginning of the sport in high schools, the mid-1970s. He is currently the main salesperson and partner in the HL badminton and sports equipment company,<sup>319</sup> HL being the official sponsor of high school badminton in Southern California and the manufacturer of the plastic shuttles used in sanctioned competitions. During the championship tournament seeding meeting at the end of the season, this board decides the teams to be included and at which level of competition the teams participate.

Because many members are coaches of successful teams, and the meetings are open for staff from any team to attend, the debates are often rambunctious. I attended the meeting in 2016 to argue for my team to be included in the second level group even though we were undefeated. During the dialogue, coaches compared results against individual teams and from the few limited tournaments. However, it was unanimously decided that if a team finished first place in their

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<sup>318</sup> CIF stands for California Interscholastic Federation.

<sup>319</sup> <https://www.hlbadminton.com/about-hl-badminton/>

league, regardless of strength of competition, that team deserved to be in the top-level competition by virtue of finishing first. The results were that some teams with mediocre records in the strongest leagues were placed in the second level competition, while teams, like Azusa, with the strongest records in mediocre leagues were placed in the top-level tournament. To my mind, the opportunity to create nuanced competitive categories was compromised by the structure of the current rules for competitive play and the format used to evaluate results and standings.

The forms of measuring comparative competitiveness in high school badminton are complicated. How teams are gauged, and their relative strengths and weaknesses compared, follows no rules. Essentially, the way that competitive equity is defined within the governing structure of high school badminton constrains fairness and impartiality. More than half of the advisory board are coaches, and between them they and their teams had qualified for the team finals or semifinals every year for the past five years. The representation on the committee was skewed in favor of the teams in the higher competitive bracket; these same teams were the ones with the largest programs, as they were also at schools with large student bodies. Additionally, of the eight-person advisory committee, half are non-teacher coaches. Of the four teachers on the committee, two no longer directly coach the sport. Of the non-teacher coaches, most work in professional and private settings outside of high school, as lawyers or business owners. The CIF badminton advisory committee is a quintessential example of the takeover of public school sports by competition focused, non-teacher interests.

Steve Meckna is an advisory board member, advanced placement (AP) European history teacher, and head coach of Poly's high school badminton team. He was one of the only two teacher-coaches on the advisory board, along with Kemp Wells, a teacher-coach from Diamond



Bar High School. Steve remembered me playing badminton for Azusa during the late 1990s. He also remembered the high school badminton careers of all three of my younger sisters. My sister, Nicole, became good friends with several players on the Poly team; through them, she also got to know Steve well.

I became reacquainted with Steve once I took over as head coach at Azusa. Steve brought Poly's team to our annual tournament, and we quickly began a collegial friendship. I often called or texted Steve when I had questions about coaching basics, as well as issues of equitably and efficiently directing a varsity level team. Over the subsequent nine years, my friendship with Steve developed significantly. I spent numerous afternoons in the living room of Steve and his partner Marcela's Long Beach home discussing sports, world politics, and coaching youth badminton. At other times, I joined Poly's 5:30 a.m. practices as a guest coach. After those morning practices, Steve would invite me to his classroom for a cup of coffee (Steve had the most serious coffee setup in a teacher's room I had seen). I have visited Poly so many times that my own coffee mug was stored in Steve's coffee collection. I would often stay for his first period AP European history course, sometimes helping to decide the order of questions for an exam, other times joining in the classroom debate regarding the day's topic.

Over the course of the nine years, Steve and I often discussed the subject of the importance of scholastic sports. I asked Steve to guest lecture several times in the undergraduate courses I taught about sports, youth, gender, and disability. In 2016, he wrote an opinion article for local Long Beach community press comparing an experience that he recently had while coaching a star female badminton athlete and the treatment of a boys' baseball team at a neighboring school. Steve asked me for feedback on the article, which I gave enthusiastically.

His article was approved for publication on the condition that he would wait several years, as the actors in the story remained in high school at the time.

Throughout my graduate career, I received the message that I must engage in intersectional and multi-disciplinary analysis of social phenomena. I was told to prioritize in classrooms and readings those community spaces that are most marginalized in the academic debates. I understood that a central tenet of feminist method must begin with people's stories; I could then study those data to gather theoretical, methodological, and practical answers to oppression. I considered that this kind of beginning of knowledge production would lead to greater opportunities for producing valuable social understandings and accurate descriptions of issues that influenced communities marginalized by *cis-hetero-ableist-normativity*. In that spirit, I considered Steve's article, "Subtle Sexism and High School Sports," to be an inspiration in my work, as it offers insights to new ways of developing theoretical and methodological protocols for my study.<sup>320</sup>

### *Subtle Sexism and High School Sports*

Steve has coached high school sports for almost forty years. He has taught sports, physical education, and history as a certified teacher in the Long Beach Unified School District his entire teaching career. Steve grew up in Long Beach and has always lived only a few miles from Poly. He also received his bachelor's and teaching credentials from California State University, Long Beach.

Often, when socializing with Steve and Marcela, we joked that coaches were social engineers. As we were all coed badminton coaches (Marcela was at Poly practices so often over the past twenty years that she was formally designated an informal coach), the jokes would often

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<sup>320</sup> Steven Meckna, "Subtle Sexism and High School Sports" (March 27, 2019).

turn to practical matters, questions of specific drills, and implications for wider society. When we were not discussing badminton directly, I listened to Steve's stories of growing up in a raucous and racy Navy port town. He would comment on living with his social justice, rabble-rousing mom. One of my favorite stories about Steve's mother was when he was confronted with his mom's legacy. In so many words, ex-city employees told him that whenever his mom called city hall, everyone was on their best behavior. These comments came years after his mom's passing. Steve's teaching is also something of a legend. He has received numerous awards for his dedication to teaching and coaching. His AP European History students are state trendsetters as almost all students pass the exam with the highest scores, with a 5/5.

Steve wrote for the alternative student body press while a student at Long Beach State. As Steve explained, the alternative press was the bastion of liberal and progressive journalism compared to the official campus press. Decades later, Steve still authored an occasional article for local press outlets and community newspapers.

In the following sections, I review Steve's article "Subtle Sexism and High School Sports." I consider his article a critical example of the ways in which some coaches have thought about and worked within the current youth sports system. Steve's description and analysis of pertinent youth sports issues aligns with the idea that sports could be part of a positive and holistic educational experience. His location within the changing education system was key to nuancing the dichotomy previously established between teacher-coaches and professional non-teacher coaches.

As school sports are being assaulted by the corporate, adult-run, privatized youth sports industry, coaches are being pushed to transition away from education-based sports toward the aims of competitive, profit-driven sports. Within this industry, Steve articulated a different set of

structuring questions. Steve confronted the enduring legacies of cis-heteronormative gender roles within sports and gendered stereotypes for boys and girls, which continue to haunt high school sports. Like a true rabble-rouser, Steve left the reader with more questions than answers, yet explained easily many of the topics I labored to cover in this dissertation. In this section, I elucidate the ways that Steve balances his critique of gendered norms and adherence to competitive ideals.

Coach Meckna is a true believer in the transformative potential in school sports. He has confidence that “[s]cholastic sports exist to enhance a child’s education.”<sup>321</sup> According to Steve, there are various kinds of civic and moral qualities that sports participation could develop, such as scholastic awards, personal individual rewards, and social rewards. Like many pro sports advocates, the claim of beneficial sports participation relied on the naturalization of competition. Although Meckna allowed for athletes to learn “how to handle failures and frustrations” the ideal of competition remained the defining factor. He stated,

School sports finish with a playoff type of competition...where the strongest competitors get to keep playing to another level. The point here is that no matter how good you are there is another challenge, a harder one, waiting for you just up the road. The beauty of it is seeing how far you can go before elimination and, for the top competitors, perhaps the championship. Even student athletes that don’t win can take pride in a deep playoff run.<sup>322</sup>

In this quotation, competition is naturalized in multiple ways and in several different settings. In many of the examples, the benefit of competition was affective in nature.

Steve explained that gender equality in youth sports has improved since he began coaching in the early 1980s. The gender discrimination that kept girls’ sports marginalized and ghettoized in second class facilities was “thankfully, all...in the past, along with the occasional

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<sup>321</sup> Meckna, 1.

<sup>322</sup> Meckna, 2.

wink wink given behind the scenes to behaviors by male coaches towards female athletes that end careers today.”<sup>323</sup> But he quickly tempered this proclamation with a controversy, one with Poly’s top badminton female athlete. The controversy moved him to realize that a double standard still existed between the social expectations for girls and boys in sports. He wrote, “Simply put, we expect our boys, or at least our athletic boys, to accept that struggle is the path to achievement. We make it clear that toughness is a virtue that will serve them well in later life. I thought, until very recently, that we taught girls the same values.”<sup>324</sup>

Steve addressed the ideological realm of competitive sports. As a sociologist of sport, Messner indicated that forty years after Title IX the rhetoric of choice to engage in sports has been afforded to girls. For boys, Messner describes a rhetoric of duty, obligation, and destiny.<sup>325</sup> The top female player on Poly’s team already won league finals in her event of mixed doubles. With her partner, also a top singles player on the team, she won league finals, and they advanced to the regional championship encompassing Los Angeles, Orange County, parts of the San Fernando Valley, and Inland Empire. In that tournament, this particular player and her partner finished second. Their result meant that they qualified for the state championship tournament and had a great chance of winning a medal. Unfortunately, the state championship was the same date as Poly’s prom.

The athlete told Steve, her coach, that she would not be playing in the state championship because she “did not want to miss her appointments to do her hair and take pictures.”<sup>326</sup> What took him off guard was not the student’s decision but the reactions and qualifications of school

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<sup>323</sup> Meckna, 2.

<sup>324</sup> Meckna, 1.

<sup>325</sup> Michael Messner, “Gender Ideologies, Youth Sports, and the Production of Soft Essentialism,” *Sociology of Sport Journal* 28, no. 2 (2011): 151–170.

<sup>326</sup> Meckna, “Subtle Sexism and High School Sports,” 2.

officials, administration, and teachers, most of whom were women. These officials voiced approval and support for the player's decision to forgo the state championship in favor of prom events. One of the officials "compared the importance of the prom in a girl's life with that of her wedding."<sup>327</sup> In the world of competitive athletics, this situation was abnormal.

The player chose to prioritize prom over the state championships, which disrupted high-performance sports narratives on a campus known across the country for its fierce sports teams. Steve remarked that a boy would never have received the same approval. He described a similar situation at Poly's cross-town rivals, Long Beach Wilson High School (Wilson). A few years prior, the boys' baseball team had made the CIF championship finals. The game had been scheduled on the same day as their prom. The resulting situation showed a gendered double standard in sports culture in high school. Steve explained that, "The school decided that the boys would be allowed to attend the prom free of charge if they come in their baseball uniforms. The message to those boys was that their sport, and the chance of achievement, took priority...The exact opposite message was given to my player."<sup>328</sup>

Wilson celebrated their players and facilitated their experiences doing both events. Steve linked this different treatment to the lingering gender stereotypes and discrimination that he found emanating from school administrators. The opportunity to choose between the two events was not presented to his female player as it was to the boys' team. Steve described the situation: "Would anyone have condoned, excused, or rationalized a male athlete skipping his state championship...for a hair appointment and pictures? Of course not. Undoubtedly the boy would

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<sup>327</sup> Meckna, 3.

