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“They’re scared to coach us Paras”: Understanding the social reproduction of ableism in disability sport coaching

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Abstract

In recognising the ableism disabled children and young people are exposed to through sport, this research investigated the mechanisms for the reproduction of ableism in and through coaching. Through semi-structured interviews, the learning journeys of ten disability sport coaches were explored. Drawing on a critical sociological framework, data analysis involved an abductive approach with Bourdieu's sociology and ableism as sensitising concepts. In addition, Charlie's story, the experiences of a young disabled person, is presented as a further sensitising concept. By applying Bourdieu's theory and practice in conjunction with ableism, the interrelatedness of the theories was demonstrated. The research found that disability sport exists as a sub-field, kept at arm's-length from the mainstream sport field. As such, coaches' mobility between sport and disability sport was constrained and often serendipitous. Further, disability knowledge was marginalised in coach education and positioned as optional and 'other'. This optional othering is a manifestation of the institutionalised ableism of the coach education system. Further, the pedagogies used within coach education reinforced enlightened and benevolent forms of ableism. The analysis suggested that ableism is present in the field, habitus and distribution of capital and is, therefore, hard to challenge and is predisposed to reproduction. The field's socialising conditions transmit certain orientations towards disability, bodies, and sport. Dispositions toward disability were informed by the field of power and its inherent compulsory able-bodiedness. The findings evidenced that ableism exists as doxa (accepted practice that goes without saying) within the field of sport and sub-field of disability sport. Ableism is woven into the fabric of coaching and forms a part of the classifying principles which are instilled in coaches' habitus through doxa. Thus, it is ableism that guides how coaches perceive, interpret and act in the disability sport field. Furthermore, doxa (ableism) was more influential on coaches' learning than coach education. Understanding ableism as doxa within the field of disability sport provides critical insight into how social and symbolic structures constrain coach learning. No matter how well-meaning coaches are, ableism is inscribed in habitus through doxa.

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Chapter 1 Charlie's Story

I begin this thesis with a disabled[1] young person's experience of sport in Aotearoa, New Zealand. The conversational narrative below is a condensed version of a 3-hour conversation I had with Charlie (pseudonym) while exploring which direction to take this research. Charlie was 16 at the time of this conversation and shared her experiences of being coached in sport. I begin with Charlie's story to centre disabled young people's voices and experiences. Charlie's story is presented as a 'messy text' that favours dialogue over description so as not to dilute or disregard Charlie's lived experience and allow the story to do its work on its own as a story (Clough, 1999; Griffin & Phoenix, 2014).

* * *

I order a flat white and strawberry milkshake – Charlie's favourite. I take a seat near the back, a more isolated table, out of the way. I've met Charlie a few times before, but this time, I'm nervous. There's a sort of heaviness to the conversation we're about to have that was never present before. It's not easy asking young people to share their experiences when I know they aren't always positive.

"Hi, Liv!" I hear a beaming, chipper voice from the entrance that jolts me out of my thoughts. "It's good to see you!"

"Hi Charlie..."

We settle into an easy rhythm of conversation. She tells me about her job, her family, and her studies before our conversation turns to sport, and Charlie asks me about my research,

"Have you ever heard of ableism?"

She smirks at me,

---

[1] The term 'disabled people' reflects the social model that people have an impairment and are disabled by society (people do not have a disability) (Oliver, 1996). This language use, as well as Para athletes and people with impairments, was endorsed by the disabled young person (Charlie) who informed this research.

“About a year ago, people were saying like, ‘Oh, that's so ableism.’ I was like, ‘what's that mean?’ And they go, ‘Oh, it's like racism but towards disabled people’. So now I understand what they're talking about. It's like, oh my god, is that the word for it? I thought there was no word! I thought you were making up a word!”

We laugh, “So yeah, I know it”, she adds.

* * *

“So, tell me about your sports?” I ask.

Charlie is currently involved in two sports competitively, and she can tell there’s a significant difference between them.

“One sport is more organised in terms of Para[2], and we get the same recognition. In the other sport, the able-bods are more privileged, even though we are more successful on the Para side - not that anyone cares. Like at this one comp, it’s a ‘privilege’ for us Paras to be allowed to compete, but the able-bods win prize money!” she adds, using air quotes, emphasising ‘privilege’.

Growing up, Charlie had to play by the “able-bod rules”. There was no Para category for her to compete in until she was in her teens. Charlie saw this as a positive because of the relationships she was able to build.

“They knew I was gonna come last; they knew I was different, but they respected me because I was trying hard to be just like them. But now Para’s are isolated from able-bods in the sense that they don't get that relationship, you know, you see that disconnection. It's almost like now what they're doing is separating.”

Charlie reflects on the first time Para athletes were included at a national-level event, “They think we’re a joke”, she declared, explaining that the Para category was opened to include “have a go”, first-timers.

“The most difficult part about being a Para is you want the inclusion - however, you get to the point where it gets too inclusive, and the able bods think it's a joke because you have

[2] Charlie uses the term ‘Para’ to refer to athletes with impairments. Charlie uses ‘able-bodied’ or ‘able-bods’ to refer to athletes without impairments.

all these ‘have a go’ athletes at the New Zealand Nationals, you know? Cause we’re still trying to earn the respect - which is sad - of the able-bods. But it's kind of like inclusiveness in sport is very hard because people think that they're doing the right thing, and then you don't want to contradict them cause they’ll easily take away the whole event.”

I can see the worry in her eyes – Charlie is acutely aware that they could take away opportunities at any moment; after all, having them taken away was not uncommon for Charlie.

“So, I got kicked off - a few times actually - classification[3] for one sport. I remember this one time they called me two weeks before I was supposed to get on the plane and said, ‘Oh, you're not going anymore. We got the age wrong. You're too young. Sorry.’ And my heart broke. I sat there, and I was like, so I'm too young for the disabled world, but I'm not good enough for the able-bodied world.”

Charlie struggled with this feeling because her parents raised her like an ‘able-bod’ – that is, only Charlie decided what she could and could not do,

“I was always an able-bod in their eyes in the sense that yes, I was a little different, but I could do everything everyone else did. Which was fine because in school and stuff like that, I would do PE. I would do everything; you name it because I could do it. No one stopped me. No one said, ‘Hey, you can't’. I was the only person that said, ‘Hey, I couldn’t’. But it did bite me in the butt a lot of the time because as I got older, when I wanted to do certain things - like my able-body friends were going off to Australia and all that sort of stuff - I couldn't.”

I jumped in curiously, “Oh, how come you couldn’t?”

---

[3] Classification is a process in which an athlete is assigned to a specific, hierarchical, alpha-numeric category (e.g. class S1 or class 3.5), based on their diagnosed level of impairment or their assessed level of sport-specific function (DePauw and Gavron, 1995; Howe, 2008).

“So I went to trials, and I qualified and everything, and then my parents got called to the office, and I was very confused. And Mum came out crying and said, ‘Oh, they’re not selecting you’. And I was like, ‘What do you mean? I just pulled out everything I possibly can. I've just done a PB on the track. What more can they want?’ And basically, the team manager there told my parents, ‘If she goes, I won’t’”.

“Really!?” I feel my blood pressure rise, and I sit up in my chair,

“Yeah! So, the guy also thought I had a disease at certain points as well. Mum and Dad had to explain to them that no, you can’t catch it because if you could, the whole family would have it.”

I look at Charlie, mouth wide open, shocked, “No,”

I sat there in utter disbelief, my mouth still open.

* * *

“So, Charlie, you’ve told me lots about system things, so I’m keen to hear more about your coaches and those experiences.” I enquire.

“Well, most of them have never coached a Para before me.”

“How have you found that?” I probe,

“I found that a lot of Para coaches, like able-bodied Para coaches, have never had a child with a disability or anything like that. They found a love in the sport, and then they just saw some Paras that could use a hand, and then all of a sudden, they found the passion for it that way, rather than having someone who's had a disabled background in the past or having a disability themselves. And I 100% like give that to them, like you know, you have the passion there, you have the drive, but then it's making them understand Para and explaining to them not every disabled person’s the exact same. Not every brain injury works the exact same. Not everything's gonna work for a Para like an able-bod. So, it's getting all those messages across without sounding like you're putting up hurdles, which is very complicated and very hard. Sometimes I have to think to myself, ‘Hold on. Are you making a hurdle already? Or are you trying to explain something?’ because other people think when we explain stuff that we're making a hurdle for ourselves, and realistically,

we're trying to explain how our body functions and-” Charlie pauses, looking for the right words,

“Explaining the reality of it?” I interject,

“Yeah, the reality of it! But don't act blunt either and be like, ‘It's not gonna work’. You have to keep an open mind. Positivity is a key one, especially with an able-bodied coach. So, I had to sit down with my coach and manually explain like, ‘Hey, that ain't gonna work’. I said, ‘I will try and show you’. Then he saw it with his own eyes and was like, ‘Wow, you are right. Why isn't that working?’ So, there’s that gap thing as well.”

“Like a knowledge gap?” I ask for confirmation,

“Yeah! But yeah, that's one thing I've learned about coaches: always try and keep an open mind with them, because especially able-bodied coaches that have never coached Para before, they're learning. So, you have to be patient with them.”

"Do you find they tend to make assumptions about you before they coach you?” I ask.

“My coach told me this the other day, actually, that I wasn't as ‘simple’ as he thought I was, and I just laughed and said I look a lot easier than what most disabled people - like I look less disabled, and I don't look as complicated as most others. You know, I have heaps of friends that you can just see their disability straightaway, like physically that they have really bad CP, and you just look at them like, ‘Oh my god’, you know, ‘It must be super hard for them to struggle every day with everyday activities’. You see me, and you're sometimes like, ‘What the hell's wrong with her?’ nicely.”

Charlie jumps straight into another example,

“This other time, someone told me that I was never going to be able to snatch or clean and jerk ever, which is Olympic lifting. I was trying it at a training camp because I've seen all these others do it, and so I was trying to learn the technique stuff like with the bamboo stick, and they just took it off me straight away and said, ‘What are you doing? You should be over there, just doing the dumbbells and stuff.” And I was like, ‘Wait, why? Why?’ And because they didn't have other CP’s lifting weights and the other CP girl can't clean and jerk and can't stand, so they're like, ‘Why are you doing it?’”

“So, they’ve assumed you can’t either?” I ask,

“Yeah, they assumed very quickly that I couldn't do it. But I proved them wrong. So, I've developed that battle in the sense that people misjudge me on how my disability is and how disabled I actually am. And also because sometimes you look able-bod, as I call it, or you look less disabled, and sometimes it's a real hindrance in public eyes that judge you. Especially, I found that in coaching. So, like a lot of my coaches I've had in the past couldn't figure out why I was going so slow. So, I really struggled with this one technique. You used to have to do it before you could learn the next one, and I hated it. Hated every minute of it. And one day because I got so mad that I had to do another set, I asked the other coach if I could join in his squad, and my coach never thought in a million years I could do it. And then I showed it to him. He's like, ‘Oh my gosh, it's so good!’. And I just stood there, and I was like, ‘It took you this fricken long! I’ve been doing this sport since I was 7, and it took you that long to realise that I could have been doing this all this time?’”

“And it's just from actually understanding your impairment and how it works?” I clarify, shaking my head,

“Yeah, and just saying, ‘Hey, can I try this?’ and someone having an open mind say ‘Sure, why not?’, you know.”

“So, through all the coaches you've had and all the different sports, do you feel like your coaches treat you differently than the able-bods?” I enquire, mirroring Charlie's language,

“Fifty-fifty. So, when I was dancing - I know that's not really a Para sport - they thought that I was really difficult because everyone was right-footed, right-handed. I’m left-footed, left-handed. So, they would either put me in the back or something, so there were no improvements and everything like that, which forced me to drop dance, which was the one thing I loved doing.”

“Oh, that’s a real shame,” I say, my blood now boiling with frustration.

“And then once, when I was in this little para squad, everyone else had spina bifida or limb deficiency or something, so their brains were completely fine; I was the only one with a brain injury. And so, the coach would talk to them like an everyday person. Me, on

the other hand, got treated like a ‘retard’.” Charlie does air quotes, looking me dead in the eyes, emphasising each syllable of the word before continuing,

“And I was like, hmm, okay, just because I've got a brain injury doesn't mean you need to treat me like that. So, one day, he started talking to me like that, and he asked me a question about something, and I gave him a really long explanation, and I said, ‘Yes, I need to do this, so my foot gets like this, and that and that’, and then he just was like ‘Pardon?’ [Charlie imitates a shocked face] and I’m like yeah, ‘I'm a bit more with it than you think’. But it was, well, for me, it's been hard because when you hear Para, most people think the worst, like, ‘Oh, they have the ability of a five-year-old’ like, ‘Yes, they have this talent, but they only understand to a 5-year-old level’, which, we get that all the time.”

“Really? That’s ridiculous!” I blurt out,

“Yeah, and like, not many coaches will take on a Para because when they hear the word Para, they usually think of disease, which I found in the past. And like I approached a few other coaches, and they didn't really want to take me on because- [Charlie starts counting the reasons on her fingers] One) the word ‘Para’ scares them, two) they didn't know what to do, and three) as my mum's explained, most people are scared of failure in the sense that they’re scared they won't be able to coach me well. So that's why a lot of people push it aside. And that's what I find the biggest thing in Para sport, is that people are scared to coach us.”

Charlie continues as I sit there shaking my head in disbelief,

“I definitely think that the difference in my past coaching is that coaches who really wanted to coach me and really helped me were open-minded. And coaches that aren't open-minded put me in the too-hard basket. It's easier to coach, I'd 100% say, either coaching amputee or, like you know, someone that doesn't have a brain injury because other than you're missing a limb or something like that, your brain’s completely and utterly fine. So, it's a lot of, you know, things that people don't realise that go on behind the scenes, and you have to explain all that’s going on to a new coach - and able-body coaches, they don't really understand. But they say they’ll take me under their wing just to please my mum or whoever, [the NSO] even. But then realistically, they're just doing it

just to shut someone up, just to say, ‘Yep, I've taken her on. I've worked with her.’ Cause, like for Paras, we’re usually passed on as ‘favours’, like doing someone else a favour because they either don’t have time or something like that.” Charlie does air quotes using a sassy yet annoyed voice before continuing,

“And that kinda hurts a little because we don’t want to be a favour, and we’re not ‘nothing’ – most of us have talent, coaches just need to realise it. So, yeah, they take that credit, but realistically, it's just been, like, not that good because I know deep down that they don't want me. But because I was so young during that time, it's only now that I have started maturing that I know that wasn't okay.”

“I was gonna ask you earlier when you said that you have conversations with your coaches about like, ‘Hey, actually, that doesn't work for me because this is how my body works’. Is that a recent thing? Because when you’re 12 years old, how do you have that conversation with an adult?” I ask curiously,

“I started when I was about, I would say, about 11 years old that I started telling. So I would try and explain, but then I would lose confidence pretty quickly because they would be like, ‘Oh, just try it’, you know, ‘Just do it,’ and then they would think that cause I had that convo that I was being stubborn and that the reason why it wasn't working was because I didn't want it to work, not because my body literally can’t.”

“Heck, that must be so frustrating!” I can’t contain my own frustration and annoyance anymore.

“Yeah, it really is!” Charlie exclaims.

I look at my watch. Charlie has been sharing her experiences with me for 3 hours.

“Wow, I’m honestly,” I let out a sigh, trying to process all of the thoughts Charlie's experiences have sparked, “Just thank you so much for sharing all of that with me. I really appreciate you being so open and honest with me.”

“No, of course, I think it needs to be talked about more,” Charlie slurps the remnants of her milkshake, “Sorry for talking so much!” she jokes,

“No, not at all! Are there any other things you want to add that haven't come up yet today about, like your experiences or what coaches need to know or anything?” I ask to begin wrapping up the conversation.

“It's just not as hard as you think it is. Be open-minded and like talk to us, get to know us and don’t just put us in the too-hard basket. We have talent, and coaches just need to realise it!”

* * * * * * * * *

Following Frank (2013), I invite you to think *with* Charlie’s story. To think with stories takes the story as complete, to “experience it as affecting one's own life”. (Frank, 2013, p. 23). In presenting Charlie’s story in an organic way, I aim to honour the contradictions and tensions that exist in an individual’s lived experience (Smith & Sparkes, 2008). I intend for Charlie’s story to highlight structures that continue to “shape, divide and separate human beings” (Goodley et al., 2004, p. x). Indeed, stories are valuable for revealing socio-cultural life as they are social creations (Smith & Sparkes, 2008). As Frank suggested, the first lesson in thinking with stories “is not to move on once the story has been heard, but to continue to live in the story” (2013, p. 159). It is in thinking *with* Charlie’s story that this thesis progressed to explore the centrality of coaching and the circulation of ableism within and through coaching culture and practice.