<sup>328</sup> Meckna, 3.

get a lecture from all concerned about the importance of finishing what he started and testing the limits of his abilities.”<sup>329</sup>

Within a school’s sports culture like Poly (a national level high school sports powerhouse), these different modes of gendered expectations were enlightening. Steve confronted unequal assessments of his girl and boy athletes at multiple levels of the school’s administrative hierarchy.

The attitudes that caught Steve unaware were not those of his teenage athlete. The attitudes concerning Steve were those he had thought were unfashionable, and derived from a previous generation that was uneducated about high-performance women and girls’ sports. As an educator with a lifelong engagement with sports, Steve urged, “We, or at least educators, need to take a good long look at how we treat boys and girls. If our goal is equal opportunity, then we need to offer them the same advice and impress upon them the same values. We need to equip our girls with the same toughness as boys.”<sup>330</sup>

I can already imagine the critiques of Steve’s words in the academic seminar. Critical students may argue with Steve’s use of *equal opportunity* or *toughness*. Because of the translational issues moving from local media to high-performance scholarship, these general critiques miss the point. Competition, valuable personal characteristics, sports participation, and coaching are inseparable. Remember, each of these elements is naturalized, in relationship to one another, within the set of limitations predetermined by the imperative of performance.

I continue to ponder the values and personal characteristics being taught in the context of USAG grassroots development, and whether school sports differed. In writing as a teacher,

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<sup>329</sup> Meckna, 3.

<sup>330</sup> Meckna, 6.

coach, and cultural critic, Steve questioned whether the changes in normative gender expectations over his professional career were anything more than *window dressing*. He pointed out, in response to the entire ordeal, “Many years later, we need to recognize again that more changes in our attitudes and approach to girls sports are necessary.”<sup>331</sup> Steve is not a crusader in the sense of focusing on one exclusive issue. For me, Steve is a social engineer because he focused on the ordinary and everyday world.

On the question of ordinary and everyday choices Foucault wrote, “[p]ower...is inscribed in a field of sparse available possibilities underpinned by permanent structures...mean[ing] that power is not a choice.”<sup>332</sup> In order to engage my background in collaborative research methods properly, and out of respect for my mentors, this section ends with Steve’s analysis of gender, sports, and activism within the limitations of school sports:

Back to the role of educators in all of this. We have a tremendous impact on our students. In a high school setting we literally see them through the transition from childhood to adulthood. As a coach I want my players equipped with the habits and attitudes that will prepare them for whatever they choose to do in life...When one of my former players passed the bar exam on her first try, I felt just as much joy as I did seeing the same person, a girl who went through high school without parents due to a horrible tragedy, win a CIF title...I would like to think that their experience as student athletes somehow contributed to their success.

That important contribution can only be made, however, if the sometimes difficult and harsh lessons of discipline and sacrifice are part of the experience. For most of the school year...my players have to be in the gym at 5:20am and set up the nets and posts for practice. Practice begins at 5:30 sharp with a standard running routine and players who are late through no fault of their own have to bring their parents in to explain the reason or face consequences. This way they learn responsibility. Attendance at practices is mandatory except for illness or family emergency...The point here is that being on a competitive team means making commitment and sacrifice, just like a career, or a marriage, or parenthood does. Don’t get me wrong, sports are fun to play and fun to coach, but fundamentally we are trying to be as competitive as possible here. Let’s face it, it’s a competitive world. One person’s admission to a college or university denies the same to another. One person getting a job often means another person did not. Even in

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<sup>331</sup> Meckna, 7.

<sup>332</sup> Michel Foucault, *Power*, (New York, NY, New Press, 2000), 328.



our social relationships' competition plays a part. Tell me, when we choose a mate or partner, we desire to be with, are there not others wishing that person would choose them? I strive to prepare them for all of this.

This is where some of the adults involved in the recent prom pictures vs state championship conflict did harm to my player. I don't doubt that they had good intentions but they did harm nonetheless...some of those involved thought I needed to be more understanding because this is a girl. Tell me when this girl, as a young woman with a college degree, competes for opportunities in a professional world that she is not at a disadvantage compared to young men? Tell me that the young man competing for the same job who was taught, as many boys are, to prioritize struggle and achievement doesn't have a leg up? Simply put we are sending this young woman into a world ill equipped compared to her male counterparts.<sup>333</sup>

### Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed the theoretical and methodological repertoire developed in the introduction and chapter one of this dissertation. My experience as a national team athlete, coupled with my ethnographic experience as a sports coach, helped to detach from the media's focus on Nassar as a personality. Instead, we must understand Nassar as a type or class of predator. His extensive record and trail of disaster violated all possible professional ethics and personal boundaries. In the context of the outstanding international success of the USAG women's team, Larry Nassar's legacy calls all protocols and training procedures into question. For the sake of extreme competitiveness, even coaches, parents, doctors, and even the athletes themselves allowed the most severe training without adequately questioning, or feeling like then can question, the necessity or reasons for doing so. As I argued, the normative framing of violence against athletes should no longer be considered exceptional. Violence against athletes was shown as more ordinary than media admitted in the past. The cases of extreme violence were both harbingers of the underlying problem and misdirection from the extensive abuse at the grassroots level, and I suspect this is applicable to other sports as well.

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<sup>333</sup> Meckna, 5.

I debated the efficacy and opportunities in high-performance sports as disrupting the ideology of competition. The range of examples included ones I employed while coaching at Azusa High. I described the institutional issues faced by the governing body of CIF high school badminton as they decided how to value a team's postseason playoffs berth based on the board's perception of that team's competitiveness. I discussed Poly Head Coach Steve Meckna's op-ed on sexism in high school sports. Steve discussed his experiences of changes in high-performance youth sports over the past forty years. Steve represents an anti-Nassar, yet fulfilled many of the same functions (coach, teacher, and invested adult). Each has left a record in youth sports from a lifetime of labor and commitment. Yet, the divergence of the two lineages cannot be further from each other.

# Chapter 5

## New Iterations of this Emergent Analytic Frame for Critical Coaching Studies

### Introduction

This study has brought to the fore ideas for further research. As I pursued the research phase of this study, I found a plethora of topics that could be expanded upon. While this study provided me with much satisfaction of the significance the results could provide to the population of student athletes and youth sport coaches, I realized there were multiple paths that could be taken further. In this chapter, I discuss the research already conducted on these varied topics that are based on an expansion of my dissertation into new areas of sports and Coaching Studies. Each topic exposed a need for new projects which were found to be important in expanding the original dissertation material and influencing the complexity of the final product.

The preparations for these new research projects included locating and visiting archival and field sites, reviewing extensive literature and media, and building the necessary international collaborative infrastructure. Each project was based on the theoretical framework of this dissertation and explored new terrain. The projects continue my focus on sports coaching in new geographic, demographic, and competitive settings while also developing a robust theoretical and methodological analytic framework. All three projects were conceived and then established through collaborative settings from my diverse graduate research education in interdisciplinary multi-method project design.

The three projects that I am planning for future studies are funded by three different sources: 1) Mellon's Urban Humanities Initiative graduate certificate program (incorporating architecture, urban planning, and social science graduate students on interdisciplinary working

groups studying Pacific Rim megacities); 2) the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science research fellowship to study youth sports in Japanese public schools; and 3) the Visualizing Toxic Subjects digital research working group at University of California Irvine Center for Ethnography.

This chapter has three parts. The first section discusses my project, *On Court Together: Athletic Performance and Mixed Sports Coaching in Japan and the US*. The second section addresses my second project, *From Hollywood to High School: Badminton and Public Culture in Los Angeles, 1920–1970*. The third project expands the frame of coaching research to include issues of air pollution and local pollution governance strategies, understanding these as co-constitutive of coaching pedagogies that led to previously misunderstood athlete vulnerabilities.<sup>334</sup> This project is titled *Youth Coaches in Air Pollution Governance: An Examination of Stakeholder Roles in California’s San Gabriel Valley*.

On Court Together: Athletic Performance and Mixed Sports Coaching in Japan and the US

This project stemmed from the need to understand mixed sports coaching more fully in a world in which single category models dominate. There is no research on the process of competitive mixed sports coaching. As a coach I was told—during informal conversations and through lack of institutional support—that mixed sports are not important. Presently, coed sporting events like tennis mixed doubles, are rarely included in professional circuits. Fortunately, the 2020 Olympics and Paralympics will push mixed sports into the spotlight by adding several mixed events.

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<sup>334</sup> Madeleine Orr and Yuhei Inoue, “Sport versus Climate: Introducing the Climate Vulnerability of Sport Organizations Framework,” *Sport Management Review*, October 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.smr.2018.09.007>.

Here I argue that the next frontier for Coaching Studies is mixed sports, by which I mean both coed and multi-ability activities. The field has narrowly focused on single-sex high-performance settings to the detriment of innovation when there is ever more evidence that as a species, humans evolved to engage in mixed activities.<sup>335</sup> Dyble et al. comment on the idea of sex (gender) equality, “[o]ur results suggest that pair-bonding and increased sex egalitarianism in human evolutionary history may have had a transformative effect on human social organization.”<sup>336</sup> Following these authors I suggest that if such egalitarianism existed in sports, it would have an equally transformative effect on athletes and athletic organizations. The current norms exist because powerful profit-driven leaders co-opt research and development and maintain strict sex and gender segregation. Mixed sports present a conundrum because they do not fit inside, nor are supported by, most organizations presently.

Too often even just the concept of mixed training sessions, let alone competition, is strange to much of the high-performance sports community. In “Mixed Doubles: Making the Case for Coed Professional Sports,” Mary Pilon describes the sad state of mixed professional sports.<sup>337</sup> Mainly writing about tennis, Pilon laments

As a coed sport played at the highest level, mixed doubles is still something of a unicorn in the world of athletics. So why, decades after Title IX was signed into law in 1972, providing far more opportunities for female athletes, are there still only a handful of professional sports where men and women play together?<sup>338</sup>

Pilon's example highlights the deceptive nature of a system of equality constructed on deeply embedded assumptions about natural differences between half of the bodies in the country. The

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<sup>335</sup> M. Dyble et al., “Sex Equality Can Explain the Unique Social Structure of Hunter-Gatherer Bands,” *Science* 348, no. 6236 (May 15, 2015): 796–98, <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aaa5139>.

<sup>336</sup> Dyble et al., 796.

<sup>337</sup> “U.S. Open Mixed Doubles: The Case for Coed Sports,” *Fortune*, accessed July 8, 2019, <https://fortune.com/2015/09/06/mixed-doubles-coed-sports/>.

<sup>338</sup> “U.S. Open Mixed Doubles.”

way sports organizations have maintained strict sex and gender segregation is by limiting, denying, and ignoring the potential of mixed sports, including any advancements in coaching pedagogies. Emphasizing sex-segregation apparently offers many more opportunities for extracting profits from events compared to mixed sports.

I have chosen to attend simultaneously to the theoretical, political, scientific, and practical aspects of Japanese and US mixed sports coaching. For this project, mixed sports mean mixed-gender. I broaden my research interest in badminton to new field sites, such as the Olympics and Paralympics, while also drawing from my dissertation research in Los Angeles and preliminary fieldwork in Japan during 2018. This research serves to intervene and reorient larger ongoing debates between critical social scientists and current high-performance sports science agendas. Current coaching science typically does not question strict sex and gender-segregated research designs, subjects, and data collection methods.

At the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic games, there will be many new mixed sports competitions; in total, fifteen mixed gender sports will be events at the Olympics and twenty-seven at the Paralympics; several will also be mixed ability.<sup>339</sup> The hosting of the games in Tokyo and investment by the government are a most opportune moment to study these growing international phenomena. I am proposing to investigate Japan's mixed sports development in response to hosting the 2020 games, an understudied topic in both the United States and Japan. I will study Japan's innovative badminton coaching and research processes. I focus on the significant measures Japan has taken to accelerate badminton mixed-gender doubles training. I also rely on my expertise in mixed sports as a former Puerto Rican national team badminton

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<sup>339</sup> "Olympics Shift: IOC Doubles Number Of Mixed-Gender Events, Adds 5 Sports," NPR.org, accessed February 15, 2019, <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2017/06/09/532256014/olympics-shift-ioc-doubles-number-of-mixed-gender-events-adds-5-sports>; "Tokyo 2020: Mixed-Gender Events Added to Olympic Games," June 9, 2017, sec. Olympics, <https://www.bbc.com/sport/olympics/40226990>.

player, youth badminton coach, and university researcher in sports, gender, and disability studies.

*Mixed Sports and High-Performance in Japan's Push for 2020*

Typically, *mixed gender sports* include teams composed of only women and men. *Mixed sports* also refer to events for teammates with and without disabilities; those teams often have no barriers for competition for both LGBTQ and heterosexual (cisgender) athletes. For instance, leaders of the Special Olympics organization have introduced the Unified Games (i.e., sporting competitions where athletes with intellectual disabilities and neurotypical athletes form integrated teams). Many sports for people with disabilities include coed competition, such as wheelchair rugby. Today, the Paralympics hosts several sports that integrate LGBTQ athletes into team competitions without controversies often associated with strict gender control in able-bodied sports.

Through the Japanese central government's Sports For Tomorrow (SFT) project, Japan heavily invested in athletic training, national level coaching, athletic infrastructure, and Olympic education legacy projects (partnering with several prominent Japanese universities).<sup>340</sup> The governmental program was initiated to support innovative Olympic and Paralympic sports research, to pursue issues of accessibility and participation, and to join in sports-oriented cooperation campaigns in over one hundred countries. The SFT is an unprecedented and global initiative on sports equality and equality through sports.

Badminton is an example of the importance of mixed coaching. Within the last decade, Japanese national badminton athletes have risen to world prominence by winning the sport's most prestigious titles. Since its introduction to the 1992 Olympic games, Japan has successfully

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<sup>340</sup> "SPORT FOR TOMORROW," accessed February 15, 2019, <https://www.sport4tomorrow.jp/>.

qualified men and women badminton athletes for every Olympics, winning medals in 2012 and 2016.<sup>341</sup> Para-Badminton will be a new sport at the 2020 Tokyo Paralympics; therefore, government agencies have increased training funds for Japanese para-badminton athletes who are now favorites to win medals in all categories, including wheelchair mixed doubles. Although the national Paralympic badminton team had already had some success in mixed doubles categories, the able-bodied team had not duplicated those accomplishments. Japan has excelled in men's and women's badminton events but struggled in the mixed doubles category.

A commonly accepted explanation for why Japan struggles to field mixed doubles teams is that Japan's distinctive company sports structure never emphasizes mixed sports.<sup>342</sup> In this study, I disagree that corporate sports are the primary reason for Japan's missing success in mixed events; instead, I find a correspondence between mixed national teams and gender-segregated physical education and afterschool sports prevalent in Japanese public schools. Japan's school sports continue to be the primary athletic career pathway for youth, and often the only one for rural and working-class athletes. Going forward, I hypothesize that current structures of scholastic youth sports in Japanese public schools curtail opportunities for mixed sports development. Gender segregation in youth athletic opportunities is also common in the United States, like Japan; both countries have limited mixed-gender physical education and school sports programs. In the United States, except for badminton mixed doubles, many mixed sports occur outside the school system and in private sports clubs. Few private clubs exist in Japan.

### *Continuing Disciplinary Intervention*

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<sup>341</sup> Andrew McKirdy, "Matsutomo, Takahashi Claim Japan's First-Ever Olympic Badminton Gold," *The Japan Times Online*

<sup>342</sup> *F / XD / WATANABE/HIGASHINO (JPN) [7] vs WANG/HUANG (CHN) [2] | BWF 2018*, accessed February 14, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tEwf4YDclTk&t=1788s.watanabe>; 25 min.



Coaching studies is the international scholarly field that engages in research to maximize coach effectiveness through education curriculum development. Current research findings have led to significant advances in coach preparation, regulations, and best practices, thereby contributing to increasingly record-breaking athletic performance by top athletes. Researchers have studied those practices primarily among male athletes at private sports clubs in countries that did not have the same history as the United States or Japan's school sports.<sup>343</sup> Japan's emphasis on youth sports development in schools provides an opportunity to study how youth sports coaching practices may differ among Japanese schools and private clubs elsewhere in the world. In addition, conducting research on the similarities and differences in gendered coaching practices in Japan's schools would enrich the findings and provide direction for future investigation.

Through my extensive research in the Los Angeles region and preliminary ethnographic fieldwork in Japan during summer 2018, I found that coaches and sports administrators felt torn between their local, school-based needs and directions from coach education curriculum defined by needs of private sports clubs. I preliminarily investigated the gap between the needs of Japanese youth coaches and the coaching researchers' focus on best practices for private sports clubs; this topic has not yet been in the United States or Japan.

#### *Future Projects Goals*

To study the development of Japan's national level badminton mixed doubles and mixed sports generally, I will conduct a multi-sited and multi-method research program designed to address gender-segregated youth sports and coaching practices on badminton training in Japan, and mixed coaching strategies in Japan and the United States. My project will compare accepted

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<sup>343</sup> Christopher Cushion and Robyn L. Jones, "Power, Discourse, and Symbolic Violence in Professional Youth Soccer: The Case of Albion Football Club," *Sociology of Sport Journal* 23, no. 2 (2006): 142–161.

"best practices" to understand the mechanisms by which single gender sports were prioritized over mixed gender at each level of competition and training. I plan to address the key debates in youth sports coaching, namely best practices for single and mixed gender settings, impacts of high-performance standards on youth athletes, and perceived social outcomes associated with private club versus public school models of youth sports development. My ethnographic research methods will include participant observation fieldwork, interviews, and media studies to identify public discourses about mixed sports teams and coaching generally.

In this research plan, I addressed mixed doubles coaching at public school badminton teams, corporate badminton teams, and Japan's national badminton squad. I already made preliminary field investigations at all three sites during the summer of 2018. My subsequent fieldwork will further include ethnographic observations and interviews with coaches, primary support staff of the badminton teams, and team members. These data will be supplemented by interviews with Japanese university youth sports researchers, coach educators, community activists (addressing gender, LGBTQ, and disability disparities in Japanese youth sports), and government officials overseeing sports development preparations for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics and Paralympics. The investigation of youth sports scholarship in Japan and the United States will also be supplemented on collected data with my previous long-term research in the United States on gender, race, and ethnicity; LGBTQ; and disability-oriented coaching pedagogies. Finally, through collaborating with my Japanese colleagues, I will compile, evaluate, and recommend practical and policy changes regarding the current status of mixed sports development in Japan and the United States.

Drawing from my analytic repertoire developed in this dissertation process, I plan to employ ethnographic and media methods to address multiple research questions. For this project, I have three main research questions and several sub questions:

1. What historical, social, and cultural factors shape “best practices” for the Japanese sports coaching community? What is the community outlook of mixed sports? How does local, school, city, and prefectural context change opinion? What are the features of sports spaces that include mixed doubles or mixed sports generally?
2. How does the development of mixed doubles athletes and teams differ from single gender sports’ teams in Japanese schools and youth sports? How are single-gender youth sports teams developed by corporate and national team structures? How have these processes changed?
3. What are the features of successful mixed sports coaching? What institutional, educational, and individual challenges exist for mixed sports coaching? What levels of competitive sports are more or less open to mixed events? How do coaches learn to teach mixed sports?

This study considers Japanese mixed sports coaching as vital for understanding dominant practices, future policy formation, and coach education curriculum. I contributed to *Coaching Studies* by highlighting previously overlooked opportunities for constructing more inclusive training and coaching paradigms, especially in scholastic sports settings. Typically, coaching researchers do not include mixed gender sports nor analysis of the distinctive Japanese and US school-based sports systems.<sup>344</sup> Coaches now face the requirements of their daily coaching needs, long-term athlete development within their specific coaching ecology, and potential mismatch with pedagogical models advanced through private sports systems. This long-term ethnographic project plans to develop new research questions about established coaching paradigms; these will include the central query of how gender-segregated research and coach development is considered appropriate for pursuing high-performance outcomes while integrated coaching strategies are dismissed.

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<sup>344</sup> Tania Cassidy, Robyn L. Jones, and Paul Potrac, *Understanding Sports Coaching: The Social, Cultural and Pedagogical Foundations of Coaching Practice*, 2nd ed (London ; New York: Routledge, 2009).

There are several interrelated objectives for this project. I have evaluated Japanese and United States' best practices in physical education, youth coaching, and mixed sports. I will construct a theoretical framework for mixed sports from further ethnographic research, offering new strategies for coaches, administrators, and parents to reconceptualize the benefits of mixed activities, and determine the needs of coaches to support increased mixed competition in educational and athletic settings. I hypothesize that the benefits and strategies developed for coaching mixed sports can inform single gender sports. I studied sports pedagogy designed for effective mixed settings to pose new questions for Coaching Studies. I will focus on Japan and build on my previous research on public school coaching in the Los Angeles region. Finally, I have continued my collaborative research with Japanese sports scholars that I began during my 2018 fellowship period.

#### From Hollywood to High School: Badminton and Public Culture in Los Angeles, 1920–1970

This project was first conceived in response to my desire to know the history of badminton in Los Angeles prior to the 1970s. During research for my dissertation, I investigated the local history of badminton in Los Angeles as key to understanding larger debates on sports, gender, mixed integration, and coaching nationally and globally. I investigated the cultural history of sports during the twentieth century, from industrialization to globalization, and focused on badminton in Los Angeles during the last fifty years. I used archival, ethnographic, media, and oral history research methods to investigate cultural practices and discourses about physical education and competition within changing racial, gender, class, and migration demographics of Los Angeles. I concentrated on badminton because it has been coed since its inception and has continued as the only coed competitive sport in US high schools. I previously concentrated on the sports and cultural history of badminton between 1968 to 2018. In that study,

I documented the growing role of immigrants and women in defining badminton's trajectory after the passage of the Title IX Act in 1972. I located the records for Los Angeles high school badminton covering the time period from 1970 to the present. This included all team championship records, early game formats, and playoff information. But these records did not contain information predating the passage of Title IX. Badminton was instituted as a result of Title IX requirements but had enjoyed widespread appeal for many years prior to this.