Chapter 2 Introduction

Sport has historically been positioned as inherently 'good', inclusive and "unequivocally empowering" (Coakley, 2015; Goodwin & Peers, 2011, p. 186). However, some practices in sport continue to exclude and marginalise certain groups (Dagkas & Armour, 2011). Mainstream[4] sport organisations have left disability sport provision to charitable, volunteer-based organisations (Townsend et al., 2017, 2022), despite the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) stating the fundamental human right of disabled people to participate in mainstream sport (United Nations, 2006a). This has contributed to the 'othering' of disability sport, where a segregated system reifies difference and enables "mainstream social structures to remain inaccessible and exclusive" (Goodwin & Peers, 2011, p. 194). Disability sport is thus forced to exist as a sub-field on the outskirts of mainstream 'legitimate' sport (Townsend et al., 2022). Further, the hierarchy or devaluing of disability sport compared to mainstream sport has been well documented and evidenced by the lack of investment into and provisions for disability sport over decades (DePauw, 1997, 2008; Goodwin & Peers, 2011). As a result, the disability sport field has been characterised by a lack of economic, educational, and administrative resources, coaches, regular competition and coherence (McMaster et al., 2012).

More recently, sport has been positioned as a site for resistance and social change. However, it is simultaneously a site for social (re)production of societal norms, such as the marginalisation of disabled people (DePauw, 1997). Integral to social reproduction in sport is coaching practice. Coaches undergo a socialisation process involving "the introduction into and acquisition of accepted practices, discourses and accumulated wisdom" (Townsend et al., 2022, p. 255). This socialisation process is central to creating and maintaining enduring structures and societal norms (Cushion & Jones, 2006; Townsend et al., 2022; Cushion & Jones, 2014). Coaches have been positioned in both policy and research as key policy enactors, facilitators of access to sport and one of the

---

[4] 'Mainstream' sport is a historically loaded term that assumes an undercurrent of ableism and is used to describe sporting experiences that 'other' disabled people. This is separate – spatially and symbolically – from Para sport and disability sport that is designed specifically for disabled people.

most influential people in fostering the positive development of youth athletes (Horn, 2008; Maclean & Lorimer, 2016; Sport New Zealand Ihi Aotearoa, 2019; Townsend & Peacham, 2021; Turnnidge et al., 2012). However, research has also shown that coaches are largely unsupported to be in such a position (Townsend & Peacham, 2021). A growing body of research into disability sport coaching has illustrated the challenges and constraints faced by the under-supported and under-resourced cohort (e.g. Duarte & Culver, 2014; Hammond, 2022; McMaster et al., 2012; S. L. Taylor et al., 2014). Formal disability coach education based on the medical model and the lack of integration or infusion of disability into mainstream coach education pathways contributes to the lack of knowledgeable coaches and, in turn, the marginalisation of disabled people in sport (Townsend et al., 2022). Coaching, then, as an inherently social activity and a site for social and cultural reproduction (Cassidy et al., 2023), is a unique context to explore the (re)production of ableist knowledge and discourse in sport for disabled children and young people.

2.1.1 A note on language

While “quibbling” over ‘right’ or ‘correct’ language has been seen to deter discussion away from promoting the inclusion and rights of disabled people, language does indeed hold power and underlying values (Powis et al., 2022; Shakespeare, 2013, p. 19). For researchers new to the disability field, language choice often feels like a moral decision, with pressure to choose the ‘right’ one (Powis et al., 2022). Peers et al. (2014) argue that the language used should not be judged on ‘correctness’ but on its links to the models, theories and values the author articulates. Powis et al. (2022) agree that the language chosen must be consistent with the theory and methodology employed and that by designating what is and is not inclusive language, disability research becomes more exclusive. Thus, in keeping with the ontological and epistemological understandings that underpin this research, the terms ‘disabled people’ and ‘non-disabled people’ are employed. The term disabled people, borne out of the social model movement in the United Kingdom, highlights that people are disabled by the actions, decisions and behaviours of society (Peers et al., 2014). This intentional choice of language emphasises that environments that exclude disabled people are rarely ‘natural’; they are produced through individual and collective social interactions and attitudes combined with

government policy and the accessibility of facilities (Imrie, 1996). The meaning behind the term is powerful in that the social model seeks to push beyond merely accessing society (rights model) to changing society (Withers, 2012, as cited in Peers et al., 2014). The term non-disabled, as opposed to 'able-bodied', is used to disrupt understandings of able-bodiedness and to draw attention to the dis/ability binary as socially constructed (Powis et al., 2022). Where other researchers' and the research participants' language choices differ from the above, it will be reflected in my writing.

2.2 The Aotearoa New Zealand Context

In Aotearoa, New Zealand (henceforth NZ), just over 24% of the population (1.1 million at the time of counting) identify as experiencing disability (Statistics New Zealand, 2014). Access to and meaningful participation in mainstream sporting activities is a fundamental human right (United Nations, 2006), yet the disparity between non-disabled and disabled people's participation in sport and active recreation in NZ continues (Cockburn & Atkinson, 2018; Sport New Zealand Ihi Aotearoa, 2024b, 2024a). The first action taken towards bettering the inclusion of disabled people in sport by the Government was the establishment of the Advisory Committee for Recreation for the Disabled (ACORD) in the early 1970s (McBean et al., 2022). Since then, a range of legislation, strategies and plans have been developed, with little change reported. In 2018, an independent review of the New Zealand disability sport and active recreation sector was commissioned by Sport New Zealand Ihi Aotearoa[5] (Sport NZ). A key finding was that disabled people participate significantly less across four key indicators of participation (weekly participation, time spent, average number of sports and activities and meeting the physical activity guidelines) than non-disabled peers (Cockburn & Atkinson, 2018, p. 18). These findings were not dissimilar to those found in a review of Sport NZ's predecessor, SPARC[6] and their No Exceptions Plan in 2003, 15 years earlier (c.f. McBean et al., 2022). In 2023, Sport NZ reported again that disabled young people have lower participation levels – they spend less time in fewer sports and activities (Sport

[5] Sport New Zealand Ihi Aotearoa is the Crown Agency responsible for the Play, Active Recreation and Sport system in Aotearoa, New Zealand.

[6] SPARC (Sport and Recreation) was the previous name of the Crown Entity responsible for the sport system.

New Zealand Ihi Aotearoa, 2024a). From the numerous reports with similar findings emerge “action plans” aimed at closing the participation gap.

Following the 2018 review, Sport NZ released its Disability Plan (2019) with ten commitments and an increased Government investment of $5.7m to deliver on the plan. A portion of this increased investment went into a contestable fund focused on supporting national and regional organisations to deliver initiatives that increased opportunities for disabled children and young people (Sport New Zealand Ihi Aotearoa, 2021). Of the 16 organisations that received this funding, five included the development of disability coach education, highlighting the central role of coaches in delivering inclusive sport policy. Further investment through the Strengthen and Adapt Programme has seen the development of more disability coach education resources by Paralympics New Zealand (LevelUp[7]) and the Halberg Foundation (partnership with CoachMate[8]) (Sport New Zealand Ihi Aotearoa, 2024c). These investment decisions further highlight the importance and centrality of coaches to inclusion and the importance of a well-trained workforce. However, whether these coach education programmes and resources effectively contribute to inclusive coaching practices remains unknown.

2.3 Coaching in Disability Sport

The above issues are not unique to NZ and reflect longstanding issues in the training and education of coaches. Indeed, DePauw identified the training of coaches as a central concern in the development of disability sport as far back as 1986 (see DePauw, 1986). However, there are still calls today for improved coach education systems and further critical research into coach education practices related to disability (Hammond et al., 2020; Townsend et al., 2022). There is a large body of research that has focused on describing, defining and categorising coach learning into a formal, informal and nonformal learning model (e.g. Duarte et al., 2020; Duarte & Culver, 2014; MacDonald et al., 2016; McMaster et al., 2012; S. L. Taylor et al., 2014). This research has shown a reliance on the social – coaches learn from each other through observation, discussion,

[7] LevelUp is a series of online modules for coaching disabled athletes. It includes 9 modules - 2 introductory and 7 impairment specific modules (Paralympics New Zealand, 2024).
[8] CoachMate is a mobile app that houses Halberg’s educational videos and step-by-step instructions on how to modify and adapt sports using the STEP model (The Halberg Foundation, 2024).

and doing. In disability sport contexts, there is a heavy reliance on social learning due to a lack of coach education provision available, which has implications for the reproduction of a particular culture and practice within disability sport. Further, research in disability sport has relied on the use of the models of disability as conceptual frameworks and tools. While these have been useful, researchers have called for a broader array of social theories to be drawn on to continue to advance the field (e.g. Brighton et al., 2021).

2.3.1 Models of Disability

At the heart of this thesis is an understanding of disability that is deeply rooted in historical and political power structures. These are usually captured in and through models of disability (Brighton et al., 2022). Models of disability are theoretically and politically informed conceptual frameworks developed to both capture and transform how disability is understood in society. In coaching, it is crucial to engage with models of disability as the alignment or socialisation of a coach to a particular model has implications for their understanding of disability and, in turn, their coaching practice. The models of disability additionally act as organising principles within the disability sport field. Thus, explaining their origins and meanings is necessary as coaches draw on them to inform practice and scholars to explain coaches' practices (Townsend et al., 2015).

Historically, disability is typically understood or conceptualised in two contrasting ways. With its roots in medical and rehabilitative discourse, the *medical model* of disability locates the cause of disability within the individual. The medical model positions disability as something that requires 'fixing' or 'changing' so that disabled people can meet societal expectations of normality (DePauw, 2000). The medical model fails to see social, political, cultural, and personal elements of psychosocial and psycho-emotional embodied experiences of impairment (Thomas, 2004b).

In contrast to the historically dominant medical model, the *social model* locates the cause of disability within society. The social model differentiates impairment from disability in that people have impairments at the biological level and are disabled by society's norms and practices; therefore, disability is a social construct (Brighton et al., 2021). The social model recognises that society is controlled, geared toward, and built

for and by non-disabled people and, therefore, "whether you are disabled or not you are living in a disabling society" (Swain et al., 2003, p. 2). The social model is the 'big idea' that has driven much change in society, from challenging negative medical model perceptions and politicising disability to providing a foundation for exposing inequality. However, it has been criticised for its dismissal of the very real effects impairment has on one's experience, homogenising the oppression experienced by people with impairments, and creating an unrealistic assumption that social change will unequivocally better all people with impairments lives (Brighton et al., 2021).

In response to the criticism that the social model denies the experience of impairment and restricts discussion of the very real impact of impairment on participating in the social world, the *Social Relational Model (SRM)* emerged (Thomas, 2004b). The SRM centralises impairment and recognises the restrictions experienced by the effects of impairment *and* the restrictions imposed by society (Brighton et al., 2021). The direct and immediate effects of impairment on experience are termed *impairment effects*:

> "The *direct and unavoidable* impacts that impairments (physical, sensory, intellectual) have on individuals' embodied functioning in the social world. Impairments and impairment effects are always biosocial in character, and may occur at any stage in the life course." (Thomas, 2010, p. 37, emphasis in original)

The effect of discriminatory and disabling behaviour experienced in society is termed the *psycho-emotional* dimension (Brighton et al., 2022; Thomas, 2007). Importantly, Thomas pointed out that while society certainly places physical barriers that determine what a person can *do,* psycho-emotional disablism "places limits on who they can be by shaping individuals 'inner worlds', sense of 'self' and social behaviours" (Thomas, 2007, p. 72). Disablism is the discriminatory mistreatment of disabled people based on the assumption that disability is an entirely negative identity and, therefore, inferior to non-disabled people (Peers et al., 2022). The shaping of inner worlds through disablism is particularly important in understanding coaching practice as coaches are positioned as enablers of sport for disabled people and thus determinants of what they can and might achieve in sport.

Underpinning disablism is ableism – an ideology of ability in which the 'natural' 'norm' is to be free from impairment (Silva & Howe, 2019). Ableism takes for granted a particular

way of being, moving, thinking and speaking and contributes to the aversion to bodies that remind one that the able-bodied norm is an ideal that may never be fully achieved (Chouinard, 1997). Given this, scholars have begun to argue that disability sport research should move beyond the models present above and instead engage with social theory to "extend conceptualisations of the complex production and experience of disability" (Brighton et al., 2021, p. 386). While the model's approach has been helpful in understanding and explaining how coaches understand disability, the model's approach is somewhat limited in its analytical capacity for the reproduction of ableism (Brighton et al., 2022). Coaches operate within an ableist society that devalues impaired bodies, and it is therefore essential to understand the ways in which coaching contributes to or challenges the (re)production of ableism and the continued marginalisation of disabled people in sport. Hence, researchers in the sociology of sport (e.g. Brighton et al., 2021) and sport coaching (e.g. Townsend, Huntley, Cushion and Fitzgerald, 2018; Townsend and Cushion, 2022) have argued for a more critical focus on the structural and cultural conditions of coaching as a means of examining the production and circulation of ableism within sporting cultures.

2.4 Purpose of this Research

Despite numerous policies, plans, and the UN Convention solidifying participation as a fundamental human right, sport continues to marginalise and exclude disabled people. The lack of change in achieving equity and equality for disabled people in sport raises questions about why. Previous research has pointed toward the existence of ableism in sport, but little is known about how and why it continues to manifest and operate. Given the social nature of sport, ableism is likely reproduced in culture and practice through the socialisation of coaches to accepted norms, beliefs and behaviours. Thus, it is necessary to explore the ways in which sport culture and practice are reproduced and to relate an individual's practices to the social conditions that produced them (Bourdieu, 1990b).

Further, research exploring ableism in sport has largely focused on the context of the Paralympic Movement, media representation and Physical Education (PE) in schools (e.g. Fitzgerald, 2005; Peers, 2009; Purdue & Howe, 2015). The ways in which coaching

and coach education contribute to the (re)production of ableism have not yet been thoroughly investigated. There has also been a tendency to focus on high-performance and Paralympic coaches. Thus, comparatively little is known about how community-level mainstream sports coaches learn about disability. Given this, the extent to which NZ's recently developed coach education resources contribute to a change in coaching practices is unclear. Even less clear are the messages they reinforce. Further, Charlie's experience highlights the importance of anti-ableist coaches (and wider sports administrators), and it is unclear if the current coach education system is set up to ensure this. The systems and practices may, in truth, reinforce ableism within coaching practice. This research, therefore, set out to understand the mechanisms of reproduction of ableism in and through coaching and coach education.

In seeking to understand the mechanisms through which ableism is (re)produced through coaching, it was essential to investigate coaches' learning and knowledge about coaching disabled children and young people. In doing so, how community sport coaches learnt about disability was explored, and the implications for the beliefs and practices reinforced by their learning journeys were investigated. This research aimed to investigate how ableism is (re)produced through coaching practice, specifically focusing on coach education. Therefore, the central question this research attempts to respond to is:

> How do New Zealand community sport coaches learn about disability, and how does this learning journey contribute to the reproduction of ableism?

Having begun with Charlie's story, which highlights the impact of coaches on a young person's experience in sport, and outlining the NZ policy landscape, this thesis turns to the body of literature about coach learning and coach education in disability sport (Chapter 3). Chapter 4 introduces Bourdieu's theory of practice as the theoretical framework of this research. Ableism is further discussed, and the potential power of the two theories is shown. The methodology of this research is explained in Chapter 5 and explores my position as a non-disabled researcher in disability sport research. The research results are discussed in Chapter 6 within Bourdieu's Theory of Practice as a framework for their presentation. Chapter 7 offers implications for coach education, coaching practice and future research.

Chapter 3 Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

In this literature review, I outline the fields of study that have informed the development of this thesis. Specifically, I position this research within and across the fields of sociology, sport and critical disability studies. In doing so, I draw on a diverse range of literature to synthesise critical messages and identify gaps within disability sport coaching literature. In doing so, I show the potential of social theory in investigating the (re)production of coaching knowledge and practices that continue to marginalise disabled athletes.

3.2 Disability Sport

Before discussing the disability sport coaching research, it is necessary to understand the landscape or field within which coaches operate. As discussed in the introduction (Chapter 2), disability sport exists as a sub-field, kept at arm's length from mainstream sport. This section of the Literature Review explores research focused on policy and practice and why there continues to be a lack of change in including disabled people in sport. It additionally reviews the conceptualisation of ability that underpins sport and disability sport. These studies give further context to the field coaches operate in and point towards some of the socialising conditions of the field – that is, some of the accepted beliefs, values, and practices coaches are exposed to that inform how they should approach coaching.