In designing this project, I continued to develop my focus on contemporary ethnographic history of badminton in Los Angeles (initially described in the Introduction). This history became important as I had questions as to why badminton became such a staple of high school sports in Los Angeles whereas very few other school locations in the country offered badminton at all. For almost one hundred years, Southern California and the greater Los Angeles area has been the epicenter of US badminton. To better define the historical, social, and political influences that established the sport in Southern California the distinctive history of badminton in Los Angeles has been essential for generating further claims and approaches to instituting mixed sports in other geographic and demographic settings in the United States. This must also be a consideration for mixed sports approaches at the International Olympic and Paralympic committees. Through preliminary archival research, I traced the influence of badminton in LA to 1920s Hollywood. With the influence from famous movie stars and the media, badminton grew in popularity in Los Angeles much more rapidly and developed a wider and more competitive athletic pool than elsewhere in the US. That beginning would set in motion an extensive, and exclusive, history in which from 1920 to 1970, Los Angeles based US badminton athletes won multiple world championships in all five competitive categories: women's and men's singles, women's and men's doubles, and mixed doubles. These local histories help explain why Los

Angeles public schools are now home to the largest youth mixed sports league in the country. No other opportunities for mixed gender sports are available for so many young people. The strength of this legacy is shown in the ways that badminton has continued as a staple of high school sports in Los Angeles even after the massive funding cuts associated with ex-President Bush's federal education plan, "No Child Left Behind."<sup>345</sup>

The significance of sports, such as badminton, in the cultural history of the twentieth century is only now being recognized. In this project, I will highlight the incredible diversity and popularity of US badminton during the 1920s to 1930s through photographs, posters, newspapers, correspondences, and cultural ephemera located in the Huntington Library's collections through preliminary archival research. These documents showed the pioneering use of badminton as entertainment by Hollywood elites, setting the stage for Californians to lead the country to global dominance in badminton after World War II. The following section discusses my preliminary archival findings regarding badminton history in Los Angeles and the following section is a discussion of the methods and direction of my purposed future research on this topic.

### *Badminton and Its Links in Los Angeles*

Badminton is a professional, global sport that is thought to have been invented in India during the mid-1800s by British army officers in colonized India.<sup>346</sup> Although the sport was brought to the United States from England during the late 1800s, it only began to gain popularity during the 1920s. Shifting notions of health, exercise, and women's sports supported both men and women playing and competing in coed badminton social clubs, gymnasiums, and parks

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<sup>345</sup> Ryan S. Vincent, "No Child Left behind, Only the Arts and Humanities: Emerging Inequalities in Education Fifty Years after Brown," *Washburn LJ* 44 (2004): 127.

<sup>346</sup> Lim Peng Han and Mohd Salleh Aman, "The Transformation and Development of Badminton as a Global Sport Dominated by Asian Players, Teams, Sponsors and Brands, 1893-2012: Multidisciplinary Perspectives" (n.d.), [http://www.worldbadminton.com/reference/documents/conference\\_E047-8th\\_Asian\\_Studies\\_Conference\\_E\\_047.pdf](http://www.worldbadminton.com/reference/documents/conference_E047-8th_Asian_Studies_Conference_E_047.pdf).

across the country. At the same time, many non-badminton athletes in other sports began to use badminton for fitness training, thereby furthering its public visibility.<sup>347</sup>

The fashionable nature of badminton continued to grow during the 1930s. Leaders of several Hollywood stage production companies paid the era's top badminton athletes to showcase live matches during evening performances on national tours. The famous Los Angeles-based sister-brother duo of Fanchon and Marco had a long-running contract with the country's best player, Jess Willard. While on tour with them, Willard competed in front of sold-out audiences at prestigious theaters, including the Paramount Theatre in Los Angeles and the Roxy in New York. The cultural history of these performances was documented in the posters, brochures, pamphlets, and ephemera now located in the Huntington archives. Hollywood stars and production researchers expounded the benefits of badminton through instructional videos and interviews. Avid movie star badminton players included James Cagney, Ginger Rogers, Boris Karloff, and Joan Crawford. The popularity of US badminton was at its zenith at this time. Notably, US players began to win international titles and were celebrated in the national media. At the onset of World War II, badminton was poised to become a top sport in the United States with Californians at its forefront.<sup>348</sup>

During World War II, badminton popularity suffered a rapid decline in participation. Material shortages across the country meant badminton supplies were difficult to find or

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<sup>347</sup> Diane Moore Hales, "A History of Badminton in the United States" (1988), <http://www.mbbadmintonclub.com/wp-content/uploads/History-of-Badminton-USA-1.pdf>.

<sup>348</sup> Hales; Lim Peng Han, "The Transition and Transformation of Badminton into a Globalized Game, 1893-2012: A Study of the Trials and Tribulations of Malaysian Badminton Players Competing for Thomas Cup and Olympic Gold Medals," in *MSC8 Proceedings: Selected Full Papers*, ed. Mohd Hazim Shah and Saliha Hassan (8th International Malaysian Studies Conference (MSC8), Selangor, Malaysia: Malaysian Social Science Association, 2012), 172–87; Lim Peng Han and Mohd Salleh Aman, "The Transformation and Development of Badminton as a Global Sport Dominated by Asian Players, Teams, Sponsors and Brands, 1893-2012: Multidisciplinary Perspectives."

disappeared altogether. On the west coast, the most damaging war-related repercussions were the mandatory night-time black-outs and military repurposing of large civilian buildings like gymnasiums. Therefore, many badminton clubs and social organizations closed.<sup>349</sup>

After the war, players enthusiastically returned to competition, in so doing beginning a decade of global domination by American players. Due to this immediate success, I investigated the competitive strength of US badminton prior to the war. During this era, athletes like Pasadena's Dave Freeman and Baltimore's Judy Devlin (previously known as Judy Hashman) were considered among the best players in history.<sup>350</sup> During the 1950s, national media often highlighted US badminton, including when world champion Southern Californian Joe Alston was featured on the 1955 front cover of *Sports Illustrated*.<sup>351</sup> Badminton proved a significant element of post-war US sports. By the early 1970s, it began to lose international prominence, never again regaining the top spot.<sup>352</sup> Badminton remains widely popular in high schools across the country, with the largest leagues in Los Angeles.<sup>353</sup>

### *Project Methods and Goals*

In continuing this project, I will focus on several local archives that have documented sports, public culture, and entertainment from 1920 to 1970. I will concentrate on the cultural history of badminton in Los Angeles from 1920 to 1940 as the source of post-World War II US badminton success. Through preliminary research, I have found substantial collections of print

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<sup>349</sup> Hales, "A History of Badminton in the United States."

<sup>350</sup> Hales; Lim Peng Han, "The Transition and Transformation of Badminton into a Globalized Game, 1893-2012: A Study of the Trials and Tribulations of Malaysian Badminton Players Competing for Thomas Cup and Olympic Gold Medals."

<sup>351</sup> Barry Lorge, "Joe Alston, Badminton Champion March 7, 1955," Vault, accessed August 17, 2019, <https://www.si.com/vault/1999/05/03/260047/joe-alston-badminton-champion-march-7-1955>.

<sup>352</sup> Hales, "A History of Badminton in the United States."

<sup>353</sup> "CIF-SS Badminton History," accessed August 17, 2019, <http://www.cifssbadminton.org/History-Information.html>.



media, photographs, posters, manuscripts, and cultural ephemera of Los Angeles entertainment and sports in local archives. These archives will be indispensable for documenting Hollywood's previously ignored obsession with badminton during the 1930s, an obsession that prompted stage production companies to sponsor live badminton matches before evening performances. I will address the development of badminton interests in the country, as fueled by Los Angeles athletes dealing with Depression-era public entertainment.<sup>354</sup>

### Youth Coaches in Air Pollution Governance: An Examination of Stakeholder Roles in California's San Gabriel Valley

I return to Azusa High School in my third emerging project, which my interest in the glaring omission of pollution hazards in coach preparation and pedagogical training prompted. Pollution hazards, such as air pollution, were often unrecognized forms of risk and vulnerability that confronted all actors at Azusa High, including athletes, students, staff, and coaches. All seemed to be entangled together in a complex mix of shared pollution governance strategies. At each level of the school decision-making hierarchy, issues of pollution were often marginalized. In preparing for this study, I have conducted a preliminary archival, institutional, and media study of the current pollution understandings operating in the high school, the city, and San Gabriel Valley more generally. This study was inspired by the lack of attention to pollution hazards in coach education and thus begins to expand pollution topics to coaching reorienting coach education and accommodating for environmental changes.<sup>355</sup>

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<sup>354</sup> Diane Moore Hales, "A History of Badminton in the United States" (1988), <http://www.mbbadmintonclub.com/wp-content/uploads/History-of-Badminton-USA-1.pdf>.

<sup>355</sup> Madeleine Orr and Yuhei Inoue, "Sport versus Climate: Introducing the Climate Vulnerability of Sport Organizations Framework," *Sport Management Review*, October 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.smr.2018.09.007>.

With this project, I continue my long-term ethnographic relationship with coaches at Azusa High School, developing research to support their decision making, while offering novel methods to study localized air pollution patterns and patterns of governance in my home community of Azusa. One strength of this study is the range of pollution data collected, which included ethnographic, interview, archival media and geo-tagged, real-time, air quality measurements. These data will be analyzed to triangulate air pollution conditions for athletes, coaches, and the neighborhoods surrounding the school and 210 freeway that are presently the school's southern boundary. These data will be visualized and described through the experimental methods of the Urban Humanities Initiative. Such specific data collection has never been done in Azusa or most of Southern California, making my proposal distinctive and unique in its design and potential for instigating change across multiple governmental, civic, and institutional spaces. Air pollution research has not significantly influenced sports science; therefore, I plan to intervene in scholarly debates to reorient some basic assumptions surrounding the environment and pollution in research design.<sup>356</sup>

### *Disciplinary Interventions*

This pollution study derived from the literature on environmental air pollution, environmental governance networks, and scholastic sports coaching. Earlier debates focused on quantifying athletic performances through precise measurements and individual coach typologies, typically outside any real-world conditions.<sup>357</sup> I will intervene in academic debates surrounding sports, coaching, and youth athletic performance, as described in *Coaching Studies*.

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<sup>356</sup> For an early and solitary example read: William Brooks McCafferty, *Air Pollution and Athletic Performance* (Charles C. Thomas Publisher, 1981).

<sup>357</sup> Jean Côté, John H. Salmela, and Storm Russell, "The Knowledge of High-Performance Gymnastic Coaches: Competition and Training Considerations," *The Sport Psychologist* 9, no. 1 (March 1995): 76–95, <https://doi.org/10.1123/tsp.9.1.76>.

The current direction involved critical ethnographic methodologies situating coaching within multiple social processes.<sup>358</sup> Air pollution and environmental pollution generally do not factor in sports research or policy creation. Likewise, coaching and sports performance questions have not typically appeared in pollution and pollution governance scholarship. I continue to study the roles of sports coaches as multiply situated key stakeholders in producing pollution vulnerabilities, uneven community environmental burdens, and mitigation and governance strategies.

### *Current Pollution Understandings*

The serious risks of pollution hazards such as vehicle emissions have become an important public topic in California. During California's 2018 midterm elections, environmental pollution and safety were top issues. Senator Dianne Feinstein and challenger State Senator Kevin de León both spoke about these hazards.<sup>359</sup> Senator de León, whose district included parts of East Los Angeles and San Gabriel Valley, mentioned the health and economic burdens that his constituents endured because numerous freeways crisscrossed their communities. He explained that the first cause of school absenteeism in his district was due to respiratory health issues, which he correlated to children living in dense neighborhoods and attending schools adjacent to the nation's busiest freeways.

Los Angeles has also become a hub of air pollution-related research. According to a recent California State report, Los Angeles County ranks higher than state averages in all categories related to pollution risk, with majority-minority communities suffering especially

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<sup>358</sup> Cushion and Jones, "Power, Discourse, and Symbolic Violence in Professional Youth Soccer."

<sup>359</sup> KPIX CBC SF Bay Area. "California U.S. Senate Debate - Sen. Dianne Feinstein & state Sen. Kevin de León." October 17, 2018. YouTube video, 29:30. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=03PIS2np2wA>

acute vulnerability.<sup>360</sup> In another report, the American Cancer Society found that urban, minority, and working-class neighborhoods in Los Angeles have high rates of lung cancer and other cancers related to environmental pollution.<sup>361</sup> A 2018 study from the University of Southern California's initiative to study and map Los Angeles neighborhood level air pollution indicated that air quality varied across the city.<sup>362</sup> To find micro-level pollution patterns, this study relied on artificial intelligence (AI) modeling and data visualization, drawing measurement information from the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) system of twelve aging air quality monitoring stations dispersed across the diverse urban landscape of the Los Angeles basin.<sup>363</sup> Air quality measurements across Los Angeles are affected by geography, humidity, wind, ambient temperature, and density of urban infrastructure.

At Azusa High, I often had conversations with coaches, neighborhood members, and school staff about potential hazards, mitigation techniques, and governance strategies regarding air pollution. The school sites and a quarter of the sports field were feet away from the 210 freeway. Students breathed in vehicle emissions all day. After-school practices sessions were held during the peak traffic times; although coaches had athletes training, they were unprepared to deal adequately with the potential vulnerabilities of athletes from air pollution. This glaring omission in my original dissertation proposal was approached through my final project; I

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<sup>360</sup> California Department of Public Health, *Los Angeles County Asthma Profile 2017*, <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDC/DCDC/DEODC/EHIB/CPE/CDPH%20Document%20Library/Cou%20nties%20Profiles/LosAngeles2016profile.pdf> (accessed on November 11, 2018)

<sup>361</sup> American Cancer Society, California Department of Public Health, California Cancer Registry, *California Cancer Facts & Figures 2017*, <https://www.cancer.org/content/dam/cancer-org/online-documents/en/pdf/reports/california-facts-figures-2017.pdf> (accessed on November 13, 2018).

<sup>362</sup> Ron Mackovich, "It is hard to breathe in your corner of Los Angeles County?" USC News June 13, 2018, <https://news.usc.edu/144493/air-pollution-in-los-angeles-county-neighborhoods/> (accessed November 10, 2018).

<sup>363</sup> Environmental Protection Agency, *General Information on California Air Quality Resources*, [https://www.airnow.gov/index.cfm?action=airnow.local\\_city&zipcode=91341&submit=Go](https://www.airnow.gov/index.cfm?action=airnow.local_city&zipcode=91341&submit=Go) (accessed on November 12, 2018).

imagined integrating environmental pollution hazards and local governance strategies into new, more responsive coach education. Given the immediacy of climate change concerns and the influence accounting for climate change from other fields, I am concerned that while marginalizing women, LGBTQ, working class, and disabled athletes, coach education and coaching pedagogies are not prepared nor anticipating the large-scale structural changes that will occur as the climate changes. I took each sport and the experiences of coaches seriously by involving them in data collection and guideline development to create locally based coaching practices responsive to the reality of pollution.

This new topic brought me to the point where I have chosen to examine how pollution and air quality is addressed within school district environments. Going forward, I plan to study how differently situated stakeholders, including high school coaches, school administrators, and residents, have addressed air pollution hazards in the San Gabriel Valley city of Azusa, California. Using my current dissertation research on sports coaching practices in the Los Angeles region, I plan to highlight the lack of attention given to environmental pollution hazards in planning sports activities. At all four sites, pollution issues intersect with race, ethnicity, gender, class, and disability concerns among the athletes, coaches, school administrators, and their communities. I will continue my research toward understanding the ways in which school and community stakeholders have in the past, engaged, measured, and framed issues, how they have judged data, and how they have articulated pollution hazards while creating localized environmental governance strategies.

#### *Site Selection Discussion*

The city of Azusa is a notorious location for studying air pollution and long-term pollution hazard governance strategies, especially those related to prolonged vehicle emissions

exposure.<sup>364</sup> The portion of the 210 freeway that I have proposed to study cuts through the middle of the city, between the exits of Irwindale Ave on the west and Citrus Ave on the east, the exit closest to my home. This portion of the freeway was completed at the end of 1969.<sup>365</sup> During construction, many homes and neighborhoods were demolished. Some life-long residents still remember the landscape and air quality of the area prior to the freeway construction. From 1980 to 2000, Azusa was considered to have one of the worst air quality problems in Los Angeles County. During that period area schools often had “smog days,” when outdoor activity was not allowed.<sup>366</sup> The city continues to have poor air quality to this day.

Azusa High School sits at the northeast corner of the San Gabriel Valley, at the base of the San Gabriel Mountains and Angeles National Forest. The city is on the land of the Tongva who thrived in the area before European conquest and colonization. Incorporated in 1898, Azusa was part of the Southern California famous citrus belt and honeybee farming economy until the 1950s. The agricultural industry brought immigrant and working-class people together in growing communities within the boundaries of the city. The 1930s insurance redlining map of Azusa describes the racist residential segregation policies operating at the time. These maps are remarkably similar to current housing patterns. The planning history of Azusa is vital for understanding how and why the freeway was built through the middle of the city’s residentially segregated, religious and ethnically diverse, working-class immigrant neighborhoods.

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<sup>364</sup> Rainey, James. “Breathe Easier : Smog: In the six months that ended Nov. 1, the Los Angeles Basin had the cleanest air since records began in 1955, air quality officials say.” *The Los Angeles Times*, November 11th, 1990. [http://articles.latimes.com/1990-11-11/news/ga-6385\\_1\\_air-quality-officials](http://articles.latimes.com/1990-11-11/news/ga-6385_1_air-quality-officials)

<sup>365</sup> Interstate-Guide, *Interstate 210 California*, [https://www.interstate-guide.com/i-210\\_ca.html](https://www.interstate-guide.com/i-210_ca.html) (accessed November 10, 2018)

<sup>366</sup> Environmental Protection Agency, *Air Quality and Outdoor Activity Guidance for Schools*, <https://www3.epa.gov/airnow/flag/school-chart-2014.pdf> (accessed November 1, 2018).

In 2003, the State of California altered its planning policies by passing Senate Bill No. 352. This change critically reflected the increasing evidence that residing next to and working near transportation corridors and freeways, with the concomitant exposure to pollution, significantly affected one's health, especially that of young children. New school sites were subsequently banned from construction within five hundred feet of a freeway.<sup>367</sup> This change in urban planning policy has changed the future of many young people. Senate Bill No. 352 was passed too late for Azusa High, which was built in 1956, thirteen years before the 210 freeway was constructed. The same situation applies to numerous schools in the greater Los Angeles area. I used planning records to understand the process by which the 210 freeway was proposed and constructed within feet of the high school and in backyards of dense, working class, immigrant neighborhoods. During the past decade, recent new growth and investment in city infrastructure has been surrounding Azusa Pacific University, a small, private, religious university located one mile north of the freeway along Citrus Ave. The investment has primarily benefited the students of the university and surrounding businesses.

#### *My Relationship to the Research Topic*

I was raised in Azusa with the 210 freeway in my backyard, 1.5 miles from the high school. As I was beginning to conceive of this study, I coached badminton at Azusa High School, which also bordered the freeway. Growing up next to and working near the freeway, I experienced the complex relationships tying together the material transportation ecology of greater Los Angeles and its accompanying pollution hazards in everyday life. Some of my neighbors lived in their homes during the construction of the freeway in the 1960s. They and

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<sup>367</sup> Tony Barboza, "Freeway pollution travels farther than we thought. Here's how to protect yourself," *Los Angeles Times*, December 30, 2017, <http://www.latimes.com/local/california/la-me-freeway-pollution-what-you-can-do-20171230-htlstory.html> (accessed on November 10, 2018).

their families have shared stories about the demolition of whole neighborhoods in the process. These residents can describe the times of day and seasons of the year when air pollution is the worst, what to do, and where to go during these times.

School sports coaches often negotiate and improvise their training sessions due to air quality concerns that can shift over the course of the day. Building on my previous research at Azusa High School concerning coaching and athlete safety, this project spotlights the ways in which coaches learn about, recognize, judge, and develop strategies to mitigate pollution hazards during everyday work. Such ethnographic data regarding pollution governance has not been collected in previous research on the San Gabriel Valley. Likewise, the documentation and history of pollution governance protocols now in practice at the local schools, and the stakeholders vital in those administrative processes are crucial elements and will be significant contributions to the fundamental research of this project. This study is an opportunity to engage in socially relevant, transformative research that directly influences my community and potentially millions of other residents living and working next to Los Angeles' ubiquitous freeways.

### *Research Plans*

To pursue the topic of pollution vulnerability at Azusa High adequately, I have drafted a research plan in which I will draw upon ethnographic participant-observation fieldwork, interviews, archival, mapping, and media studies methods. Additionally, I plan to use commercially available air quality monitoring devices and enter ongoing debates surrounding citizen science, science technology studies, pollution, and education pedagogies. These methods were chosen to uncover the everyday meeting points between structural pollution governance policy and individual strategies of coaches, administrators, parents, and athletes. Together, the



rich variety of data will help in appropriately accessing vulnerability to pollution within the school and surrounding community.

I am proposing an ethnographic study of the after-school sports program at Azusa High and of the neighborhood within 1,000 feet north and south of the 210 freeway between Irwindale Avenue (as the western boundary) to Citrus Avenue (as the eastern boundary). With this data, I will analyze the multi-scalar, multi-sited, intersecting histories of the 210 freeway, the immediate community, city planning and policy, and school sports planning and policies. I plan to focus on including the freeway's effect on current approaches to environmental pollution management in Los Angeles. For this project, I anticipate collecting thirty interviews, each of which will be between thirty minutes to two hours in length. These interviews will supplement an extensive and intensive review of relevant documents, including from city, state, and federal government research; Los Angeles based university air pollution research; community organizations; and news media archives.

I will not rely on computer models. Instead, I will collect and define neighborhood level air pollution data through immersive, on the ground empirical research data. I will install commercially available, high-quality, cost-effective, air pollution sensors where the freeway abuts the neighborhood and school site. Additionally, I will provide the head coaches of each in-season sport at Azusa High with a durable, wearable, air quality sensor. Along with those installed in the neighborhood, I expect the wearable sensors to magnify the gathering of highly localized air pollution hazard datasets through systematic, longitudinal data collection. I will use statistics, including regression analysis, GIS, and other comparable data analysis software, to collect and interpret finely tuned, empirical data sets.<sup>368</sup> I expect these measurements more

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<sup>368</sup> Kim Fortun, "Ethnography in Late Industrialism," *Cultural Anthropology* 27, no. 3 (2012): 446–464.

accurately to reflect the changing patterns of air pollution throughout the day, and especially those directly affecting athletes during practice and competition, and I anticipate that these could be cross-referenced with other ethnographic and interview data regarding governance strategies resulting in robust findings. I will examine and compare current readings from the single Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sensor in Azusa located more than one mile from the freeway and high school with the daily information gathered from the smaller air pollution sensing devices.<sup>369</sup>

Together, the multiple forms of data collected should disarticulate previously combined ecological, temporal, geographic, and practice periods. For instance, the environmental seasons of summer, fall, winter, and spring are intended to merge with the sporting equivalents of the off-season, pre-season, in-season, and post-season. Different sports have dissimilar relationships to environmental seasons. Girls' tennis is in-season during the fall, which is also the off-season for boys' tennis; this is reversed in the spring when boys' tennis is in-season and girls' tennis is not. The rules of tennis do not change over the course of a year, but the experiences of coaches and athletes practicing outdoors certainly do. Tennis is just one example of the disambiguating possibilities in studying air pollution exposure over the course of a full year by each sport and each season. In producing street level, empirically robust pollution mapping, this project will provide research data that has not been gathered before in the San Gabriel Valley.