3.2.1 Policy and Practice

In recognition of the marginalised position of disabled people, a range of sport inclusion policies have emerged globally, yet their effectiveness in changing practice remains questionable (e.g. Australian Sports Commission, 2022; Sport England, 2021; Sport New Zealand Ihi Aotearoa, 2019). Townsend and Peacham (2021) suggest that achieving inclusion policy in NZ is "inhibited by the inconsistency in the nature and level of coaches and coaching available across this sector" (p. 171). This points to a lack of standardised, readily available support for coaches to understand how to implement inclusion policy. The gap between policy and practice in NZ has only been explored in the context of

inclusive education. Lyons (2013) reports that NZ's inclusive education policy and legislation have done little more than provide a language to speak about inclusion, resulting in enlightened ableism. Enlightened ableism occurs when there is dissonance between discourse and behaviour or practice – one may be talking about including while simultaneously excluding. The language of inclusion and resulting enlightened ableism masks the continuation of practices that marginalise disabled people. However, no empirical research to date has explicitly investigated why there continues to be a gap between policy and practice in disability sport in NZ. As such, I turn to research globally.

Hammond et al. (2020) investigated the interpretation and enactment of disability inclusion policy by eight Australian swimming coaches. Through discourse analysis of interviews, the research highlighted that while coaches were aware of and supported the inclusion policy, their practices sought to maintain the (able-bodied) status quo, and inclusion extended only to those disabled people who would not disrupt the able-bodied swimmers (Hammond et al., 2020). The inclusion of only the most 'able' disabled swimmers occurred because the coaches had "ignored, adjusted, and re-worked official policies so they would fit with the contextual and cultural constraints of their organisations" (Hammond, 2022, p. 477). Thus, while the governing body of the sport (Swimming Australia) set an inclusion policy, the policy did little to challenge, change and improve coaching practices. Coaches continued to coach as they always had, and disabled swimmers needed to mould themselves to fit the coaching environment. It was reported that classification operated as a framework that permitted coaches to link their practice to "technocratic, rationalistic, behaviourist ideals of coaching that allowed for the imposition of able-bodied ideals about the body to remain dominant and prevail" (Hammond et al., 2019, p. 316). Further, the researchers reported that coaches were unable to "deduce or make a link" that their coaching practices were problematic or exclusionary of disabled people who could not emulate the compulsory able-bodiedness[9] required to be included (Hammond et al., 2020, p. 580).

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[9] The system of compulsory able-bodiedness produces disability (Mcruer, 2013). The system of compulsory able-bodiedness values being free from physical disability and capable of the normal physical exertions required in a particular system of labour, which everyone desires.

Jeanes et al. (2019) report similar findings in their study investigating why Australian community sports clubs are unable or unwilling to enact disability inclusion policy. The clubs in their study justified the exclusion of disabled people via its 'too difficult', 'not core business' and 'not beneficial' rhetoric, espoused in ableist understandings of disability as "inferior and undesirable" (Jeanes et al., 2019, p. 1001). Similarly, in the UK, through semi-structured interviews with sports organisations, officials, and disabled people, Christiaens and Brittain (2023) reported that an ableist understanding of disability impacts how inclusion policy is implemented. For example, one club implemented the inclusion policy in such a way that only those who were able to meet non-disabled norms and behaviours were included (Christiaens & Brittain, 2023). This mainstreaming approach to inclusion – that is, placing disabled people into existing (able-body) offerings with little changes – results in a "nominal inclusion, effective exclusion, and continued disablement of others who are unable or unwilling to 'normalise' themselves" in order to participate (Goodwin & Peers, 2011, p. 194). Christiaens and Brittain's study refers to this as "able-inclusion" (Christiaens & Brittain, 2023, p. 1056).

Together, this literature shows that inclusion policies do little other than create an illusion of inclusion while reproducing ableist norms and understandings of disability (Hammond et al., 2019; Lyons, 2013). Further, the findings are suggestive of inclusion policy producing enlightened ableism within coaching. That is, coaches talk about how they are inclusive and agree with inclusion policies, but their practice is, in fact, exclusionary. Enlightened ableism coupled with compulsory able-bodiedness results in an unspoken expectation that people with impairments will assimilate themselves into current (ableist) coaching practices. That is, coaches expect that disabled people will unequivocally and unquestionably conform to mainstream sports' values, norms, aspirations and ways of being (Goodwin & Peers, 2011). Townsend, Smith and Cushion (2015) argued that because the medical model continues to underpin disability sport provision and practice, people's impairments are positioned as the exclusionary factor, not coaches' practice. Thus, opportunities for disabled people to participate in sport are more inclusive of and limited to individuals who can mould themselves to fit current (ableist) offerings, with minimal changes or adaptations made to coaching practice. To

achieve true inclusion, the conceptualisation of ability that underpins the meaning of sport must be assessed (Christiaens & Brittain, 2023; Goodwin & Peers, 2011).

3.2.2 Conceptualisations of Ability

The typical conceptions of ability in sport relate to asserting physical dominance, precision in movement, or "the display and development of capacities that most people possess and that can support their participation in sport (e.g. the ability to run or walk or throw)" (Hay, 2011, p. 87). Using the phrasing 'most people' in this definition highlights the taken-for-granted nature of normativity and biology embedded in ability. A "normal" body has been constructed by science and medicine, and this has filtered into the social construction of ability in sport (DePauw, 2022). This conception of ability is bound in a biological (medical) view of ability that believes sporting ability is objective and pre-determined by genetics (Hay, 2011). There is a complete disregard for environmental or social factors that determine sporting prowess. The favouriting of the biological and normative understandings of ability creates a contradiction in disability sports. Disability is often thought of in terms of deficiency because "the prefix of 'dis' provides us with a constant reminder of the perceived inferior and negative relationship between disability and ability" (Fitzgerald, 2005, p. 45). Thus, disability sport exists in a constant state of contradiction of 'inferior' bodies operating within a field that values ableness. There are few empirical investigations into the conceptualisation of ability in disability sport - most are conducted in the physical education (PE) setting. Fitzgerald (2005) drew on five disabled students' experiences of PE and Bourdieu's conceptual tools to investigate how ability is understood in PE settings. Fitzgerald (2005) found that Boccia, a sport developed for disabled people, is perceived to require little "motoric competence" and is thus rejected as 'legitimate' sport, resulting in disabled athletes who play boccia attaining very little status (cultural capital) with their non-disabled peers (Fitzgerald, 2005, p. 55). It was determined that the lack of status attributed to boccia players was due to the recognition and value placed on masculinity, mesomorphic bodies and motoric competence, which boccia was perceived not to represent (Fitzgerald, 2005). This mirrors sport in which an "athletic arbitrary" determines the most highly valued sports (Karen & Washington, 2015, p. 37). Also drawing on Bourdieu, Karen and Washington (2015) discuss that specific sports occupy distinct positions within the

broader field of sport, and those that are highly valued tend to be ones that men, upper classes, privileged ethnicities, and able bodies excel in. Thus, the conceptualisation of ability inherent in the sport field is problematic when it underpins disability sport.

Drawing on data generated through semi-structured interviews with 15 sport practitioners Spencer-Cavaliere et al. (2017) discuss that the contradiction between ability and disability is used to justify the segregation of disabled athletes. Practitioners believed segregated participation opportunities had to exist for those who could not ‘keep up’ in mainstream sport as it allowed individualised adaptations. Spencer-Cavaliere et al. (2017) determined that, while this approach appears inclusive on the surface, it privileges normative able-bodiedness because the practitioners' goal was to improve or ‘fix’ skills so the disabled athlete may one day be able to play mainstream. Thus, despite claims that disability sport has moved on from its rehabilitative roots, an ‘obsession’ with getting athletes as close to the able-bodied ideal as possible still exists because the conceptualisation of ability as equating to ableness has become taken for granted (Spencer-Cavaliere et al., 2017). Further, segregated programmes, while offering connection to others with similar experiences and (possibly) better-suited rules, equipment and playing conditions, “do so in a way that reifies ‘difference’ and supports medical models of disability, enabling mainstream social structures to remain inaccessible and exclusive” (Goodwin & Peers, 2011, p. 194). By systematically differentiating and othering disability sport from ‘normal’ mainstream sport, the able-bodied ideal is reproduced, and disabled people are marginalised.

The existence of a system at the higher levels of disability sport that differentiates bodies based on their deviation from the ‘norm’ contributes to the continuation and maintenance of understanding ability as related to an able-body. The Paralympic Movement, which emerged to prove disabled bodies could perform in just as impressive ways as Olympic bodies, implements a system of classification under the guise of fair competition (Purdue & Howe, 2013). It creates a contradiction between the messaging of inclusion and who is allowed to compete in the Paralympics, which some scholars have termed the Paralympic paradox (Purdue & Howe, 2012).

3.2.2.1 Paralympic Paradox

At the pre-high performance level of disability sport, classification systems are implemented in which abnormal bodies are assigned “a specific, hierarchical and alpha-numerical category” (Goodwin & Peers, 2011, p. 198). Only specific impairment types and severity levels are included in classification, and it varies across sports – those who stray too far from the (able-bodied) ‘norm’ are excluded (Purdue & Howe, 2013). In interviewing various Paralympic stakeholders, including athletes with severe impairments, Purdue and Howe (2013) show that aesthetically pleasing sporting bodies and performances are more highly valued in the Paralympic Movement because they are more palatable and relatable for non-disabled people to engage with. Thus, certain impairments and levels of severity remain marginalised and even excluded from the Paralympic Movement. Bush and Silk (2012) shine a light on how disabled bodies become a commodity within the Paralympic Movement, and discourse in the media is driven by athletes “they can sell” (p. 477). These are often the most palatable bodies, described as “those, like us, but with just a bit missing” (p. 478). Media discourse drives a hierarchy of bodies and further reinforces ableist views of bodies, which, in turn, has implications for those bodies which are ‘in’ and those which are ‘out’.

In Peers’ (2012) autoethnography, attention is drawn to the ableist hierarchies that exist within disability sport - specifically, the narrative that Special Olympians are not ‘true’ athletes but that Paralympians are. This narrative is fed by the inherently ableist Paralympic sport classification system that limits elite competition to specific groups, the majority of which are physical impairments. Athletes with other impairment types, such as intellectual impairments, are turned away and sent to find sporting opportunities elsewhere. Peers (2012) recognises the ableism in her thinking but “can’t help but feel it” (p. 20) as the (ableist) stories and dominant discourses about Special Olympics athletes have become internalised over time and in cases such as Peers’ (2012), disabled people become complicit in their reproduction.

Together, the above research on policy, ability and Paralympic sport suggests that disability sport is a field in which discourses and norms about bodies, ability, and sport collide, providing a discursive framework for the socialisation of coaches. Coaching does not occur in a vacuum, and ableist discourse in wider society and within sport

contexts can influence coaches' understanding and practice. Given this, calls for critical coaching research began over 35 years ago (DePauw, 1986).

3.3 Coach Learning in Disability Sport

Coach education is considered a primary vehicle in the professionalisation of coaching and for ensuring consistency of high-quality practice among a practitioner workforce (Gilbert et al., 2006; Stodter & Cushion, 2017; W. G. Taylor & Garratt, 2013). As a primary vehicle, coach education has generated considerable research interest over the last twenty years, with much of the research focus on describing, defining and categorising coach learning (Piggott, 2015). One of the key pieces of literature driving this focus is Nelson et al.'s (2006) paper on formal, non-formal and informal learning. While this model was not developed in a disability sport context and is in some ways redundant, given the lack of structure and scarcity of disability sport coach education (Townsend et al., 2022), various disability coaching research scholars have drawn on this model. Given this use, the model is discussed here to provide context for the studies reviewed.

Formal learning usually involves prerequisites, compulsory attendance, and standardised set curricula with the outcome goal of certification (Nelson et al., 2006). In coach education settings, these opportunities are often offered by the National Governing Body (NGB) of a sport and, increasingly, tertiary or higher education institutions. Disability is typically absent in coach education settings (Townsend et al., 2022). Therefore, formal education opportunities in disability sports are scarcely available and are more commonly delivered by separate charity organisations. *Non-formal learning* is similarly structured, systematic and educational; however, it happens outside of a formal system, targeting subgroups of the population with an alternative to formal education and does not typically result in certification (Nelson et al., 2006). In the coaching context, these endeavours include seminars, conferences, webinars, workshops and clinics on specific topics of interest. Non-formal learning is the most common in disability sport. *Informal learning* is "the lifelong process by which every person acquires and accumulates knowledge, skills, attitudes and insights from daily experiences and exposure to the environment" (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974, as cited in Nelson et al., 2006, p. 253). Informal learning includes previous involvement as an

athlete, observation of other coaches, practical coaching experience and interactions with peers and athletes. It can also include self-directed learning through 'Googling', YouTube, coaching books and magazines, and, more recently, electronic newsletters directly from NSOs.

There can also be informal learning networks or communities of practice in which coaches share information, ideas, skills, and resources, which have become increasingly more common with the rise in social media platforms. It is reported that coaches will spend thousands of hours in informal learning compared to as little as 10 hours in formal education (Gilbert et al., 2006). Informal learning is, therefore, powerful in the development of coaching knowledge. Nelson et al. (2006) described a coach's informal learning network journey as entering at the periphery and progressing into a legitimate participant "as they gain knowledge, learn the norms, and see themselves as members of the community" (Nelson et al., 2006, p. 254). This often uncritical acceptance of norms has implications for the reproduction of coaching knowledge where, in a disability sport context, the dominant understanding of disability (often the medical model) can be perpetuated through the group.

Courses commonly offered by NGBs, and especially courses related to disability, tend to occur over short periods (sometimes only a few hours), often years apart, with minimum follow-up or connection in between, and a lack of opportunities to put the learning into practice in 'the real world' (Townsend et al., 2022). Course content typically favours bio-scientific or tactical and technical information and ignores the social sciences. While sports science knowledge is essential, when delivered in isolation, it overlooks that coaching involves integrating various sources of knowledge at once (Nelson et al., 2006). Formal education has also traditionally offered predetermined solutions to common problems coaches may encounter (Nelson et al., 2006). This has implications for the formation of disability coaching knowledge in that impairment is commonly positioned as the problem to be 'fixed' through coaching, thus reinforcing medical model understandings of disability (Cronin et al., 2018; Townsend & Cushion, 2017b). Further, this approach does little to encourage coaches to think critically and draw from various bodies of knowledge to inform their practice. Here, Nelson et al. (2006) posit that coach 'education' is more appropriately labelled 'training' because of the

emphasis on providing solutions rather than theoretical and conceptual frameworks coaches can use to think and practice more critically and analytically. This can also be taken a step further to 'indoctrination' where "robotic coaches [are] being churned out" of coach education "knowing and doing the same things because that is what you needed to pass” (Jones et al., 2004, p. 16; Nelson et al., 2006). This learning is especially concerning in disability coaching settings where impairments differ significantly and thus require coaches who can integrate various knowledge sources flexibly and ‘on the spot’.

A paucity of formal disability sport coach education results in coaches drawing on nonformal and informal sources to develop their knowledge and practice. In disability contexts, informal learning is overwhelmingly experiential and trial-and-error-based (Townsend et al., 2022). When coaches do engage in formal learning, it is reported that it is ineffective at influencing coaches’ practice and is commonly referred to as "relatively low impact endeavours" (Nelson et al., 2006, p. 249). When considering how coaches learn about disability, it is necessary to examine critically formal coach education. Research related to coaches’ learning journeys is now explored to understand the issues that arise.

3.3.1 Coaches’ Learning Journeys in Disability Sport

In recognition of the paucity of formal disability coach education, disability coaching scholars have focused their studies on exploring coaches' learning. Early investigations relied heavily on mapping coaches' self-reported learning experiences against the formality model (Nelson et al., 2006, discussed above). While the research on coaches' sources of knowledge has provided useful insight, it has ignored the social, cultural and structural implications for and impact on coaches’ learning. Coach learning has been positioned as a process of acquiring knowledge in predefined moments. The influence of sport culture on coaches’ learning has been too often overlooked, and, as such, the reproduction of ableism in coaching has also been overlooked.

3.3.1.1 Sources of knowledge

A body of research has focused on understanding coach learning by establishing the ‘sources’ from which coaches draw. While I recognise that categorising coach learning as ‘sources’ is reductionist and ignores the implications of the social, cultural and

structural (Townsend, 2018), understanding coaches' perceived learning of disability sport knowledge from an acquisition lens has provided some much-needed insight (Hodkinson et al., 2008).

Drawing on five parasport coaches' experiences, McMaster et al. (2012) used a two-phase observation and interview procedure to examine the learning experiences of coaches in disability sport. The study illustrated a reliance on non-formal and informal learning by mapping the coaches' data against the formality model (discussed above). Coaches' biographies influenced their preconceptions of what it meant to be a coach and what coaching practice 'looked like'. McMaster et al. (2012) reported that all five coaches in this study had access to formal learning, though these were introductory and criticised by coaches as generalised (not sport-specific enough). Non-formal and informal learning was used to counter the "deficiencies" of formal learning, and, as a result, open collaboration and knowledge sharing between coaches and disabled athletes was reportedly more common (McMaster et al., 2012, p. 238). Notably, this study had two groups of coaches: "experienced coaches who were able-bodied and inexperienced coaches who had a disability" (McMaster et al., 2012, p. 231). The coaches with a disability were termed inexperienced as they had only been coaching disability sort for two to three years compared to the 12 to 35 years of experience of the other three non-disabled coaches. Often, coaches who experience disability are not present in disability sport coaching research, and the McMaster et al. (2012) study begins to shed light on the fact that this is because disabled coaches have only recently entered the practitioner workforce. While it is outside of the scope of this research to investigate this issue further, it is an important indication of who is valued as a coach in sport and disability sport. McMaster et al. (2012) also draw on Jarvis' theory of human learning in mapping the coaches' learning experiences, categorising them as primary or secondary. Primary learning is related to previous experiences and skills, and secondary is related to integrating coaches' knowledge with the knowledge of their athletes. All coaches stated that primary experience as an athlete was important and acted as a filter through which coaches adapted and related to disabled athletes. It can be argued that the primary experience of non-disabled coaches will be espoused in ableist understandings of disability. The reliance on this experience to inform coaching has implications for the

reproduction of ableism through coaching practice. Reliance on primary experience, however, was not problematised by the authors. Similarly, Taylor et al. (2014) and Duarte and Culver (2014) situate their research within the constructivist perspective of learning. In these particular studies, prior familiarity with disabled people in coaches' childhoods enabled them to better understand the disability sport coaching context (Duarte & Culver, 2014; S. L. Taylor et al., 2014).

Taylor et al. (2014) utilised a case study methodology to understand the lifelong learning biography of one Para sport coach named Michael. The authors also mapped his learning against the formal, nonformal, and informal model. Michael discussed drawing on early childhood experiences and spoke about how his parents were influential in how he understood disability in that "there was no normal or ability or disability." (Taylor et al., 2014, p. 130). Despite this, Michael talks about being hesitant to work with disabled athletes early on because he feared unintentionally hurting them. The impairment-specific information he learned through his university degree in kinesiology helped him to feel more confident in his coaching practices. This fear of hurting a disabled athlete is tied to the underlying ableist understanding of disabled people as more 'precious' because they have an impairment (Nario-Redmond et al*.,* 2019). The coach's university studies acted as a sort of permission to "push" his disabled athletes as he would non-disabled athletes (Taylor et al., 2014). In addition to his kinesiology degree, Michael completed the national coaching certificate but found it lacked the technical knowledge required in practice. Michael filled the gaps by engaging in non-formal learning experiences that helped his coaching, such as learning braille and completing a welding apprenticeship (which meant he could make necessary detailed adjustments to his athlete's equipment). Further, Michael drew on various Para sport stakeholders (a Parasport leader, physiologist, former Paralympic Athlete and an adapted physical activity professor) and had a mentor for a time – an Olympic coach. The issues with mentoring, especially from Olympic coaches to disability coaches, are discussed further below (3.3.1.2).

In seeking to answer the question, "How has a coach learned—throughout her lifetime—to coach adapted sailing?" Duarte and Culver (2014, p. 443) utilised a life-story methodology. Like coach Michael from Taylor et al.'s (2014) research, this coach's early

life influenced her understanding of disability. Her mother worked at the Association for the Blind, and her sister taught adaptive swimming. For this coach – Jenny – social interaction was a key determinant of developing her coaching practice, with formal learning less of an influence. Duarte et al. (2020) replicated these findings years later by mapping coaches' learning trajectories within wheelchair curling. The above studies point to a coach's biography as a powerful mediator in structuring learning.

A further study in disability sport coaching that utilised the formality model (Nelson et al., 2006) was that of MacDonald et al. (2016), who interviewed forty-five coaches involved in Special Olympics Canada. These interviews focused explicitly on 'actual' and 'ideal' sources of knowledge as reported by the Special Olympics coaches. Despite rating formal learning as the highest ideal source of knowledge, in reality, 'learn by doing' was the coaches' most common actual source of knowledge (MacDonald et al., 2016). This cohort of coaches also highly rated learning from peers or mentoring as an actual source (MacDonald et al., 2016). The authors concluded that the current structure of the formal learning opportunities available to Canadian Special Olympics coaches is ineffective, and the volunteer coaches do not see their time and money well spent. The coaches turn to learning from each other in the absence of quality, effective formal education. Though representative of a cohort of coaches often absent from the disability coaching literature, these findings were consistent with over a decade of coaching research.

In drawing on a constructivist perspective, the above studies assume learning to be observable, sequential, and rational (Townsend, 2018). Knowledge is positioned as something to be acquired through certain situations (formal, non-formal, informal) and the influence of the sociocultural context is overlooked or ignored (Townsend et al., 2015). However, the studies have also shown that coach learning is an almost overly social experience, highlighting over-reliance on experiential learning in disability sport. Experiential knowledge has largely been uncritically examined in studies that draw on formality models. However, Hardwick et al. (2024) problematise the reliance on experiential learning as it can contribute to coaches' exposure to ableist and medical model practices and beliefs. Hardwick et al. (2024) found that ParaHockey coaches experienced serendipitous entries into disability sport coaching and an absence of formal coach education. The ParaHockey coaches learnt while doing and relied on the

transference of able-bodied knowledge and practices. While this research shows the same results as research conducted almost 10 years earlier, drawing on the Social Relational Model (see Chapter 2.2.1) as an analytical tool, the authors discuss the risks of reproducing ableist norms more critically. The high reliance on experiential learning and "observing and conversing" with other ParaHockey coaches results in an uncritical reproduction of the accepted practice and taken-for-granted discourse that often reflects medical model assumptions. Further, uncritical implementation of accepted practice in able-bodied sport or attempts to adapt able-bodied practice to the disability sport context also contributes to a reproduction of ableist views. When coaches did engage in formal learning, it positioned a person's impairment as the issue and something to be "intervened upon", further reinforcing ableist values (Hardwick et al., 2024, p. 8). This research was more critical of the sources of coaches' learning than previous studies because it utilised the SRM, showing the value of engaging with critical theory when investigating coach learning in disability sport.

3.3.1.2 'Adapting' Able-bodied Ideals

Research on categorising coach learning has shown that coaches rely heavily on experiential learning in disability sport. As a result, coaches often only engage in formal coach education related to disability sport when faced with a need to do so and, in some cases, may never engage in formal learning (Griffiths & Armour, 2013). Given this, coaches learn through exposure to discourses and practices related to disability informally through socialisation and 'trial and error' processes (Townsend et al., 2022). This 'knowledge' becomes challenging to displace because it is reinforced by coaches' perceptions of what 'works' (Stodter & Cushion, 2014). What occurs is an imposition of able-bodied sport practices in disability contexts (Hardwick et al., 2024). This imposition has implications for the reproduction of ableism in disability sport as coaches uncritically implement 'accepted', legitimised practices.

The imposition of able-bodied practice is also, in some cases, encouraged through coach education. Douglas et al. (2016) explore how 'expertise' was acquired in wheelchair and standing basketball (i.e., disability and non-disability). In this study, the wheelchair basketball coach shared his frustration that aspiring wheelchair basketball coaches must progress through the non-disabled coach education curriculum and "then

translate and adapt that knowledge to the sport of wheelchair basketball" (Douglas et al., 2016, p. 40). As reflected in the language used by the coach, wheelchair basketball is a separate, specialised sport requiring vastly different knowledge from standing basketball. However, because of the system in place, novice coaches continue to coach wheelchair basketball as they would standing and thus, the system is, as described by the authors, "a recipe for failure" (Douglas et al., 2016, p. 40). The overreliance on transferring, often uncritically, knowledge generated outside of disability sport is concerning because of the reproduction of ableism within disability sport (MacDonald et al., 2016; Townsend & Cushion, 2017a). Drawing on ableist ideals and a 'borrowing' of knowledge results in disabled people having to assimilate to able-bodied practices as coaches make minimal modifications to their practices (Hammond et al., 2019).

As discussed earlier, Hammond et al. (2019) found that Australian swimming coaches only included the most able disabled athletes so that they did not have to modify their practice very much and that disabled athletes did not disrupt the mainstream swimmers. In their secondary paper further exploring the connection between policy and practice, Hammond et al. (2020) stated that coaches believed it was up to disabled people to make themselves fit within the standards required of the high-performance sport environment. Thus, the preservation of the able-bodied elite pathway prevailed, and only those disabled athletes who most closely aligned to this able-bodied ideal were included. Similarly, the coaches in Cregan et al.'s (2007) study stated that the swimmers within the Canadian system were of higher classifications – that is, "higher functioning athletes" (p. 340). Rather than seeing this as an issue of ableist ideals underpinning parasport and coaching practice, the researchers problematised athletes' severity of impairment as the reason for their exclusion.

In a further example of the reliance on adapting able-bodied practice, one can examine mentoring. In the broader coaching literature, mentoring is positioned as a critical factor influencing coaches' learning and this view is echoed in the disability coaching literature. For example, Taylor et al. (2014) (above) illustrated how Para sport coaches often draw on mentors from able-bodied, performance sport to shape their knowledge. In this specific case, the disability sport coach was mentored by an Olympic coach (Taylor et al., 2014). This mentoring relationship could be problematic because of the potential for

the uncritical reproduction of ableist practices. Fairhurst et al. (2017) suggest that the reliance on mentoring in Para sport may be due to a lack of formal learning opportunities. As shown by Hall et al. (2022), though in a mainstream context, mentors exist to impose a group habitus (dispositions that inform ways of thinking, behaving and valuing) to be reproduced. In some instances, mentor-mentee interactions acted as a form of social control to keep mentees aligned with the field's accepted practices (doxa). Thus, mentoring is far from a "functional, positive and unproblematic" learning intervention (Nelson et al., 2013, p. 214). Further research should investigate the ways in which it reproduces knowledge and practice and critically reflect on the implications for the (re)production of coaching practice, especially of ableist practices.

It is unreasonable to suggest that formal disability sport coach education can 'give' coaches all the knowledge they need to be an inclusive, anti-ableist coach. For example, the coach from Taylor et al. (2014) learned braille outside of their engagement with formal coach education to be a better coach. Thus, formal coach education will never be coaches' only source of knowledge. However, the studies exploring coach learning discussed above were descriptive in nature and failed to engage with social theory to critically examine how these sources of knowledge may serve to reproduce the status quo. Furthermore, recommendations to incorporate informal learning, such as mentoring, do not critically reflect on the implications of these practices. Instead, these suggestions show that researchers are bound by what has already been done and what constitutes legitimate practice in coach education. The lack of engagement of these studies with social theory has contributed to the lack of movement towards transformation within coach education and the reproduction of ableist cultural norms within coach education. The above studies do, however, show that disability coaching follows a model of reproduction in which ableism is transmitted in different ways and formal education in its current form is problematic in that it secures ableist understandings of disability.

3.3.2 Approaches to 'Educating' Coaches in Disability Sport

Despite the general message that formal coach education endeavours have a low impact, they still play an essential role in coaches' learning journeys. Given the prominence of coach education in transmitting dominant and largely 'taken-for-granted'

ideas and beliefs about disability (Townsend et al., 2017), examining the approaches used to educate coaches is crucial. The approaches, in terms of structure and the pedagogies implemented within them, have implications for the knowledge (re)produced and, thus, coaching practice.

In their analysis drawing on wider coaching literature, Townsend et al. (2022) argued that there are three approaches to educating coaches. These are ‘categorical’, ‘inclusion’, and ‘infusion’ approaches (Townsend et al., 2022, p. 251). These different approaches mirror the ways in which disability is commonly viewed in society, and thus, there are implications for how each approach defines disability. Currently, the most common approach in disability sport coach education is the categorical approach. These approaches offer impairment-specific information centred around disability content related to “aetiology, methods of classification and strategies for ‘dealing with’ differences” (Townsend et al., 2022, p. 12). Such information reflects the medical model's understanding of disability and reinforces that disability resides within an individual. Coaching practice is positioned as a series of interventions to correct or ‘fix’ impairment based on ableist conceptions of ability (DePauw, 2000; Townsend & Cushion, 2017b). An example of this is seen in Townsend et al.'s (2017) evaluation of an autism-specific coach education course delivered by a major disability charity.

In a thorough evaluation, the authors implemented a multi-method approach including in situ observation of the course delivery over two years, pre- and post-delivery qualitative surveys, ten interviews with coaches and interviews with the course tutor. Townsend et al. (2018) employed the social-relational model of disability as an analytical and explanatory device. As discussed in Chapter 2.2.1, the SRM simultaneously recognises the experiences of restriction due to impairment effects and the restrictions imposed by society. Several coaches that engaged with the ASD-specific course had learnt 'on the job' after being 'dropped in the deep end', which resulted in experience becoming the mode of production for coaching knowledge. As a result, autism was understood by many as a “devastating neurodevelopmental disorder” reflective of medical understandings (Townsend et al., 2017, p. 352). When these negative discourses combined with a lack of support or education, coaches experienced fear, nervousness, apprehension and a feeling of uncertainty related to 'how' to coach these

individuals. Thus, the goal of the course was to develop coaches' knowledge and, in turn, confidence to coach people with ASD.

While the course aimed to develop coaches’ awareness and confidence, it instead perpetuated a “false ideology of inclusion” because it emphasised the impairment effects of autism spectrum disorder as the reason for exclusion rather than coaches’ knowledge and practices (Townsend et al., 2017, p. 346). The course boosted coaches’ confidence by offering prescribed 'best practice’ strategies for dealing with various characteristics of ASD that could make coaching sessions more 'inclusive'. There existed a dissonance in that the tutor had been emphasising the individual nature of ASD, but the practical, pedagogical aspect of the training was prescriptive and generalised ASD. Thus, it became interventionist and focused on ‘fixing’, which reinforced the medical model understandings coaches brought to the training. Using the SRM to evaluate the effectiveness of this coach education course illustrated that coaching knowledge functions as a barrier to inclusion and, thus, contributes to disablism. Further, the focus on understanding learning in coach education through social relations is useful as social relations comprise “the sedimented past and projected future of a stream of interaction” (Crossley 2011, p. 35). That is, past experiences shape and frame present experiences. In drawing on a relational ontology, Towsend et al. (2018) show that coach learning occurs through the interaction of individual agency and social structure. Learning is reinforced by social practices and the internalisation of cultural discourses, and thus, it has implications for the production of coaching practice, which will be explored further later in this chapter.

Another mode of educating coaches relates to ‘inclusion’ approaches, which are often structured as separate, “add-on” inclusion workshops and typically emphasise adapting current practice through inclusive models and frameworks (Townsend et al., 2022, p. 253). While these workshops often shift away from impairment as the exclusionary in favour of a focus on coaches' knowledge, skills, and practices, the extent to which meaningful change in coaches' understanding of disability occurs is unclear. These courses are often episodic and give coaches a series of tools and reflective frameworks

such as TREE and STEP[10], which encourage ways to adapt an activity to be more 'inclusive' of varying abilities (see Black, 2011). These reductionist approaches overlook the complex social reality of coaching and further contribute to the false ideology of inclusion, also known as the illusion of inclusion and enlightened ableism (Lyons, 2013; Townsend et al., 2022).

Another common practice often seen in categorical and inclusion approaches is to put into practice what has been taught in a peer-to-peer practical session where coaches coach each other. These scenarios are largely decontextualised and can lead coaches to experience a sort of 'reality shock' back in the 'real world' of coaching (Townsend et al., 2022). Further, during these peer-to-peer sessions in disability coach education contexts, coach learners often imitate various impairment types, which reinforces stereotypical, stigmatised and discriminatory understandings of disability (Townsend et al., 2017) and ableist views related to pity, tragedy, lack of value, and gratefulness or relief for not having a permanent impairment (Leo, 2022).

A more recent approach discussed in the literature is a model of infusion (Townsend et al., 2022). This approach, drawn from teacher training, weaves disability content throughout the 'mainstream' curriculum, thus providing coaches with knowledge and understanding early on in their coaching journey. While this model of infusion has been suggested as the answer to the issues of categorical and inclusion approaches, there continues to be a lack of evidence as to how infusion can be implemented within current coach education structures (Owen, 2022) and, indeed, if this approach *does* fix the issues existing structures perpetuate. In any sense, the drive behind Townsend et al.'s (2022) suggestion is to push past the reliance on current models and encourage discussion of what could be if we, researchers and practitioners, are to achieve true transformation in coach education.

Taken together, current coach education practices in disability sport are reductionist, overly simplistic, and continue to perpetuate the dominant medical model, ableist

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[10] These acronyms are used to remind coaches of the various things they might adapt and stand for: Teaching style, Rules and regulations, Environment, Equipment (TREE); and Space, Task, Equipment, People (STEP).

understandings of disability. Coach education about disability continues to exist as short, ‘add-on’, ad hoc, one-off, and ableist, which has direct implications for coaching practice. Indeed, there is a clear need to address the ableist politics of knowledge embedded in sports coaching and address the historical marginalisation of disability within coaching knowledge. In turning to coaching practice, I intend to show how coach learning informs practice and how coaching practice informs learning. It is through this simultaneous process that cultural reproduction occurs.