### *Situating My Research in Collaboration*

Building on research conducted by the Asthma Files Consortium, this project will add to the scholarly knowledge for the understanding of cultural dimensions with environmental air pollution science and politics of micro-governance. I will add three important lines of work to

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<sup>369</sup> California Air Resources Board, *Quality Assurance Air Monitoring Site Information*, [https://www.arb.ca.gov/qaweb/site.php?s\\_arb\\_code=70060](https://www.arb.ca.gov/qaweb/site.php?s_arb_code=70060) (accessed November 10, 2018).

the Asthma Files: research focused on and involving collaborators in Los Angeles and the San Gabriel Valley; interdisciplinary mixed methods (including collection and analysis of air quality by 15 sensors); and an empirical and analytical focus on scholastic sports coaches as key environmental pollution governance actors. The latter extends a key finding of an NSF-funded Asthma Files Project, “Environmental Health Governance in Six Cities: How Scientific Cultures, Practices and Infrastructure Shape Governance Styles”: that there is growing recognition of the importance of involving diverse stakeholders in air pollution governance including from grassroots organization and K-12 school faculty, staff, and students when possible.<sup>370</sup> I will develop environmental pollution assessment guides, tutorials, and in-person curriculum for coaches and community residents.

Although pollution information is available in general terms, coaches are not supported or educated on how to evaluate that information with regard to their individual coaching needs. Nor do they have easy access to that data in forms that could assist them in real-time decision making. School administrators and community residents suffer from the same difficulties in accessing air pollution data in usable forms.

The project will be bound within a specific geographic area alongside the 210 freeway within which I had prior and extensive research experience. I know all coaches who are currently working at Azusa High School. The specificity of my project will have the benefit of collecting and mapping new pollution hazard research previously not conducted in the San Gabriel Valley.

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<sup>370</sup> Key sources include; Kaufman, A., R. Williams, T. Barzyk, M. Greenberg, M. OShea, P. Sheridan, A. Hoang, C. Ash, A. Teitz, M. Mustafa, AND S. Garvey. A Citizen Science and Government Collaboration: Developing Tools to Facilitate Community Air Monitoring. Environmental Justice. Mary Ann Liebert, Inc., New Rochelle, NY, 10(2):1-11, (2017); Gwen Ottinger & Elisa Sarantschin (2017) Exposing infrastructure: how activists and experts connect ambient air monitoring and environmental health, Environmental Sociology, 3:2, 155-165; Gupta, P., Doraiswamy, P., Levy, R., Pikelnaya, O., Maibach, J., Feenstra, B., et al. (2018). Impact of California fires on local and regional air quality: The role of a low - cost sensor network and satellite observations. *GeoHealth*, 2, 172–181.

Thanks to my personal connections I developed for my dissertation over eight years of ethnographic participant observations at the school, several stakeholders have already agreed to participate in this study and carry or install the pollution monitoring devices. Many other teachers and coaches expressed their interest in this research. In this study, like the others described in this chapter, I considered the locally produced knowledge infrastructure from coaches, staff, and community residents. Pollution must be understood as foregrounding issues of race and ethnicity, class, gender, disability, migration, and age discrimination.

### Conclusion

In this chapter, I described three different studies for which I already conducted preliminary research. These projects emerged as I began to expand my original theoretical and methodological framework. Each new project reconceptualizes elements of that earlier framework.

Although each of the projects was self-contained, I implicitly borrowed from each as necessary and beneficial when building my initial dissertation framework. The implications from each project complicated the analysis of youth sports in this dissertation and directed it toward future goals. For instance, my theoretical approach to studying mixed coaching in Japan generated a significant international component in my research. In Japan, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) has significant oversight of local level school sports policies. The MEXT is very different to the structure of government education systems in the United States. The ministry has considerable power in enforcing policies, subject matter, curriculum strategies, hiring practices, and school site infrastructure development. The US system is often considered as antithetical to MEXT's approach. In the United States, local school districts wield extraordinary autonomy in decision making on the

same issues that are centralized in MEXT. Recall the example of the coaching clearance process and the degree to which each district and school site can mandate specific certifications. When inquiring about control over certification requirements, staffing choices, and sports infrastructure during my preliminary fieldwork in Japan at four school sites, the coaches, administrators, and parents were consistently surprised at the level of control that US schools had over these issues.

Within the context of such highly regulated educational systems, studying the implementation of mixed sports becomes very interesting. Whereas in Los Angeles coed coaching has been in place since the late 1970s, almost forty years, in Japan, mixed or coed coaching in school sports is relatively new; broad-based mixed coaching has only received attention within the last few years in preparation for hosting the 2020 Olympics and Paralympics. In Los Angeles, mixed sports coaching in public schools is exclusively correlated with the implementation of badminton, post-Title IX. Yet, the basis for wide-scale adoption of badminton in Southern California, more so than anywhere else in the entire country, was several decades of growth in and increasing popularity of the sport. The early history of badminton in the United States is based on the East Coast and specifically in New England areas. Circulation of British goods, including sports, followed the Atlantic trade setup in previous centuries. The pathway for badminton to become dominated by Angelinos and headquartered in Southern California was significantly influenced by the rise of Hollywood entertainment in the early 1900s and the traveling stage shows popular during the Great Depression.

Badminton emerged from elite, Ivy League sports clubs and into popular society through this process. As Los Angeles became capital of badminton competition with broad-based participation, from movie stars to youth, Californian athletes began to win the majority of national championship competitions. From 1920 to 1970, Los Angeles residents won an

inordinate number of national and international awards in comparison to the total number of individuals playing badminton in the United States.

Dave Freeman, from Pasadena, California, is considered the best men's singles player in American sports history and one of the best internationally. Several other Angelino athletes, men, and women also made their mark on the US and international badminton. Since badminton was first brought to the United States from England, competitive mixed doubles were a major aspect of the sport's popularity. After several decades of significant popularity and elite competitive records, coed badminton was quickly identified as a new sport of choice after the passage of Title IX. This local badminton history preliminarily studied in this proposed project and aimed to expand the understanding of the importance of badminton's distinctive pathway of implementation that has maintained itself over forty years within changing political and economic ecologies.

After explaining the significance of the local history of badminton and my efforts to develop larger mixed sports and coaching theoretical apparatus, I focused on the growth of my critique concerning potential vulnerabilities inherent in current pedagogy. Becoming an after-school youth sports coach in Los Angeles involved successfully passing several web-based certification programs. These included mandated court reporting training, CPR and first aid, concussion protocols, and heat illness recognition training. Nowhere in all of my time coaching was I instructed on or did I have to learn about the means by which pollution hazards could dramatically change coaching.

The internationalization of youth coaching pedagogies is primarily being driven through private organizations, research bodies, and institutional infrastructures in countries with strong club sports systems. The United States and Japan both significantly differed from the private

club system as they focused on public school sports. Mixed sports are not yet massively popular but, at least for the sports of badminton and para-badminton, mixed doubles are a major event. My research has been with youth badminton mixed teams in Los Angeles. Contrasting that study with mixed coaching in Japan in the wake of government funding increases in preparation for the 2020 Olympics and Paralympics was an exciting opportunity. Mixed coaching is on the outer boundaries of what are considered legitimate kinds of sports coaching. Yet the inclusion of mixed sports begins to rewrite the field of high-performance coaching.

In preparation for Los Angeles hosting the 2028 games, and to further local badminton historical knowledge, I have outlined a project to study that history in LA. This is important for several reasons: it will answer the question as to why Los Angeles is distinctive in its high coed mixed team participation; the historical reasons badminton was important to 1920s and Depression-era entertainment; and as a model for future local sports historiography projects.

Concerns about pollution hazards were not originally part of my dissertation research design. It became apparent that I need to conceptualize air pollution fully and specifically for my research at Azusa High. My own experience as a student and athlete was evidence of the need for adequate pollution management. Once my coaching peers learned more about my dissertation research, they had suggestions for topics. Pollution and air quality were often cited as problems that coaches did not feel they were adequately prepared to confront. When analyzing the coach education literature used to certify coaches at Azusa and Long Beach, I found there was no curriculum about climate change, environmental pollution, or air quality. The surprising fact about other coaches' admissions regarding pollution preparedness was that they had all noticed the lack of pollution governance support, but in relative isolation from each other because these

courses were all completed online. These same coaches were even more excited when I mentioned that they could use personal sensors to monitor air quality in their daily lives.

Together, these projects represent the next steps in a process that began with my dissertation. These next steps include studies engineered to articulate my theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical analytic frame. Combined with the previous chapters that discuss my research in Los Angeles and Japan, I showed how these future studies fit into my larger scholarly pursuits. In the following conclusion of the dissertation, I clarify my emerging analytic frame for critical Coaching Studies.



# Chapter 6

## Conclusion

### Introduction

In my dissertation proposal I outlined a project that was part historical ethnography, participant observation, and intervention in the field of Coaching Studies. At that time, I hypothesized that youth sports coaching was a contested and contradictory activity designed to discipline both athletes and practitioners. I also identified major issues in the field including the imperative of performance and best practices. This chapter gives a summary of the major results and discussion of findings presented in the current study. This dissertation project expanded the three main elements of research (historical ethnography, participant observation, intervention in the field) and suggests that success in high-performance sports, such as gymnastics, can be correlated with athlete abuse by coaching and training staff. The imperative of performance and conceptions of best practices are fundamental components of both research and education models. In extreme cases, abusers such as Larry Nassar actually write the athlete safety policies. Concurrently, by focusing on public school extracurricular sports coaching, not high-performance settings, my research uncovers ways sports can support activity disruptive to for profit, win-at-all cost priorities. Ultimately, the frameworks developed in this study have begun new projects and defined new research areas.

#### *Historical Context: Youth Sports History, Title IX, & Coach Ideologies*

In the US, early scholastic teams began in 1890s New York and other urban areas as a way to educate youth about moral and civic virtues. Sports were thought of as being an ideal avenue by which to educate the body in schools. Girls' sports began to expand during the 1920s

with athletic leagues dedicated to girls and women. The different rule making bodies, and social pressures generally, lead to girls' organizations advocating for different rules in major sports, like basketball, conforming to expected heterosexual norms of strength and physical capacity. Title IX changed fundamental conditions and access to previously denied resources and began a shift in which women's and girls' sports organizations merged with male run organizations, sometimes only by means of a court order. The rise of the youth sports industry, a multi-million-dollar business grounded on the backs of young athletic labor, is an outcome of Title IX legislation.

Coaching became professionally institutionalized around the same time as school sports. Today, there are two main models of youth coaches, 'educator as coach' and 'professional coach.' The scholastic sports commitment to 'educator coaches' were eventually undermined by the declining stipends and rising number of required, non-sport specific coaching certificates a person needed to qualify as a legitimate coach. The 'professional coaches,' tied to private sports leagues and win-at-all cost priorities, have moved into the open positions in public schools.

The passage of Title IX created opportunities for access to sports opportunities for girls and women that were previously denied. At the same time Title IX compelled the opening of a large youth sports market. Gradually, girls' sports were institutionalized in the high school and collegiate levels. As the numbers of youth in private sports leagues rose precipitously in the late 1990s and early 2000s, the *No Child Left Behind* Act was passed. This act slashed funding for extracurricular activities, like sports, and prioritized math, science, and engineering courses. As scholastic sports began to lose educator coaches and rely on walk-on or professional coaches, there begins a circulation of coaching personnel and athletes between private leagues and school

sports teams. This trend has intensified so that now private club coaches with win-at-all cost approaches are taking over scholastic sports.