3.4 Disability Sport Coaching

Coach learning has direct implications for coaching practice. However, coaching practice simultaneously impacts coach learning. As shown and discussed above, coaches undergo a process of initiation and socialisation into a particular culture of practice when they enter the field (Cushion & Jones, 2006). Over time, the dominant values and beliefs, often bound in “cultural tradition, orthodox beliefs and hierarchal relationships” (Hall et al., 2022, p. 378), start to “appear natural” and become “taken-for-granted” (Cushion & Jones, 2014, p. 276). In doing so, coaching practice comes to reflect and reproduce dominant societal beliefs that continue to marginalise minority groups. This is even more evident in disability sport coaching, given the lack of available and effective coach education. Given coaches' importance to the sporting experience and their powerful position in reproducing dominant societal norms, research has examined coaching practice in disability sport more closely. This research has focused on coaches’ career progression, the demands on disability sport coaches, effective disability coaching practice and athletes’ perspectives. Further research has begun investigating social and cultural reproduction in disability sport coaching.

3.4.1 The Realities of Disability Sport Coaching

In their analysis of the Para sport coaching workforce, Huntley et al. (2019) found that coaches step into disability sport coaching “through ‘accident’” after having vast experience in mainstream sport coaching (p.6). Often, a disabled athlete ‘turns up’ to a session or approaches the coach looking for support. Only a small number of coaches are introduced to disability sport through university studies or other life experiences (Cregan et al., 2007; Fairhurst et al., 2017; S. L. Taylor et al., 2014). In addition to

experiencing serendipitous entries, coaches can also experience an accelerated trajectory once they enter disability sport. For example, a coach in McMaster et al.'s (2012) study reported that within her first year of coaching disabled athletes, she attended a Paralympic Games, a trajectory timeframe almost unheard of in Olympic sport. This acceleration often occurs due to the lack of coaches available and willing to work with disabled athletes.

As a result of coaches 'happening upon' disability sport coaching, there is a 'fear of the unknown' reported among coaches. In investigating the preconceptions and experiences of 12 elite disability sport coaches, Wareham et al. (2017) found that the lack of integration of disabled people in broader society and sport resulted in a lack of knowledge related to coaching disabled people. This lack of knowledge resulted in a 'fear of the unknown' among coaches – even the coach with a disability themselves reported this feeling. This fear places difficulties around recruiting coaches into disability sport as there is an assumption based on dualistic understandings of sport contexts (i.e. mainstream/disability) that coaching in disability sport requires specialist knowledge and skillsets (Bush & Silk, 2012; Wareham et al., 2017). The 'othered' position disabled people are forced into in broader society is reproduced in sport and coaching, and the lack of integration in society and coach education impacts coaches' perceived preparedness to coach disabled people in sport (Wareham et al., 2017).

When compared to mainstream sport, coaches in disability sport have fewer resources, such as financial, support staff, and equipment, which results in coaches having to take on more than merely a coaching role (Townsend, 2018). For example, in Taylor et al.'s (2014) study of Para sport coach Michael, he described the multifaceted nature of his role as a "fundraiser, mechanic, manager, recruiter, nutritionist, trainer, prosthetics specialist, and coach for varying para athlete classifications" (2014, p. 132). The prevailing disparity in funding and recognition of disability sport coaching lessens its prestige even at the elite end, and disability coaching becomes understood as something only "nice people" do (Wareham et al., 2017, p. 1191). In their scoping review of Para sport coaching research, Bentzen et al. (2021) reported that elite parasport coaches understood they were considered 'lower' compared to other elite mainstream sport coaches because they worked with disabled athletes. Similarly, Allan et al. (2020)

reported that Para athletes knew their coach used their position as a stepping stone to a more prestigious role in non-disabled sport. Thus, it is common for coaches operating in elite disability sport contexts to distance themselves from disability to avoid becoming pigeonholed as a 'disability sport coach' and become seen as a legitimate 'high-performance sport coach' (Townsend et al., 2020). These issues reflect the notion that disability sport is something charitable organisations 'look after'; thus, coaching disabled athletes becomes understood as a charitable endeavour (Wareham et al., 2017). Further, there exists discourse among disability sport coaches that it is 'incredibly rewarding' – a feeling that has gone uncritically examined. This notion has ableist undertones related to the charity rhetoric; as one coach from Bush and Silk's (2012) paper put it, "well, isn't that what sport ultimately should be doing for everybody?" when receiving messages from parents of disabled young people thanking them for the positive changes they have seen in their child (p. 475). This coach's comment highlights benevolent ableism inherent in disability sport coaching discourse. Benevolent ableism manifests as "pity, paternalistic protection and unprovoked praise for everyday activities" (Nario-Redmond, 2019, p. 729). That disability sport coaching is somehow inherently more rewarding than mainstream coaching is linked to the benevolent ableism rife within sport and wider society.

In exploring the challenges faced by coaches working with elite athletes with a disability, Bush and Silk (2012) present a reflexive conversation with one coach who "has dedicated his career to performance athletes with a disability" (p. 471). The dualism of disability/mainstream emerges again as the coach discusses being labelled "Paralympic Coach" despite working with non-disabled athletes too, "I am pigeon-holed into a mentality that states 'you can only do Paralympic stuff'" (Bush & Silk, 2012, p. 474). This mentality reflects the idea that you are either a good disability sport coach or a good mainstream coach, but you cannot be both. Given the above literature, disability coaching, then, occupies a marginalised position in the broader sport coaching field.

3.4.2 'Effective' Coaching Practice in Disability Sport

As has been discussed in many examples in previous sections, the lack of coaching research situated in disability means there is a reliance on transferring ideas, knowledge and practice from mainstream into disability. While much work has been done to

understand effective coaching practices, it has been within the 'mainstream' (non-disabled) sporting context (e.g. Côté & Gilbert, 2009). When disability sport is considered, notions of effectiveness are often conflated with elite or Paralympic contexts (e.g. Douglas et al., 2016). This results in coaches determining effective practice in situ through perceptions of what 'works' rather than what is proven effective through empirical, critical disability sport research (Stodter & Cushion, 2014).

One often uncritically employed practice in disability sport is the 'athlete-first' discourse (Townsend & Cushion, 2017a). Athlete-centred approaches can be just as dominating and oppressive as more authoritarian approaches when applied uncritically in the disability sport context (Townsend & Cushion, 2017a). Townsend and Cushion (2017a) argue that coaches are socialised to unquestionably accept athlete-centred approaches as 'best' despite a lack of theoretical or empirical substance. In coaching the athlete and 'not the disability', the complexity of disability is rejected in favour of normative coaching practice and thus becomes an "instrument of domination" (Townsend & Cushion, 2017a, p. 48). In exploring the social construction of disability in high-performance disability sport, Townsend et al. (2018) found that coaches imposed an 'athlete' identity onto those they worked with as a means of subsuming disability into more favoured or valued identities. Coaches did so with complete disregard for the autonomy of disabled athletes as they believed that the athlete-centred discourse and approach to coaching was empowering the disabled athletes and constituted good coaching. The athlete-first discourse positioned 'disability' in opposition to 'athlete'; in doing so, athletes' agency was constrained by coaches' practice (Townsend et al., 2018). "Such is the paradox of the dominated" that it became in the best interests of disabled athletes to conform and distance themselves from devalued disability identity (Townsend et al., 2018, p. 355). Through the athlete-first discourse, disability is driven into the background in favour of an ableist approach to sport. Attention is diverted from the impact impairment has on the lives of disabled people and has serious limitations and consequences concerning fatigue, recovery, pain, injury prevention and, indeed, inclusion and participation.

Much of the research presented so far has focussed on the perceptions and experiences of coaches and academics. A small but growing literature group focuses on understanding and presenting disabled peoples' and disabled athletes' perspectives

and experiences. Two studies have focused on understanding what constitutes effective coaching from an athlete's perspective. Interviewing eight female Paralympic Athletes, Alexander et al. (2019) found that effective coaching in the eyes of these athletes is related to being knowledgeable, adaptable and creative. It is also associated with good interpersonal skills of coaches and a coach-athlete relationship that closely resembles friendship. Similarly, Allen et al. (2020) conducted retrospective life history interviews with disabled athletes to understand their perceptions of coaches and how this influenced their sports experience. Professionalism (sport-specific knowledge), Collaboration (athletes know their impairment best), Consideration (self-reflection) and Prejudice (negative stereotypes and oppressive attitudes or behaviours) were the four overarching themes that influenced the sporting experience. Both Alexander et al. (2019) and Allen et al.'s (2020) discussions sought to link their respective findings to Côté and Gilbert's (2009) effective coaching definition. This model is designed in a mainstream sport context (i.e. not disability sport). Thus, to better reflect the nuance of disability sport, these studies could have sought to develop a disability sport-specific definition with Para athletes rather than reproducing the able-bodied model. In keeping with disabled people's perspectives, I turn now to studies that highlight the effects of coaching practice on disabled people.

3.4.3 Disabled Athletes' Perspectives

The lack of training and support for coaches at a grassroots level, coupled with limited research situated in disability contexts, reduces opportunities for quality experiences and even limits disabled young people's access to sport altogether (Townsend & Peacham, 2021). Indeed, athletes have reported a theme of prejudice in disability sport when coaches lack knowledge or buy-in to negative stereotypes arising from medicalised understandings of disability (Allan et al., 2020). In one of few studies that address athletes' perspectives, Allen et al. (2020) conducted life history interviews with 21 athletes with physical impairments. Some athletes experienced an apparent lack of engagement from coaches, felt they were not treated as equals to their non-disabled peers, and thought there were lower expectations for them. These three experiences are underpinned by ableist understandings of disability and its place in sport (Allan et al., 2020). Spencer et al. (2022) similarly prioritise athlete perspectives in sharing the stories

of 12 women and non-binary Para sport athletes. These athletes highlighted issues of ableism when coaches "came straight from able-bodied, [men's sport] and were wonderful [athletes], and wonderful [sport] coaches [but]... they don't know how to coach people with a disability, and they don't know how to coach women" as athlete Stacy explained it (Spencer et al., 2022, p. 217). The athletes also experienced negative assumptions about disability from their coaches, with one athlete sharing a blatantly ableist comment she received from her coach, "I think in some way they wanted us all to be able-bodied. In fact, one of our coaches said to us…world champion Paralympic athletes…'real' world cup racers do it" (Spencer et al., 2022, p. 217 shortened for clarity). In centralising athlete perspectives, these studies highlight the inherent ableism that exists and is manifested in coaching practice. The impact of ableist coaching practice on athletes is shown to be harmful. While the studies discussed here have focused on Paralympic athlete perspectives, ableist coaching behaviours may be more likely in community sport due to the lack of engagement in coach education and the voluntary nature of community disability sports. These behaviours were certainly reflected in Charlie's story (Chapter 1).

3.4.4 Social and Cultural Reproduction in Disability Sport Coaching

So far, I have shown that due to a lack of effective coach education, coaches' learning about disability is highly social, relational, and primarily anchored in social practice. In any learning context, there is an interaction between coaches' agency and the social structures around them (Townsend et al., 2017). Understanding coach learning in this way is not unique to disability sport coaching, and indeed, there is a small but growing body of research exploring coach learning through sociological lenses in mainstream sport. A common sociological theory drawn on is Bourdieu's Theory of Practice (explained in-depth in Chapter 4), which has shown how coaches' learning occurs through the transmission and reproduction of dominant discourse and practice (Cushion & Jones, 2006, 2014). Hassanin and Light (2014), drawing on Bourdieu's concept of habitus, argued that coach learning relates to the historical and culturally available discourse coaches can draw on. Further, a sport's doxa (everything that goes without saying) was found to be just as influential on coach learning as formal coach education in elite cricket (Townsend & Cushion, 2017b). Townsend and Cushion's (2017b)

study highlighted the arbitrary culture existing within elite cricket education and pointed to a need to explore how coach education is delivered and structured more critically. Given the important findings of these studies, understanding coach learning and coach practice from a sociological lens is essential in understanding the reproduction of ableism in sport. However, drawing on sociological theory in disability sport is a relatively new endeavour, and only a few studies have utilised Bourdieu to investigate coaching in disability sport contexts specifically.

Earlier, it was discussed that it is common in disability sport coaching for 'disability' to be placed in opposition to ableist notions of ability – defined by the imposition of an athletic identity and driven by performance-focused and normative ideologies (Townsend et al., 2018). Athletes are judged against and subjected to ableist standards of 'normal' sporting performances, and disability is forced into the background. In drawing on Bourdieu, Townsend et al. (2018) illustrated that coaching culture is reproduced through symbolic violence in which coaches hold the power to impose a legitimate way of thinking about disability. Symbolic violence refers to subtle, unnoticed coercion that aims to maintain social hierarchies. In the social hierarchy of high-performance disability sport, disability held negative symbolic capital, and thus, coaches pushed disability into the background in favour of athlete identities, obscured by 'empowerment' rhetoric. Athletes became constrained to 'fall in line' with this thinking as it was in their best interests to do so and thus became complicit in the distancing of 'disability' from 'high performance' identities. This athlete-first approach becomes doxic in that it becomes taken for granted and goes without saying, becoming embedded in coaching discourse and practice as 'effective' practice in (Townsend & Cushion, 2017a). Townsend et al. (2018) show that coaches held power over disabled athletes and were able to maintain and reproduce more favourable high-performance values and culture through symbolic violence. As a result, athlete's autonomy to challenge coaching discourse was constrained by a misrecognition of coaches' power and the 'liberating' appearance of dismissing disability (Cushion et al., 2020).

Further research has shown how coaching practice functions as symbolic violence. Townsend and Cushion (2022) explored the social construction of disability in high-performance disability sport through an ethnographic study of a high-performance

learning disability (LD) sport team. The authors argued that disability was continuously inscribed in habitus through the internalisation of differentiation; coaches described the athletes as needing more structure and consistency than other athletes (i.e. athletes without LD), exemplifying a logic of difference which categorised athletes in relation to their deviation from the able-bodied 'norm'. This form of differentiation was naturalised and concealed through symbolic violence that sought to align the athlete's habitus with high-performance, able-bodied sport. This occurred through the pedagogic authority – the power to act – given to the coaches by players through recognition of "technical competency and institutional authority" (Townsend & Cushion, 2022, p. 900). Additionally, coaching practice in this context reflected "cultural rules about what bodies should be or do" (Townsend & Cushion, 2022, p. 905). As a result, athletes were placed in a paradoxical position where in order to accrue symbolic capital as high-performance disabled athletes, "players had to disassociate as far as possible from their impairment" (Townsend & Cushion, 2022, p. 905). This study evidenced how symbolic violence through coaching practice enables a cultural arbitrary such as disability to become naturalised and embedded as legitimate in a specific field.

In further understanding social reproduction, Townsend's ethnography of time spent as a researcher and coach in a high-performance disability sport context sheds light on how easily one can become complicit in reproducing the culture of a field (Townsend & Cushion, 2021). This reflexive piece highlighted the conflicting interests of 'researcher' and 'aspiring coach' and illustrated a difference between scholarly knowledge and practical knowledge. Through a process of socialisation into the 'rules of the game' of the field, the author internalised these and "was an accomplice in the reproduction of the doxic order" despite 'knowing' these rules resulted in potentially harmful practice (Townsend & Cushion, 2021, p. 263). This is evidenced when Townsend discusses that challenging or being critical of the practices and beliefs of the field felt unavailable as a choice because going against the rules would put his position within that field at risk. Thus, Townsend reports conforming to the logic of the field and that "while I recognized and problematized many of the practices, I continued to invest in, and see the value of, 'playing the game' in the coaching field…mainly as it was in my interests to do so" (Townsend & Cushion, 2021, p. 263). By turning a reflexive lens on this experience as

coach and researcher, the authors illustrate how easily one comes to reflect the dominant beliefs and accepted practice of the field they are in. This has implications for coach education because the current method of ad hoc, one-off, short workshops will not change coaches' practice when they operate in a field that values high-performance sports narratives.

Notably, the turn to sociology has highlighted that to understand the nature of learning and coaching knowledge, taking the coach or coach education as a singular unit of analysis is inadequate. To understand how ableism is reproduced in and through coaching, coach education and coaching practice need to be examined together, as coach learning and knowledge are bound by the historical, cultural and social discourses and practices of the field. The research presented above has focused heavily on high-performance disability sport contexts and on coaching practice. Therefore, there is a gap in understanding reproduction in community, participation contexts and the role of coach education in this. Further, the field of sport heavily reflects the field of power and the values inherent that hold symbolic capital – i.e. able-bodied norms. Therefore, it is necessary to examine how ableist values circulate across the broader field of community sport, rather than in stratified social arenas such as high-performance sport.

3.5 Discussion

Despite the recent increase in inclusive policies related to the inclusion of disabled people in sport and, in some cases, increased investment, change in the inclusion of disabled people in sport has been slow. Coaches have been positioned as integral to the successful implementation of inclusion policy but have yet to be supported in holding such a role. Further, literature shows that coaches interpret inclusion policies in a way that ensures the able-bodied ideal prevails, and thus only most able disabled athletes are included, and minimal change to coaching practice occurs (Hammond et al., 2019). Inclusion policy has done little more than create an illusion of inclusion while ableist norms are reproduced (Lyons, 2013). The conceptualisation of ability in sport is inherently ableist and further limits inclusion policy implementation; thus, disability sport exists in a state of contradiction where inferior bodies perform in a field that values and demands able-bodiedness. Further, only certain impairment types and severity

levels are allowed entry to the Paralympic Movement and those that most closely resemble the able-body ideal experience more fame and limelight in the media. Taken together, the literature shows that coaches operate in a system imbued with enlightened ableism; however, there remains little empirical research into why this continues.

Furthermore, much ink has been spilt on mapping how coaches learn about disability sport based on the formal, nonformal and informal model of learning (Nelson et al., 2006). This research has shown that disability sport coaches rely heavily on informal, experiential learning and that coaches' biographies strongly influence practice (e.g. MacDonald et al., 2016; McMaster et al., 2012; S. L. Taylor et al., 2014). Disability sport coaching is shown to be an inherently social practice and is, therefore, a powerful practice in reproducing societal norms (Townsend et al., 2017). Coaches learn through socialisation and exposure to discourses and practices and 'trial and error' processes. This 'knowledge' becomes challenging to displace as it is reinforced by coaches' perceptions of what 'works'. What occurs is an imposition of able-bodied sport practices in disability contexts, and this is problematic because of the potential for uncritical reproduction of ableist practices. The coach education that does exist for disability sport coaches is ad-hoc, add-on, and tends to reinforce ableist, medical model understandings of disability. Categorical approaches reinforce the medical model through impairment-specific 'fixes' to common 'problems', whereas, inclusion approaches emphasise adapting current coaching practice but are often reductionist and overlook the complex reality of disability sport coaching (e.g. Townsend et al., 2022). Infusion approaches are much less common, and their implementation in disability sport coaching has not been empirically explored. Taken together, current coach education practices in disability sport are reductionist, overly simplistic, and continue to perpetuate the dominant medical model, ableist understandings of disability.

A 'fear of the unknown' exists among mainstream coaches and early career disability sport coaches because of the clear distinction between mainstream and disability sport – mobility between the two fields is not common. There is a "double bind of exclusion" in which the low visibility of disabled people in the mainstream sport field coupled with the marginalisation, effective exclusion, of disability knowledge within existing mainstream coach education simultaneously contribute to the exclusion and marginalisation of

disabled people in sport (Owen, 2022, p. 154). Disability sport coaching is positioned as ‘other’ and a charitable endeavour ‘nice’ people do, not core business, reflecting the benevolent ableism rife among coaches and sport discourse. Further, the lack of research into effective practice in disability sport results in an over-reliance on implementing coaching practice from mainstream sport. While seemingly positive and inclusive, the athlete-first discourse forces disability into the background and places the identities of ‘disabled’ and ‘athlete’ in opposition. The imposition of athlete identities by coaches constrains athlete autonomy, and the complexity of disability is rejected in favour of normative coaching practice; attention is diverted from the impairment effects disabled athletes experience.

Together, the disability sport coaching research above illustrates that disability sport exists as a separate field from sport with its own challenges. It is evident that coaching is underpinned by an ableist value system that is embedded, tacit, taken for granted, and largely uncritically received and unquestioned. However, previous studies are overly reliant on categorising coach learning into discrete and recognisable episodes, overlooking the relational, social and historical nature of coaching. This has resulted in a body of work repeating the same messages about coach learning in disability sport. Furthermore, coaching practice and coach education are often studied in isolation. There is a growing body of sociological research that shows our understanding of coach learning will continue to be limited if coaching practice and education are not investigated together.

Coaching, then, as an inherently social activity and a site for social and cultural reproduction, is a unique context to explore the (re)production of ableist knowledge and discourse in sport for disabled children and young people. Further, the extent to which coach education challenges or reinforces ableist value systems is poorly understood. Together with Charlie’s story, the literature points to a clear need to address the ableist politics of knowledge embedded in sports coaching and address the historical marginalisation of disability within coaching knowledge.

By drawing on Bourdieu’s conceptual tools of field, habitus, and capital, in addition to ableism, this study will build on an emerging body of evidence suggesting that disability sport coaching contributes to the reproduction of ableist ideals and principles. This

research explores how and why ableism is reproduced in and through coaching. Such insight is crucial in understanding how current structures and practices in coaching reinforce ableist ideals that marginalise disabled people and hold the potential to influence coach education in ways that can challenge the production of ableism. In addition to informing changes within the coach education system, this project can highlight why access to quality sport experiences for disabled children and young people remains the exception rather than the rule. To do so, chapters four and five describe the theoretical and methodological approaches used in the current study.

Chapter 4 Theory

4.1 Introduction

My literature review, coupled with Charlie's experiences, has begun to show how coaching is a potential vehicle for reproducing and transmitting ableism through coaches' practices and discourse. However, there is a lack of understanding of how this reproduction of ableism occurs in coaching and relatedly the role of coach education in reinforcing or challenging ableism. To better understand this, I turn to Bourdieu's Theory of Practice to locate and understand how ableism might be perpetuated through the coach education system and coaching practice in Aotearoa, New Zealand.

Bourdieu was one of the only early social theorists to discuss sport as a serious sociological issue (Brighton et al., 2022; Tomlinson, 2004). Sport was defined by Bourdieu as a field of struggles "to impose the legitimate definition of sporting practice and of the legitimate function of sporting activity" (Bourdieu, 1978, p.826). Further, the sport field is simultaneously part of the overarching field of power - a larger field of struggles over "the definition of the legitimate body and legitimate use of the body" (Bourdieu, 1978, p. 826). While this definition highlights the undeniable interconnectedness of bodily understandings and sport practices, Bourdieu never directly addressed disability or impaired bodies in his work. Nevertheless, his theory of practice provides a framework for critiquing accepted ways of thinking and exposing the practices taken for granted within disability sport coaching (Townsend, 2018).

To understand how ableism is embedded in and reproduced through coaching, locating its causes within Bourdieu's opus is necessary. In so doing, I aim to locate the evaluative framework of ableism as cultural reproduction, highlighting the mechanisms through which ableist discourse and practice manifest in and through coaching and coach education. This is a significant advancement, as in thinking with Bourdieu, ableism can be understood as a broad mode of thinking, a set of dispositions, and as deeply rooted in sport coaching.

4.2 Bourdieu's Theory of Practice

Bourdieu's sociology is critical of inherited, accepted ways of thinking and established patterns of power and the politics that support them (Wacquant, 1998, p. 217). It aligns with a "constructivist structuralism" or "structuralist constructivism" paradigm that rejects the objective/subjective dualism (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 14; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Here, Bourdieu (1989) explains structuralism as the objective structures that exist independent of consciousness and agency that guide or constrain practices or their representations. Constructivism relates to the social – on the one hand, schemes of perception, thought and action (habitus) and, on the other, social structures often thought of as 'social classes' (Bourdieu, 1989). For Bourdieu, both objectivity and subjectivity are necessary to establish an authentic theory of practice (Grenfell, 2014) and in his anti-dualistic ontology, the objective and subjective cannot be split if the complexity of human action is to be truly understood (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). In reconciling the two, Bourdieu talks of practice as both structuring (generative) and structured (conditioned by previous experience) (Grenfell, 2010). In other words, behaviour is simultaneously structured by social institutions whilst also (relatively) autonomous (Townsend, 2018) – social agents have free will but are always in some way constrained within what is possible as determined by the field, habitus and capital.

Bourdieu's theory of practice provides a nuanced framework that emphasises the complexity of the social world. Through the primary concepts of field, habitus and capital, Bourdieu's theory of practice makes it possible to articulate how cultural settings such as coaching function according to an agreed logic, thus defining how people become competent social agents within these settings. Through Bourdieu, an understanding of the two-way relationship between structure and individual agency and, when applied to coaching, how practice comes to be (re)produced through this relationship can be established. Further, Bourdieu was concerned with power in knowledge production, and thus, his theory is useful in understanding the practices that produce and legitimise knowledge (Brighton et al., 2022; Townsend & Cushion, 2022). In addition to habitus, capital and field, Bourdieu's secondary concepts, such as doxa, symbolic violence and misrecognition, help explore how social structures and power relations are perpetuated and naturalised across and within different fields. In thinking

with Bourdieu, it is possible to theorise disability as a "product of cultural rules about what bodies should be or do" and highlight the ways in which disability becomes firmly embedded in social structures with differential value placed on disabled bodies (Garland Thomson, 1997, p. 6).

The use of Bourdieu in the current study then is to understand the taken-for-granted practices in coach education and disability sport coaching that contribute to the reproduction of ableism that reinforces the marginalisation of disability sport and disabled young people. Bourdieu warns that his concepts of field, habitus and capital can only be defined and understood "within the theoretical system they constitute, not in isolation" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 96). Thus, in this chapter, I necessarily separate each concept for simplicity. However, each cannot function independently of the others, and therefore, there is an overlap in their explanations.[11]

4.2.1 Field

A field is a "network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 97). These relations between social agents create structured spaces with their own rules, accepted ways of doing things, and forms of authority imposed on individuals who enter the field (Wacquant, 1998). A field is also understood as a 'social arena' demarcated by struggle as individuals and institutions seek to maintain or increase their distribution of capital (species of power) and thus their position (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Examples of fields include education, art and sport. Within these fields, individuals seek to increase their symbolic or actual power, resources, and positions through the distribution of various capital. It is important to note that the struggles within fields are not only for the distribution of capital but for the preservation or transformation of social structures. Thus, fields are not static; the struggle within, combined with external historical, political and social forces, results in fields existing in a constant state of flux (Grenfell, 2010).

[11] What will become evident is Bourdieu's complex use of language. This is purposeful to show that social life is complex and to break with traditional dualistic approaches to understanding it.

Fields have a distinctive “logic of practice”, their raison d'etre (loosely, ‘reason to be’), which gives meaning and direction to social agents (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 66). A key function of the field is as a source of socialisation for members, incorporating sets of regulatory principles often referred to as the “rules of the game”, which agents are attuned to (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 99; Thomson, 2014). Individuals within a field know, somewhat unconsciously, how to behave within the field through a ‘feel for the game’ related to their habitus (discussed in detail below) (Bourdieu, 1990b). When the rules of the game go unquestioned and are taken for granted, fields enter a doxic mode. Doxa relates to a “set of fundamental beliefs which does not even need to be asserted in the form of an explicit, self-conscious dogma” (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 15). Through doxa, an individual misrecognises the ‘usual’ order of things as natural, self-evident and legitimate (Bourdieu, 1984; Deer, 2014a). The social order is thus naturalised as doxa through the internalisation of its norms, structures and practices, which in turn generate practice (via habitus), resulting in a circular logic (of reproduction) (Stewart, 2016). The earlier someone enters a field, the less they will be aware of their socialisation into and tacit acceptance of ‘the rules of the game’. More significantly, the earlier they enter, the greater their ignorance of what is tacitly granted to them by their investment in the field and their interest in that field’s existence and perpetuation (Bourdieu, 1990b).

The size and structure of fields varies greatly. There exists a *field of power* of which we are all a part of. The field of power consists of multiple large fields, such as the education, economic and political fields (Thomson, 2014). Within these larger fields, *sub*-fields can exist. For example, sport is the largest field, of which disability sport is a smaller sub-field. Within sub-fields, there exists the overall logic of its field (e.g. sport) as well as its own internal logic (e.g. disability sport) (Thomson, 2014). The boundary of a field exists where the effects of that field cease (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Because of the delimited nature of boundaries, fields overlap and thus, individuals are situated across many fields (Townsend, 2018). Coaches are social agents who may find themselves operating in both sport field and disability sport sub-field.

While a field has a logic of practice and doxa to which all social agents are attuned, individuals still demonstrate the capacity to exercise agency (Thomson, 2014). However, this agency is constrained by the hierarchical nature of a field, and dominant social

agents (individuals and institutions) hold considerable power over subordinates. Townsend (2018) argues that disability sport is a field of struggles in which coaches endeavour to dissociate from disability to accumulate capital (symbolic power). Coaches produce an ableist practice by ignoring disability, pushing it to the background and positioning disability in direct opposition to notions of sport and athlete identity. Coaches do this in order to hold favourable positions and power within the sport field.

Bourdieu's notion of Field is a useful epistemological and methodological heuristic for making sense of the world and for "translating practical problems into concrete empirical operations" (Thomson, 2014, p. 79). The analytical usefulness of field is in unpacking the set of logics that legitimate knowledge and practices that structure social spaces and the activities within them (Hall et al., 2022). Thus, field will assist, along with capital and habitus, in understanding the accepted logic of coaching practice in disability sport and how this practice has come to be. Habitus and capital mediate practice within a field, and an individual's position within a field relates to their perceived capital (Townsend & Cushion, 2022).

4.2.2 Habitus

The core concept that ties the theory of practice together is habitus. Habitus is the system of durable, transposable dispositions through which a social agent (individual, group or institution) perceives, judges and acts (Bourdieu, 1990b; Wacquant, 1998). It generates and organises practice and gives meaning to perceptions (Bourdieu, 1984). Through habitus, a field is endowed with sense and value, constituting a meaningful world that is worth investing in (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Habitus is acquired through "lasting exposure to social conditions and conditionings" (Wacquant, 1998, p. 221) and is thus a product of history and socialisation (Bourdieu, 1990b). In other words, habitus can be understood as the internalisation of social regularities and structures that influence one's dispositions and, thus, interactions in the social world (Bourdieu, 1984; Wacquant, 1998). Habitus is embodied and provides a frame of reference through which people produce, perceive, and evaluate practice in a seemingly unconscious manner (Stewart, 2016; Wacquant, 1998). Habitus gives one that "feel for the game" (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 66).

Bourdieu describes habitus as “structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures” (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 53); habitus is not only structuring of practice but simultaneously structured by practice. Habitus is structur*ed* by past and present experiences such as childhood and schooling and is structur*ing* because it produces behaviour or practice (Maton, 2014). Habitus is also a structu*re* because habitus is employed systematically (Maton, 2014). The limits of habitus are set by the historical and social conditions in which it is produced (Bourdieu, 1990b). A coach’s individual habitus informs how they coach (their practice). This habitus may be influenced by how they were coached as children, the type of sport they played and the level to which they competed, their upbringing, their education, and their position in other fields. Simultaneously, their time in the sport field exposes them to accepted, legitimatised coaching practices. Coaches internalise these accepted practices, and thus, they structure a coach’s habitus, too. Through this process, a cycle of reproduction of coaching practice can occur (Townsend, 2018).

Habitus, while “durable”, is not “eternal”, but rather it is open and malleable (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 133). However, habitus does tend to ensure its own consistency. Past experiences always constrain the incorporation of new experiences due to the filtering and structuring of new experiences in accordance with the structures (habitus) produced by past experiences. In other words, habitus interprets all new experiences and information through the lens of the original habitus and rejects or avoids anything that may question its accumulated information and experience (Bourdieu, 1990b). Further, Bourdieu suggested that people often encounter an experience or circumstance that reinforces habitus rather than modifies it because people are “statistically bound” to experience the world in ways that agree with experiences that originally structured their habitus (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 133). This is important in understanding coaching habitus as the earliest engagements with sport shape one's habitus, which is carried into the future. If disabled people are absent from youth sport, those who grow up to become coaches are going to assume that disabled people do not participate in sport. If disabled athletes remain absent from mainstream coach education programmes as well, the notion that disabled people do not belong in sport is further reinforced in habitus. Together, these experiences structure habitus in such a way that

these new coaches fail to provide coaching provisions for disabled athletes. Here, the role of habitus in the reproduction of coaching practice is evident.

It is important to highlight that while a change in habitus is possible, it is often slower than and asynchronous with changes in a field (Maton, 2014). This is why practices can seem out-of-date or ill-informed; the embodied dispositions that generate practice are unconscious and thus not easily reflected on or changed. The "raising of consciousness" or making habitus explicit is simply not enough to overcome the inherent inertia of habitus to transform it (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 172). Bourdieu (2000) compares transforming habitus to the training of an athlete – deliberate counter-training through repeated exercises is necessary to durably transform habitus (Stewart, 2016). The extent to which current coach education systems shifts habitus is unexplored in the literature.