As private league coaches moved into positions at the public school, bringing with them for-profit, competitive oriented pedagogies, sports and coaching science concentrated research on high-performance athletic settings. The consequences of normalizing high-performance settings were distributed across the industry, including impacts on athletes. High-performance research was commonly used to develop athlete safety policies which was then recommended by national governing bodies to scholastic and private leagues leaving them to regulate the coach credentialing process. The same research has also been used to develop new pedagogical models. Ultimately, through the research, coach education, regulation, and takeover of jobs privatized, for-profit models of coaching become the norm for all settings. The resulting effects of these models include the cases of abuse discussed in this study.

### Review of Findings

The purpose of this ethnographic and historical analysis was to examine the underlying assumptions within regulatory systems of youth athletics and coaching. The lack of appropriate coaching education has created problems within the industry for both practitioners and their athletes. My conclusions are based upon my ethnographic experience, including from informal interviews with athletes, students, parents, teachers, coaches, staff, administrators, and officials who described both the positive and negative benefits of sports participation.

The focus of most coaching science is to find the most effective motivational techniques, physical training, and sport-specific training. This emphasis runs counter to school sports programs which are supposed to draw from traditions outside of the private, for-profit, pedagogies. I considered the show *Friday Night Tykes* and showed that it was actually guilty of

promoting the worst in sports while the coaches profiled on camera professed to be doing the best for their athletes. These coaches believed they were sufficiently prepared to teach their young athletes lessons in determination, obedience, patience, persistence, independent thinking, hard work, merit-based results, healthy bodies, teamwork, graciousness in defeat, humility when winning, and self-confidence. Strikingly, there is insufficient research to definitively connect sports and positive athlete development. Rather it is the culture of high-performance that negatively impacts competitiveness and enjoyment of all sports participants from athletes to umpires.

#### Preliminary Descriptions of Field Sites

Much of my discussion was based on my experiences as a coach for Azusa High School. Currently, the student population at Azusa is approximately 1,300 students, with 91 percent identified as Hispanic. I have been the head badminton coach for eight consecutive years with the two preceding years as the assistant varsity coach. I am also an alumnus of the school.

Long Beach Polytechnic High School (Poly) and the head coach Steve Meckna were also used as examples for the current study. Poly serves approximately 4,200 students with very diverse socioeconomic characteristics. More than half of the students receive free or reduced lunch. I know Steve from my time as a player at Azusa. Since becoming head coach, I have maintained that relationship with him.

A third field site utilized in the current study was my 2018 research fellowship to Japan that allowed me to conduct preliminary contrastive research between US and Japanese school sports. This study illustrated how the US school system gives a great deal of control to local communities and school districts, whereas in Japan schools are governed from the prefectural or national level. Yet both youth sports systems have a significant problem with abuse.

## Research Methods

his study drew from several key texts in Physical Education Studies, Coaching Studies, and Sports Studies to support my study's data collection. The methodological instruments deployed for this study were archival and media analysis, ethnography, participant observation, and informal interviews chosen based on availability of person interviewed. Each method was reviewed as well as my approach to using them within the context of my research.

## Theoretical Framework

I began explaining my theoretical approach and key ideas through two stories that highlight coaching situations not typically understood to be about coaching and therefore outside of the needs and norms coaches are expected to take on. The premise behind using these stories was to begin to describe, early in the dissertation, how coach education does not account for a diversity of athletes in real life. My use of various theorists and conceptual models, including Foucault's concepts of power, Cacho's method for denaturalizing of normative life expectations, Traweek's concept of grounding common discourse, intersectionality studies, and the *Propaganda Model*, all provided me with theoretical insights and abstract models into the sports industry and regulatory system of coaching education.

Foucault's ideas on analysis of power permeated my entire dissertation. The process of normalization discussed throughout the study was informed by Foucault's notion of power as a net over the population. The nodes of power to which he referred are moments when power is enacted on individuals or the population at large. As an example, when a coach deploys pedagogies informed by single sex, high-performance biased science with their athletes, we are witnessing the exercise of power. In youth coaching especially, current research and educational

models have discarded questions of social and civic education and instead single-mindedly pursue coaching methods inappropriate for most athletic settings.

I drew on Cacho and elaborated my conception of how coaching practice can be aimed away from high-performance and toward valuing and dignifying participants. I used Cacho's work as a starting point to explain my own coaching and pedagogical activity at Azusa. Cacho made interventions into social expectations of gender, race, class, and ideas of expected individual progress. She wrote that following the death of her cousin and his two friends she could not find the vocabulary or frame of reference to value her cousin Brandon's life without also using his life as a negative reference point. Essentially, the structures that typically would have been used to validate productive and worthy lives—such as financial, material, or educational sign posts—were not possible with Brandon. Only by drawing from theoretical traditions outside of neoliberal, capitalist structures (Queer of Color Critique) did Cacho find a method of dignifying Brandon and his friends.

In my dissertation I argue that high performance sports are grounded on the abuse of children. I utilize the conceptual model of Ground States, described by Traweek, as a shared state of expected interaction or set of rules. What is not part of the shared expectations is questionable or illegitimate. Although Traweek's research studied high energy particle physicists, it applies to the high-performance sports settings prioritized by coaching science. That priority is not questioned and thus any focus on non-high-performance sports, or women's sports, or mixed sports, is illegitimate research. The ground state of sports science is high performance sports.

My research in sports and coaching science has required drawing from theoretical approaches capable of managing insights into multiply interlocking conditions of youth sports. Intersectionality started out as a legal theory and was subsequently applied to other disciplines.

Crenshaw's description of the field of Intersectionality Studies includes identifying intersectional research as a disposition not only a specific tool to use. The authors of the paper I cited described two kinds of intersectional research, the 'centripetal' and 'centrifugal.' The centrifugal they describe as being scholarly work within disciplinary boundaries. The centripetal, the kind of research with which I identify, is described from the margins and drawing from diverse disciplinary traditions. Intersectionality Studies was the theoretical lens through which I paired critical sports research by ethnic and gender studies specialists with high-performance research and coaching certifications across multiple levels of organizational hierarchy in the sports industry. The disposition afforded by intersectionality made possible the analysis in my dissertation from disparate models and approaches.

Another theoretical concept I used was Chomsky and Herman's *Propaganda Model* (PM). Applying the model to the sports industry, especially the control over publishing outlets, helped to decipher why there existed such narrow research boundaries. Sports and coaching science primarily considered elite, high performance, single-sex sports settings, all others typically fall outside the boundaries of debate. The limits of the disciplinary debates are policed, maintained, reinforced through several mechanisms. The five filters of the PM are used to distort news coverage and maintain consistent messaging between two closely related viewpoints in favor of established power. In the case of sports and coaching science, a small number of publishers exist; these publishers, chief among them *Human Kinetics* (HK), are contracted by schools and private sports clubs to provide coaching education and certification. In creating educational material these publishers rely on the science that published in their journals. As the gate keeper, HK is financially incentivized to publish material in favor of its bottom line. This is how the current system of youth sports reproduces itself as an ideology. I hypothesized that this

bias systematically favors the interest of for-profit, competitive, professional or professionalized sports and coaching settings.

The concept of the norm was also drawn from Disability Studies literature. Davis uses the regulation of the body to describe the invention of norms. He shows the process by which the statistical extreme becomes the idealized standard against which all other categories are measured. Davis uses the phrase imperative to describe social forces prioritizing the extremes as the new average. I borrow that language to describe the forces compelling sports coaches to prioritize win-at-all cost pedagogies. The examples Davis used are based in the history of the eugenic movement in the US and Europe especially significant during the early part of the 1900s. Rembis showed that athletes with disabilities are expected to reach able body standards and do so via means that form other social markers such as heterosexual norms of beauty, and body image. He centered two famous para-athletes and discussed the specific gendered labor each person used to fulfill heterosexual norms.

#### Coaching Studies Intervention

I drew from Feminist Studies, Ethnic Studies, and Disability Studies of sports to question certain basic premises of Coaching Studies. With the historical and critical understanding of sports provided by authors in these fields, I reviewed the *imperative of performance*, which I described as the unconditional pursuit of profit by exploiting athletic achievement. Sports science continually works to develop better techniques for improving optimal functioning of athletes' bodies. Thus, profits are linked to those performances. The drive and institutional pressure to fulfill the imperative of performance forces coaches to measure athletic output through industry standards. I emphasize the ways narrowly focusing on high performance sports,



and the athletes and coaches in those settings, leads to descriptions of “best practices” for all levels of coaching, regardless of diversity of athletes, community, or institution.

Histories of women’s boxing serve to disrupt common narratives of female fragility in the early 1920s. Yet, decades after these women punched through gender norms, youth sports organizations rely heavily on female volunteer labor. As men are trafficked to be coaches, women expected to be ‘team moms’. Sociologists and Gender Studies researchers describe this as the ways gender and heterosexuality are reproduced through youth sports. Finally, Disability Studies researchers have found that athletes with disabilities, and LGBTQ athletes, are at higher risk of inappropriate touching and abuse in certain key spaces that go unrecognized. For instance, the locker room and overnight travel are two places both LGBTQ and disabled athletes are more vulnerable than normative athletes. This oversight is reflected in the coach education material that does not take into consideration these kinds of specificities.

### *Feminist Coaching Possibilities*

Writing from the position of a sports coach, Chawansky invites others to engage in creating a feminist coaching methodology. She gives her experiences deploying feminist coaching principles and they are varied. In her article she reflects that in striving to reject typical, violent kinds of coaching behaviors, some athletes desired she engage in those very practices. For those athletes, coaching aggressively, such as yelling at players, elevated their game. Chawansky was baffled at this conundrum and wondered if she was doing a disservice to her athletes as she was the head coach of a collegiate team that demanded she develop competitive teams and win games. This dissertation is a response to Chawansky’s call for others to develop feminist coaching methodologies.

### *Coach Education & Disrupting Education*

I described the control of *Human Kinetics* (HK) over the coach education world, using Foucault's notion of 'truth.' In this case HK sets the conditions of possibility for all coach education by monopolizing the publishing and research outlets. Coaches themselves are also impediments to addressing the issues of violence and trauma in sports. The paradox is that the situations in which coaches learn new pedagogical models best (non-hierarchical, group based, mentorship heavy situations) are the environments coaches usually avoid. Instead, either for personal reasons or from institutional pressure, they opt for learning pedagogies that focus exclusively on performance issues.

I further discussed sporting spaces that are more or less open to activity that disrupts the imperative of performance and normative high-performance goals. The exploration of the snack bar in chapter three is one of those spaces. On the court, I give an example of badminton singles training in a coed team. This kind of training involves development of equally positioned physical activity during practice for the coed squad. Researchers have also considered ways coach education can disrupt future violence. Researchers at the intersection of interpersonal violence and sports find that when coaches are educated about and address sexual violence, they help lower possibilities of individuals committing that violence later in life.

#### Analyzing High-Performance Sports and Athlete Abuse

In chapter four I revisit the Nassar scandal and discussed theoretical methods for accessing the effects of his abuse. I then gave examples of coaching methodologies that have potential too short circuit the ideological drive of competition. I specifically used examples from my ethnography and Steve Meckna's op-ed for local press questioning gender and competition in high performance high school sports. High performance sports are a world of extremes. Some

sports, like big wave surfing have obvious dangers and I used that as a metaphor to explain the scandals plaguing high-performance gymnastics.