Additionally, members of the same social class share structurally similar positions in society and thus share structurally similar experiences and dispositions. One can assume these members will have similar habitus (Maton, 2014). The same cannot be said for two members of the same field. For example, in his critique of the judgement of taste, Bourdieu writes, "it would be naive to suppose that all practitioners of the same sport (or any other practice) confer the same meaning on their practice or even, strictly speaking, that they are practising the same practice" (Bourdieu, 2015, p. 45). This is because individuals employ an individual habitus in a field. Despite coaches operating in the same field (sport), one cannot assume they have the same habitus. This is not to say their habitus is entirely different - there will be some level of similarity as sport coaching is a practice that has its own logic, doxa and habitus. It is in the other experiences and fields the coach is a part of that there exists a difference in habitus. For example, a coach who has an impairment will have a very different coaching practice when coaching disabled athletes compared to a coach who has never met a disabled person previously.

Habitus is intimately intertwined with capital and field. Habitus shapes one's practices and defines the position one holds in a field based on one's capital. Simultaneously, the position they hold (via capital) in the field structures their habitus (Grenfell, 2010; Wacquant, 1998). Habitus is an internal informer, and the field is an external informer of

possibilities and their associated profits, costs and potentialities (Wacquant, 1998). To symbolise the unconscious, "obscure and double relation" that exists between habitus and a field (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 126), Bourdieu produced the following equation:

$$[(\text{habitus})(\text{capital})] + \text{field} = \text{practice}$$

(Bourdieu, 1984, p. 101)

The equation highlights the intertwinement of the three concepts, showing that practice is the result of the relation between one's dispositions (habitus) and one's position (capital) within the current social arena (field) (Maton, 2014, p. 50). Social agents rely on habitus for their 'feel for the game' and can experience a field-habitus match when they find themselves in a field reflective of that which structured their habitus originally (Maton, 2014). Bourdieu described this experience as being "like a fish in water" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 127). The social agent is attuned to the doxa of the field and their habitus matches the logic of the field. Conversely, one can also feel like a fish out of water when there is a mismatch between the field they find themselves in and their habitus. Further, while the body is perceived to be individual and characteristic of the self, it is indeed influenced by a socially structured habitus. Webb et al. (2002) state that "the relationship between field and habitus functions to 'produce' agent's bodies and bodily dispositions: what Bourdieu refers to as the 'bodily hexis'" (p.37). This is evidenced by the internalised expectation that sportspeople will have bodies that look a certain way in accordance with their sport. A rugby player's body is large and muscular, whereas a distance runner's body is long and lean. Bodily hexis then presents a useful explanatory tool for understanding the differential value placed on disabled bodies in sport. Value is attributed through capital, and as the equation above shows, it is not only habitus that interacts with a field; capital is a key determinant of one's position in a field.

4.2.3 Capital

Capital are the resources that can be effectively employed in a social space – a form of power – and are the basis of the social hierarchy in fields (Moore, 2014; Wacquant, 1998). The logic of practice of a field defines what is and is not valued; thus, capital only exist and function in relation to the specific conditions of a particular field. Social agents

"both commit to the validity of, and compete for, the acquisition of capital" through a process of illusio - belief in the rules of the game and recognition of its stakes (Schirato & Roberts, 2019, p. 175). Capital are symbolically and materially active – they are objective and subjective, material and non-material – and determine the position of individuals within the social hierarchy of a field (Townsend, 2018). Given that capital are active, they are constantly redistributed between social agents in the field, and for one's capital to hold power within a field, it must be recognised by others in the field as such.

Capital, in Bourdieu's theory, is not only economic and this distinction is important in understanding social life. Bourdieu argued:

> "It is in fact impossible to account for the structure and functioning of the social world unless one reintroduces capital in all its forms and not solely in the one form recognized by economic theory." (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 241).

Thus, there are three types of capital discussed by Bourdieu: social, cultural, and economic (Bourdieu, 1986). *Economic* capital relates to financial resources in the modern sense and can be exchanged for goods or other species of capital. In fact, Bourdieu posited that economic capital is "at the root of all other types" of capital – that is, cultural and social capital are "transformed, disguised forms of economic capital" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 250). Cultural and social capital are most effective when they conceal that they are, in fact, derived from economic capital (Bourdieu, 1986).

Social capital is understood as the actual or potential resources of the network of relationships (social connections) one has (Purdue & Howe, 2015). Membership to this network provides a "credential" via collectively owned capital (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 247). The relationships can be socially instituted, that is guaranteed, through a common name such as a family name, school, or sport team. Additionally, a network is built using investment strategies (consciously or unconsciously) that aim to establish or reproduce relationships that are "usable" in that they are simultaneously elective and necessary, "implying durable obligations subjectively felt (feelings of gratitude, respect, friendship, etc.) or institutionally guaranteed (rights)" (Bourdieu, 2016, p. 191). The volume of *social* capital one has, relies on the size of the network of relations that one can mobilise and the associated species of capital of the network (Bourdieu, 1990b).

Cultural capital is "a form of value associated with culturally authorised tastes, consumption patterns, attributes, skills and awards" (Webb et al., 2002, p. xi). Cultural capital is described as existing in three forms – embodied, objectified and institutional (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). It can be *embodied* which relates to "long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 240). Embodied cultural capital is knowledge and culture communicated through a person's body/mind hexis – their embodiment. Embodied cultural capital is acquired rather unconsciously and is "marked by its earliest conditions of acquisition", becoming an integral part of the person (inscribed habitus through bodily hexis) (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 244).

Embodied cultural capital cannot be transferred instantaneously from one who possesses it to another, and thus, it "declines and dies with its bearer" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 244). Therefore, it is given the prestige of assumed innateness but is simultaneously recognised as the merit of acquisition (Bourdieu, 1986). Given the link of embodied cultural capital to one's bodily hexis, it may explain the unequal distribution of knowledge and skills across the coaching workforce. Those who share similar social and educational positions (what Bourdieu would refer to as classes) share embodied cultural capital. For example, just as the specific pronunciation of words within a social class can be considered embodied cultural capital, so too can coaching knowledge and skills. The distribution of coaching knowledge and skills across the coaching workforce is related to field positions and access to education. Disabled people exist in a marginalised position across major fields such as education, politics and leisure and, thus, are not able to gain embodied cultural capital (in the form of knowledge and skills) that non-disabled coaches are able to attain. This results in a lack of disabled coaches and coach educators in the field of sport.

Objectified cultural capital relates to material possessions and the history accumulated in artefacts of museums, galleries, and books, for example (Moore, 2014; Bourdieu, 1984). The objectified form of cultural capital is intertwined with its embodied form in that, in order to 'use' objectified cultural capital, one must also have the embodied cultural capital to go with it or be able to access this via proxy (Bourdieu, 1986). For example, you can have the economic capital to own a bike, which gives you objectified cultural capital, but you must also have embodied cultural capital to operate it. The third type,

institutionalised cultural capital, relates largely to group memberships and academic qualifications and is the capital bestowed by institutions. In coaching, these may relate to winning championships, winning coaching awards and 'Hall of Fame' induction.

Cultural capital operates under the guise of hereditary transmission - it is given the prestige of assumed innateness but is simultaneously recognised as the merit of acquisition. The misrecognition of its innateness *and* meritocracy disguises its transmission and acquisition and results in cultural capital most commonly functioning as symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Cultural capital thus has more weight in the system of reproduction strategies and understanding its power within a field is useful in unpacking the structure of a field (Bourdieu, 1986, 1990b).

Symbolic capital is the form another capital (most often social or cultural) takes when individuals "misrecognize the arbitrariness of its possession and accumulation" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 119). That is, capital's value or power is misrecognised by others in the field. In some scholarship, symbolic capital is discussed merely as prestige, status and authority such as that attributed to coaches for holding a 'head coach' position (e.g. Purdue & Howe, 2015). Stewart (2016) highlights that this description of symbolic capital fails to emphasise its arbitrary and "obscure character" (p. 115). As will be discussed further, habitus is at play when specific capital is transfigured into symbolic capital through (mis)recognition of its 'power' as legitimate. Not all symbolic capital gives an individual power, and, in some cases, misrecognition results in *negative symbolic capital*. In the case of disabled people, their lack of social, cultural and often economic capital is misrecognised as a flaw of the individual (rather than an issue of society) and thus, disabled people are attributed with negative symbolic capital (Stewart, 2016). In a sporting context, disability is seen as negative symbolic capital when operating in a field imbued with a logic of practice related to high-performance sport (e.g. Townsend et al., 2018). The negative symbolic capital that may be attributed to coaches of disabled athletes has not been discussed thoroughly in the current body of literature. As discussed in Chapter 3 (Literature Review), conceptualisations of ability are bound in ableist understandings, and so too is the body. That is, the body (athletic or not) is unquestionably recognised as well and able and, simultaneously, impairment and disability are recognised as negative, unpleasant and

illegitimate (Stewart, 2016). These doxic understandings of disability result in the attribution of negative symbolic capital to disabled people.

In extending Bourdieu's theory, Shilling (1991, 2004) developed the concept of physical capital. Shilling (1991) argued that while physical capital is intertwined with embodied cultural capital, 'the physical' is too important to be a mere part of cultural capital. Physical capital can assist in unpacking the negative symbolic capital attributed to the disabled body because it speaks to the values placed upon the size, shape and appearance of bodies in social life (Shilling, 2004). Physical capital can be produced (acquired) through the development of bodies in ways recognised as having value (e.g. attending the gym in order to attain a toned body) and can be converted into other forms of capital (Shilling, 2004). Physical capital is related to social position, habitus and taste. It also closely resembles Bourdieu's original concept of bodily hexis.

These primary concepts (field*,* capital*,* habitus) of Bourdieu's theory of practice have powerful analytical potential. Together, Bourdieu's sociology is concerned with the discovery of the socio-cultural processes underpinning the reproduction of structured inequalities. Likewise, as Shilling (2003) suggests, for Bourdieu, the body, "is an unfinished entity which develops in conjunction with various social forces and is integral to the maintenance of social inequalities" (p.111), imbued with social meaning and ascribed with value. In examining the differential value attached to disability within the field of sport, it is necessary to understand the mechanisms through which the ascribed value and meaning to bodies are reproduced. Bourdieu's secondary concepts, such as symbolic violence, doxa and pedagogic action, support this understanding as they further explain social life and cultural reproduction.

4.2.4 Symbolic Violence

Symbolic violence arguably informs Bourdieu's entire body of work and is an attempt to theorise the indirect, subtle, even 'gentle' processes operating in all societies to produce order and control (Jenkins, 2002; Schubert, 2014). Symbolic violence can be defined as the imposition of systems of meaning that legitimise and solidify structures of inequity (Jenkins, 2002; Stewart, 2016). Symbolic violence occurs with a social agent's

complicity as they misrecognise another's power as legitimate (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

The theory of symbolic violence was written mainly in the context of education and thus refers to pedagogic action. Pedagogic action was described by Bourdieu as the "imposition of a cultural arbitrary by an arbitrary power" (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, p. 18). It occurs through 3 modes: *diffuse education* (similar to socialisation in that it is learnt through interaction with competent members of the social world), *institutionalised education* (relates to schooling on one hand and "age-set initiation rituals" on the other) and *family education* (Jenkins, 2002, p. 105). The misrecognition of the arbitrary power held by a social class or group as legitimate affords the dominant class or group 'pedagogic authority'. The group endowed with pedagogic authority determine the 'correct' way of life (practice) as well as the "exclusion of ideas as unthinkable", which "may in fact be the most effective mode of pedagogic action" (Jenkins, 2002, p. 105). Thus, the exclusion of disability from mainstream sport operates as a mode of symbolic violence - even disabled people accept that they must be separated and thus perpetuate their marginalisation in sport (Fitzgerald, 2005; Goodwin & Peers, 2011). The dominant group (i.e. non-disabled people) impress the 'correct way' or legitimate culture onto others through pedagogic work:

> "a process of inculcation which must last long enough to produce a durable training, i.e. a habitus, the product of internalization of the principles of a cultural arbitrary capable of perpetuating itself after PA [pedagogic action] has ceased and thereby of perpetuating in practices the principles of the internalized arbitrary." (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, p. 31).

The legitimate culture becomes ingrained in habitus, so much so that it becomes taken-for-granted (doxic) and functions to keep the order of things. Symbolic violence happens in such a way that the dominant group do little more than "go about their normal daily lives, adhering to the rule of the system that provides them their positions of privilege" in order to maintain dominance (Schubert, 2014, p. 180). Bourdieu described it as hard to resist or rebel against because symbolic domination is "something you absorb like air, something you don't feel pressured by; it is everywhere and nowhere and trying to escape

from that is very difficult" (Bourdieu & Eagleton, 1992, p. 115). This is one way in which the dominant culture and practice continues unquestioned.

To better understand how symbolic violence operates in "seemingly trivial practices", the analogy of fork use is helpful (Schubert, 2014, p. 187). One's 'taste' (for objects and artefacts) is assumed to be personal when it is, in fact, entirely social - any 'choice' made is an expression of habitus. Take a 'working-class' diner at a table of the upper class who has just been served an appetizer. They do not know which fork to use and may feel uncomfortable, anxious or even embarrassed – like a fish out of water. The sense of uncomfortableness in this social setting acknowledges that a) such a distinct setting exists and b) contributes to the reproduction of the social structure (and the diner's position in it) and its legitimacy. The misrecognition that there is a 'correct' way to use a fork that is superior, contributes to the reproduction of the social hierarchy and social limits are established. The idea that "those who know how to use the fork are somehow better than those who do not" is reinforced despite, of course, that there is nothing inherently superior in the use of a fork and it is all arbitrary (Schubert, 2014, p. 188). It is through this example that symbolic violence is indirect, subtle, even 'gentle' and that the dominated are complicit in the violence. In sport coaching, the imposition of the athlete-first identity has been shown to be a form of symbolic violence.

What is also evident is the role of doxa in one's complicity. As discussed earlier, the taken-for-grantedness within a field is the result of doxa. The social order is naturalised as doxa through the internalisation of the order and its norms, structures and practices (Stewart, 2016). Social agents tend to define themselves as the established order defines them, thus imposing limits on themselves that reflect 'one's sense of place' (Bourdieu, 1984). Disabled athletes define themselves as athletes first because the high performance sport doxa tells them they should if they want to be seen as legitimate. The doxa of a field, the assumptions whose acceptance "goes without saying", determine the limits of the doable and the thinkable (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 51). Here, doxa relates to symbolic violence through social agents' misrecognition of their own place (Bourdieu, 1984).

4.2.5 Summarising Bourdieu: The Game

To show the usefulness of Bourdieu's Theory of Practice and better illustrate the interconnectedness of its concepts, I bring the concepts together through the explanation of a sports game. When comparing the concept of field to a game, one must be cautious as, unlike games, fields are not the product of deliberate creation, and their rules and regulations are "not explicit and codified" – it is all arbitrary (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 98). However, despite this warning, Bourdieu himself compared social life to that of a game of football (Thomson, 2014). Thus, it is useful to now review the Theory of Practice and its concepts together under an analogy of sport.

A sports game has specific rules and regulations (and power dynamics) that novice players must learn. Once learned, the rules are accepted as the legitimate way of doing things and go unquestioned (doxa). As one plays the game more often, they come to understand the reason for the game is to win at all costs (logic of practice). The style of play one exhibits is developed through experience in the game and their prior knowledge and experience of the game (habitus). Players' capital relates to their knowledge of the game (*institutional cultural*), their ability (*embodied cultural*), their equipment (*objectified cultural*), their networks (*social*) and access to the game as in facilities, equipment and coaching (*economic*). Those who enter the game with more capital by way of volume or type are advantaged at the outset. The combination of the type of capital as well as volume a player possesses, also influences the position a player can hold. A player's position in the field determines (limits) where they can go and what they can do. Players compete (struggle) for capital to advance or at least maintain their position. Players can also use their capital to transform the rules or culture of the game by changing the relative value of species of capital - the way capital is exchanged or discrediting a form of capital. It is this type of struggle that occurs most often in fields. Players buy into the beliefs of sport such as the notion of 'fair play' or 'win at all costs' mentalities without question (doxa). Symbolic violence occurs when a player is limited or excluded on the basis that it is natural or legitimate that they are excluded. For example, a wheelchair user excluded from a game of football because they cannot 'run' is legitimised based on the rules of the game. Even when one is conscious of the doxic

and arbitrary nature of the rules, one cannot help but continue to play the game as it is in their best interest to do so to avoid social exclusion.