### *The Legacy of Nassar: Olympic Gold Medals & Pervasive Abuse*

I compared Nassar to J. Marion Sims, who is considered the ‘father of gynecology.’ Sims’ record has come under scrutiny and his legacy has been challenged to accurately reflect the brutality of his purported medical experimentation. He pioneered treatment on women practicing on enslaved women as his research population. Both Sims and Nassar, established medical doctors during their times, relied on the bodies of vulnerable girls and women for their projects. Reviewing public records of Nassar’s victims and cross referencing those names with the members of the national teams over a fifteen year period reveal the most prominent victims. In one extraordinary case, all five of the gold medal winning women’s 2012 Olympic team publicly named Nassar as having abused them. There are many years when Nassar’s victims were the majority of team members. I argue that Nassar's actions contributed to the global dominance of US women's gymnastics. He was able to thrive thanks to the loose governance model of the US Olympic Committee and national gymnastics governing body.

### *Theorizing the Everyday*

My study of athlete abuse also drew from Veena Das’ ethnographic work on violence, trauma, and everyday life. The methodological inspiration from Das’ work, in which she studied how trauma and violence are collapsed into everyday relationships between victims and perpetrators, intervenes in the normative discussions of Nassar’s abuse; namely that Nassar and his specific horrendous acts against some people are the focus. Following Das' example, we should attend to the everyday experiences of trauma, abuse, and violence in sports to grasp more fully the extent of the problem. Current coach certifications teach practitioners to recognize

abuse mainly as individual and horrific instances, not sustained and population based as was Nassar's.

### *Feedback from the Gym*

I introduced Steve Meckna, who is the Poly head badminton coach and AP European History teacher. He has known me since I was a player at Azusa High. Since I became a coach at Azusa, he has been a mentor to me. Steve is also a part-time alternative journalist. He penned an op-ed a few years ago for a local press contrasting the experience he had with a top-level female athlete with the story of a boys' baseball team. In the two stories, both the individual badminton and the baseball team had championships games the day of prom. Steve's player was encouraged, supported, and excused by school officials to choose preparations and photos of the prom over playing the championship game. The baseball team was offered free admission to prom if they showed up at prom after the game in their team uniforms. Having witnessed the implementation of Title IX, and having been a coach and teacher in Long Beach for his entire career, Steve questions what gender equality in sports really means. He questions what kinds of messages school officials are teaching about sacrifice, persistence, determination, and equal access to sports, and at what cost to the players.

### Emergent Frames of the Dissertation

My dissertation ends by outlining three new projects that began during my data collection phase. These emergent projects expand the theoretical, methodological, and historical approaches I developed for the dissertation and enrich my overall scholarly trajectory. The preparations for these projects included visiting and locating archival and field sites, reviewing several new and extensive bodies of literature and media, and building the preliminary international collaborative infrastructure to support aspects of these projects. These three

emergent projects are also the outcome of my varied graduate education and mentorship, including funding from the Mellon sponsored Urban Humanities Initiative, the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, and the Visualizing Toxic Subjects at the Irvine Center for Ethnography.

*Mixed Sports, Japan, and the 2020 Olympic & Paralympic Games*

Mixed sports (whether mixed abilities or mixed gender) are the next athletic frontier. At the 2020 Olympics and Paralympics mixed events are set to increase dramatically signaling (for some researchers) a new horizon for sports science. This project focuses on the contrasts between Japanese and US mixed sports coaching. In preparation for hosting the 2020 games, Japan has invested significant time and funds into developing their chances of winning medals.

In badminton, Japan has previously been able to secure Olympic medals and other tournament trophies in all single gender categories, men's or women's singles and doubles. Success in mixed doubles has eluded the Japanese team. In their preparation for 2020, Japanese badminton coaches have continued to develop their mixed doubles recruitment and training with some modest success. I focus on badminton as the pathway to examining more fully some of the issues I have raised regarding mixed gender practice spaces, thus allowing me to delve deeper into the sport's mechanics.

It is common to be told that Japanese mixed doubles suffer because the athlete development pathway is aimed at the 'corporate sports' structure unique to Japan. Company teams are rigorous in maintaining segregated sports and typically have no mixed teams. I move the goal post from company teams to the system of youth sports development. Like the US, Japan has a very well-developed youth sports system that is primarily run through the public schools and extracurricular sports. Beginning in middle school, boys and girls are mostly

segregated from each other during PE and for after-school sports. As the schools provide the only established pathway of sports development, I hypothesize that the difficulty the Japanese national team has in recruiting and developing mixed doubles athletes and teams is not because of the corporate sports structure, it is because of strict segregated physical education (PE) and sports in the school system.

I made preliminary field site investigations in Japan during my research fellowship in 2018 establishing contacts, visiting archives, and interviewing athletes, coaches, and academics specializing in Japanese youth sports and sports history. I will expand my dissertation research in Japan to include scholastic, corporate, and national level badminton coaching. The new data will offer me the opportunity to explicate more fully the particularities of mixed sports coaching. Japan is an ideal contrast to the US because both countries rely heavily on scholastic sports, have different systems of school control (local or national), and will both host the Olympics and Paralympics within the next ten years. There is no doubt that Japan is innovating their mixed sports training and coaching and that other countries will most certainly learn from these changes.

#### *Histories of Gender, Sport, and Los Angeles*

I explained a second future project for which I have begun to investigate the history of badminton in Los Angeles and how it is unique in the US. My dissertation project delved into the history of high school badminton in Los Angeles, which began shortly after the passage of Title IX in 1972. While there are scattered pockets of high school badminton in other metropolitan areas of California, and cities in the rest of the US, Los Angeles high school badminton leagues host the greatest number of teams and has the longest history. This emerging project will investigate more fully the history of badminton in Los Angeles prior to Title IX. As I studied the

archives and history of high school badminton as background to the dissertation, I was pulled into a world in which Angelinos had been dominating the international badminton scene beginning in the 1920s. Dave Freeman, originally from Pasadena, California, began competing in the 1940s and continued through the early 1960s. He is widely considered to be the best badminton player in history, having won every single US national championship tournament he entered, and importantly repeating that same feat internationally. Badminton matches were popularized by Hollywood actors and stage productions beginning in the 1920s and gained steam throughout the Great Depression. To further this project, and fully develop the unique history of badminton in Los Angeles, I have made preliminary investigations at the appropriate archives and located those individuals and records that are not now part of those established archives. This project will situate badminton historically, with as focus on its being a mixed sport since its beginnings in the US, and provide a new lens through which to review the changing dynamics of gender, race, class, and disability through the lens of sports tied to the geographic and imaginative world of Los Angeles.

### *Pollution Governance and Coaching Pedagogies*

My third emerging research project focuses on Azusa High School, sports, and pollution governance strategies. This project grew out of a previously unnoticed gap in the coach education literature. The athletic fields at Azusa High School border the 210 freeway and at certain times of the day students, athletes, and coaches on those fields can clearly smell vehicle emissions. Although my dissertation highlighted coaching pedagogies in the public schools, eventually I realized environmental vulnerability, just like vulnerability to abuse examined in earlier chapters, directly impacted the bodies, health, athletic performance of all athletes at Azusa. The recognition of the effects of air pollution has been only minimally studied and, like

most sports research, on high performance athletes. How coaches, staff, and athletes make sense of environmental pollution information to make practical on-the-ground decisions, and how the danger of air and environmental pollution is transmitted to important decision makers is unknown and a new topic of study in sports research. This emerging project is about uncovering the ways environmental and air pollution are entangled in the youth coaching industry and the scientific pursuit of high-performance success in the field of Coaching Studies.

I am ideally situated to continue my research at Azusa High and public schools, and on sports coaching with a focus on air pollution. To situate the current knowledge more fully, I have conducted preliminary archival research and informal interviews with key “stakeholders,” the vocabulary of the environmental pollution literature. The current state is that air pollution is a concern for everyone on campus, but the lack of adequate localized access to local pollution conditions, and reliance on an outdated government-run monitoring system, perpetuates confusion about best practices. The coach education literature likewise does not include in its instruction to coach’s advice about how settings of schools like Azusa, which borders a massive vehicle thoroughfare, affects students and therefore might be addressed in coaching and performance expectations. Through the project, I expect to engage the school and surrounding community in a community air pollution monitoring project, while I continue to investigate the protocols and recommendations, however slight they might currently be, that regulate activity at the school site during environmental problems. A decisive method, the one I have proposed, is to install with community help and input, commercially available air quality monitoring units at the school site and in the neighborhoods surrounding the school. In addition, I expect to try something new by equipping coaches with personal versions of the air quality monitors that they will wear, especially during the team training. I expect that the collection of original and finely



attuned (meaning neighborhood level) air quality data, along with the current system in place, will offer new directions in developing school policy and coaching practice. I also propose to develop a series of coach education resources, alongside coaches, to expedite the collection, organization, and adoption of environmental data into sports planning.

### Concluding Remarks & Recommendations for Future Research

Drawing on my methodological and theoretical frames, I investigated multiple overlapping topics and developed significant critiques and observations about each. Together, the topics and critiques can be organized into three main clusters: 1) detecting the underlying assumptions of the regulatory and education systems for youth athletics, coaching, the high-performance sports industry, and the way those ground states produce athlete vulnerabilities, 2) examining the ways coed and mixed sports operate within sex segregated sporting models dominant in coaching and sports science, and theorizing pedagogic strategies to disrupt such models based in current coaching practice, and 3) concentrating on public school extracurricular sports, instead of high-performance setting, and the everyday circulation patterns of students, faculty, and staff within aging public school infrastructure, can expose sports related school spaces that disrupt normal administrative control.

Within each cluster, I argued for my critiques and observations by closely analyzing a series of examples. Investigating the educational and regulatory ground states lead to the review of the field of Coaching Studies, the development of the concept of the imperative of performance, and revealing the ways sports and coaching are complicit in producing athlete vulnerabilities. For instance, current coach education does not discuss the ways LGBT or disabled athletes can be victimized that are outside of the dominant model. Furthermore, the outcome of the Nassar scandal gives the strongest case for reconceptualizing abuse and

athleticism in high-performance sports as a common occurrence instead of exceptional or obscure. As well, standard scientific sports research in the field marginalize coed and mixed sports thus exclude from consideration diverse athletic and coaching venues. This situation artificially constrains pedagogic innovation across the entire for profit, win-at-all costs sports industry. Ultimately, although underfunded, under resourced, and supplanted by private for profit coaching models, public school extracurricular coaching is now the primary youth sports model still somewhat exterior to the competitive, high-performance systems described earlier. To emphasize this point, I closely analyzed the op-ed by LB Poly coach Steve Meckna as an excellent example of the distinctions of school sports and impact of educator coaches.

Through these critiques and observations, the findings of my study suggested to me that within disciplines like Coaching Studies, there is a dearth of needed literature regarding athlete diversity at all levels of research. As such, I have been motivated to pursue further research relying on the methodological and theoretical frameworks developed for my dissertation. The exploration and results of this dissertation created the basis for my next set of studies. While my main focus is on badminton, mixed coaching, and coaching standards, the generalization of all necessary coaching parameters and future educational needs and requirements are recognized for all types of athletics. This includes the recognition that governance and coaching pedagogies may have to change in the future to provide stability, fairness, and a better structure for coaches in all sports. As outlined in chapter five, the theoretical and methodological frameworks developed in the dissertation lead to new projects. Continuing my interdisciplinary work after this dissertation, I intend to develop coach education modules and training material to respond to multiple forms of athletic vulnerabilities, such as those specific for LGBTQ and disabled athletes, or those produced by pollution.

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