While this explanation presents Bourdieu's Theory of Practice and broader sociological perspective as simplistic, they are complex. Their complexity contributes to their usefulness in understanding social life. As I have outlined above, Bourdieu's opus helps to understand how bodies act as bearers of symbolic value, and how inequalities can become legitimised in certain social fields. It is particularly useful in exploring how certain abilities can be valued and misrecognised, affording power and advantage to individuals and structuring practices within a field. In disability studies, the overriding preference for certain abilities is 'ableism'. Chouinard (1997) defines ableism as

> "Ideas, practices, institutions and social relations that presume able-bodiedness, and by so doing, construct persons with disabilities as marginalised… and largely invisible 'others'" (p. 380).

Therefore, locating ableism within Bourdieu's framework is important to examine the production of ableist normativity – the system that values able-bodiedness and contributes to inequality. First, I will outline the project of ableism as it is defined within the field of critical disability studies before exploring the theoretical connections with Bourdieu.

4.3 Ableism

As I have outlined earlier (this Chapter, section 1.1), the study of disability is largely absent from Bourdieu's work. However, the field of critical disability studies dedicates significant conceptual ink to the theorisation of disability, positioning it as a political, sociocultural phenomenon that is simultaneously personal, embodied, physiological and psychological (Goodley, 2017). Two key concepts in understanding the differential treatment of disabled people are ableism and disablism (Campbell, 2009). Though often conflated and used interchangeably, the terms ableism and disablism denote different concepts (Silva, 2022; Peers et al., 2022). Silva (2022) suggests "disablism denotes the harmful outcomes of ableism, whereas ableism targets the genesis of disability oppression" (p. 159).

Disablism refers to the discriminatory, oppressive and abusive behaviours that stem from the belief that disabled people are inferior. This inferiority is based on a negative ontology of disability – the assumption that disability is an entirely negative, all-encompassing identity (Peers et al., 2022). Disablism is embodied in the "differential and unequal treatment of people because of actual or presumed disabilities" (Campbell, 2008, p. 152). Social-relational in nature, disablism places social restrictions on the activity, aspirations and psycho-emotional well-being of people with impairments (Thomas, 2010). Disablist behaviours can be covert in that even those who work to address the rights of disabled people or disabled people themselves can embody disablist behaviours as they are expressed in habitual, unexamined ways (Peers et al., 2022). Disablism reflects the social constructionist view that disability is experienced by a person with an impairment as a result of the social world, and disability is thus *produced* (Campbell, 2008). Disablism, while widespread in sports, can be considered as a practical manifestation of a broader system of power and privilege that centres around a culturally embedded notion of 'normality'. This system of power and privilege, according to Campbell (2009), is *ableism*.

Ableism is the ideology of ability in which the natural norm is to be free from impairment (Silva & Howe, 2019). The most widely used definition of ableism is that of Campbell:

> "A network of beliefs, processes and practices that produces a particular kind of self and body (the corporeal standard) that is projected as the perfect, species-typical and therefore essential and fully human. Disability is cast as a diminished state of being human." (2001, p. 44).

This definition recognises the presumption of able-bodiedness as a naturalised understanding of being fully human, and that presumption leads to "persons with disabilities as marginalized, oppressed, and largely invisible 'others'" (Campbell, 2009; Chouinard, 1997, p. 380). Ableism results in the devaluation of "non-able-bodied" members of society (Chouinard, 1997, p. 380). Thus, as Peers et al. (2022) state, ableism is a supremacist ideology that structures a social hierarchy of human kinds, and those with impairments are at the lower rung. Ableism has roots in eugenics and values the species-typical, which "represents a value-laden, technology-laden, White, Eurocentric

and historically specific ideal" (Peers et al., 2022, p. 36). However, this is an ideal that most people cannot attain, let alone maintain their whole lives. Ableism, then, differentiates and ranks bodies and thus, it is possible to locate within Bourdieu's conceptual framework as struggles over "the definition of the legitimate body and legitimate use of the body" (Bourdieu, 1978, p. 826). The dominant social actors within the field of power (people without impairments) have determined what is 'normal', the 'correct' way of doing things, a certain way of being and behaving and this norm has become superior to the way people with impairments live. The norm, doxic, taken-for-granted, emerges as ableism – a system of privilege that advantages people without impairment over people with impairments (Jun, 2018).

Ableist ideals are so deeply embedded in our ways of being in the world (habitus, doxa) that ableism remains invisible and illusive to most (Leo & Goodwin, 2016; Silva, 2022). Ableism as a project imposes ableist norms on others, and such practice "is so ingrained in society that its use for exclusionary purposes is hardly ever questioned or even realized." (Wolbring, 2008, p. 257). This is because those who are privileged by the system are simply unaware of the privilege they are granted and the assumed superiority of the impairment-free 'way of life' results in a belief that the solution to disabled people's problems lies within them (Jun, 2018). Ableism has been divided into a range of forms to better distinguish the ways in which it manifests in the everyday world. These forms show just how insidious and embedded ableism is within the social world – even disabled people can be ableist.

4.3.1 Forms of Ableism

The most obvious and negative form of ableism, *hostile ableism*, targets people because of their disability and relates to shaming language, gestures of disgust, avoidance, and aggression (abuse and hate crimes) (Nario-Redmond, 2019). *Benevolent ableism* stems from the tendency to admire disabled people for overcoming their disability, and the achievement of everyday activities is highly praised (Nario-Redmond et al., 2019). While more 'positive' than hostile ableism, it is bound in non-disabled people's feelings of pity, protection and charity. In sport, this manifests as Paralympic athletes used as "inspiration porn" (e.g. Beldame et al., 2024). Nario-Redmond (2019) suggests ableism often occurs as a mixture of both the positive and negative, as *ambivalent ableism*.

Ambivalence stems from conflicting beliefs about disability -neither entirely negative nor positive- and manifests as over-helpful behaviours. Ambivalent ableism often undermines autonomy by reinforcing dependency and unequal power dynamics (Nario-Redmond, 2019; Nario-Redmond et al., 2019). Ambivalent ableism may occur in sport when non-disabled people see a Para athlete using different mobility aids – for example, the athlete may be using a wheelchair to get around the athletics stadium and then stand to continue using a different mobility aid. For non-disabled people who do not understand the nuance of impairments, seeing the athlete stand and walk away from their wheelchair can result in negative attitude toward the athlete and even accusations of 'faking'.

Enlightened ableism stems from the descriptions of enlightened racism. Lyons (2013) stated that "enlightened ableism allows one to side-step, or even fail to recognise the effects of an ableist paradigm" (p. 240). Thus, enlightened ableism occurs when non-ableist discourse is contradicted by ableist practice (Peers et al., 2022). This occurs in sport where top-down inclusion policies provide a language of inclusion, but coaches' practice favours the most able disabled people, thus certain impairments continue to be marginalised (e.g. Hammond et al., 2019). Ableism is so embedded in the doxa of the sport field that it goes unnoticed and uncriticised and thus manifests as enlightened ableism.

Ableism can also be *institutional*, where laws, policies, regulations, processes, the built environment, and practices restrict access, movement, freedom and equity of people with impairments (Ball & Haegele, 2024). This is reflected in sport through segregated competition, disparities in funding for Olympic and Paralympic sport right to community level, classification and divisioning practices, inaccessible sporting venues, and media representations that favour hyper-disabled athletes or reinforce inspiration porn narratives. It could be argued that it is through the extreme institutional ableism that occurred throughout the 20th century that the acceptance of ableism as natural became embedded in habitus and doxa of many fields (Nario-Redmond, 2019). It is through this process of naturalisation that the more covert forms of ableism more commonly seen today have thrived.

Dysconscious ableism, less known and utilised, similarly emerged from research into racism as enlightened ablism. Dysconscious ableism relates to the tacit acceptance of ableist norms and privilege, and Broderick and Lalvani (2017) argue it reproduces "the two core elements of ableism's regime: 'the notion of the normative (and normate individual) and the enforcement of a constitutional divide' between abled and disabled identities" (p. 895). Dysconsciousness is not the absence of consciousness (as in unconsciousness) but is the distorted view of and way of thinking about disability that is both created by and supports ableist (mainstream) ideology (Broderick & Lalvani, 2017). Dysconsciousness is described as "an uncritical habit of mind (including perceptions, attitudes, assumptions, and beliefs) that justifies inequity and exploitation by accepting the existing order of things as given" (King, 1991, p. 135). Here, the connection to Bourdieu's habitus and doxa is clear - through doxa, an individual misrecognises the 'usual' order of things as natural, self-evident and legitimate (Bourdieu, 1984; Deer, 2014). Ableism becomes embedded in dispositions (habitus) in a dysconscious manner through doxa of the field of power.

Disable people are exposed to the same doxa as non-disabled people and thus internalise the dominant societal norms and discourse about disability and impairment. This results in an internalisation of ableism. Internalised ableism "means that to assimilate into the norm the referentially disabled individual is required to embrace, indeed to assume, an 'identity' other than one's own" (Campbell, 2008, p. 157). Disabled people feel compelled to distance themselves from disability and aim to mimic the able body in recognition of "compulsory ableness" (Campbell, 2008, p. 156). In pushing disability into the background through athlete-first discourse there is an erasure and disavowal of disability and an imposition of self-loathing, and "ironically, disabled people who achieve 'people first' status are not achieving full normative status but are only legitimizing an able-bodied resemblance through their desire for normality" (Campbell, 2008, p. 156). Here, symbolic violence is occurring as by "unwittingly" emulating ableist ideals, disabled people become complicit in their own oppression (Campbell, 2008, p. 159)

Given the numerous and varying forms, ableism is rife within society and sport, manifesting across individual, interpersonal, structural, institutional and cultural levels.

We can, and must, use (anti)ableism then, to understand and bring to light the marginalisation disabled people experience in sport and expose sport's role in the (re)production of ableist beliefs (Hammond et al., 2019; Silva, 2022).

4.3.2 Anti-ableism

As has been shown, ableism is a pervasive supremacist ideology that is embedded in social life through doxa and habitus. Through the definition of enlightened ableism, it is evident that even those who most explicitly desire to not be ableist struggle to truly avoid it. This has led to calls for a movement towards anti-ableism (e.g. Peers et al., 2022; Silva, 2022). Anti-ableism is about exposing and invalidating the ideologies that legitimise the inequities and discrimination disabled people face (Silva, 2022) . Anti-ableist research questions "sports' responsibility in creating and reinforcing ableism" and sports' potential to challenge and change it (Silva, 2022, p. 160). Anit-ableism differs from what has been termed "non-ableism" attempts that focus on not being part of the disability oppression problem and rather transform and dismantle the very "foundations of that oppression" (Peers et al., 2022, p. 44).

As mentioned previously, it is hard to identify ableism because it forms the foundations of coaching knowledge, practices and values; thus anti-ableism involves a "commitment to actively critique and act against" accepted practices, discourses and beliefs in coaching (Peers et al., 2022, p. 44). Anti-ableism in coach education is about going beyond teaching coaches to modify rules or equipment to accommodate disabled people (McBean, 2023). It means being critical of the coach education structures, practices, and models employed and their role in the oppression of disabled people and committing to doing the work to improve the system. It is with anti-ableism in mind that this thesis examines the reproduction of ableism in coaching knowledge and practice.

4.4 Summary: Bourdieu and Ableism

The above sections have outlined the key theories that inform this research. Bourdieu's critical sociology and conceptual tools enable an understanding of coaching a reproductive social activity and the discovery of an unequal power distribution. Throughout the discussion of ableism, I began to point out its links to Bourdieu's sociology. In doing so, I highlight the powerful sociological heuristic available to use to

understand the mechanisms through which ableism is enabled and reproduced in and through coaching.

Disability sport research drawing on ableism often tells us that disabled people experience and encounter ableism in sport and physical activity settings (e.g. Ball & Haegele, 2024). However, they do little more to unpack why ableism exists in physical activity and sport culture in the first place. This is the difference between disablism-informed research and anti-ableist research (Silva, 2022). Research drawing on Bourdieu has shown that reproduction of dominant (ableist) practice and discourse occurs through coaching (e.g. Townsend & Cushion, 2022) yet the linking of Bourdieu's opus to ableism is often left unexplored or is merely implied. There are two previous studies that have drawn on both ableism and Bourdieu however, neither are focused directly on coaching or learning.

Silva and Howe (2019) present an ethnographic vignette of a sitting volleyball community to show how a sport such as sitting volleyball can "destabilize engrained ableist premises" through embodied situated action (p. 1). The authors remind us that Bourdieu's theory is useful in exposing "how fabricated ideologies (such as ableism) reproduce themselves in cultural practices" and in doing so contend that ableism constitutes a logic of practice (Silva & Howe, 2019, p. 4). The logic of practice of a field defines what is and is not valued and gives meaning and direction to social agents. A field's logic of practice is deeply embedded in one's habitus through doxa; however, doxa is not discussed in this piece. However, this piece highlights that the implementation of embodied pedagogies can offer "eye-opening experiences" that have the potential to promote critical reflection and may challenge ableist logics. While this insight is useful for informing the future direction of coach education what is missing is an understanding of how ableism becomes the logic of practice for coaches. There is a need to investigate the coaching field's doxa and coaching habitus as doxa is the foundation of habitus, and habitus shapes the logic of practice.

The second research piece attempts to connect three theories – ableism, Bourdieu's theory of practice and self-determination theory (SDT). Brittain et al. (2020) drew on these three theories to show their combined usefulness in explaining why disabled people are less likely to participate in sport. While the three theories used in the model come from

different paradigms and, therefore, have differing ontological and epistemological assumptions that are not necessarily compatible, this literature is useful in understanding the reproduction of ableism in sport. The authors show that ableism regulates habitus through the socialisation of what an able, ‘normal’ body is. Ableism is internalised by disabled people as well as non-disabled people and is depicted to manifest for disabled people as “low self-perceptions of [physical activity] competence” (in SDT) (Brittain et al., 2020, p. 219). While coaches are not discussed at all in this piece, if ableism regulates the habitus of disabled people, it is reasonable to suggest it regulates the habitus of coaches, and thus, coaches will perceive disabled people as having low sporting competence, too. The authors show that the cultural reproduction of ableist ideas about the sporting body occurs in and through socialisation into able-bodied norms.

While the above research does not focus on coaching or coaching learning, it has begun to scratch the surface of the potential of weaving ableism and Bourdieu together to strengthen our understanding of reproduction. This thesis will, therefore, go beyond past research to understand how ableism is reproduced in and through coaching, making explicit the connection between Bourdieu’s opus and ableism. There is a focus on coach learning and knowledge related to disability, as learning is inseparable from practice. There is equally a focus on power, social hierarchy, and the symbolic structures that create and maintain them. Chapter Five introduces the methodology of this research, including the ontological and epistemological stances underpinning it. Chapter Six presents the data from 10 disability sport coaches, critically examining how ableism is reproduced. Chapter Seven highlights the significant implications of this research for coach education.

Chapter 5 Methodology

5.1 Introduction

Research in disability sport coach learning is limited in depth and breadth as it is an emerging field (Powis et al., 2022). Current research often employs models of disability to theoretically inform their approach to research or to data analysis, which lacks the ability to make the familiar and taken for granted, unfamiliar – a central feature of critical, constructionist/sociological work (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012). In contrast, this research seeks to broaden theoretical approaches to disability sport coaching research and, in doing so, draws on sociological thinking to investigate the mechanisms that reproduce ableism in sport.

5.2 Research Paradigm

A research paradigm refers to the set of beliefs and practices in conducting research related to a specific philosophy and worldview - a view shared by those within the research paradigm (Denscombe, 2010). The paradigm "defines, for its holder, the nature of the “world”, the individual’s place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 107). Each paradigm has a set of interrelated beliefs about the nature of reality (ontology), the nature of knowledge (epistemology, that is, how we know what we know) and how we can learn about the world (methodology) (Crotty, 2014; Denscombe, 2010; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Sparkes & Smith, 2014). It is important to discuss one’s paradigm because it informs and shapes the research questions asked and how one goes about answering them – research is influenced by our way of seeing and understanding the world (Sparkes & Smith, 2014).

In focusing acutely on issues of power, reproduction, inequity, and culture in coaching, I adopt a social constructionist perspective attuned to the issues of power, inequity, and culture. The constructionist views all knowledge (and meaning) as constructed through the interaction of humans and the objects in their world (Crotty, 2014). In other words, an object might have potential meaning, but actual meaning only emerges when consciousness engages with it (Crotty, 2014). Here, meaning, or reality, is multiple. This reflects a relativist ontology that assumes reality as we know it is socially, experientially,

locally, specifically and actively constructed and thus, multiple realities exist (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Epistemologically, constructionism is typically talked about as subjectivist (e.g. Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Sparkes & Smith, 2014). However, Crotty states, "objectivity and subjectivity need to be brought together and held together indissolubly. Constructionism does precisely that" (2014, p. 44). Crotty goes on to state that constructionism mirrors the concept of intentionality in that no object can be described in isolation from the conscious experience of it, and no experience can be described in isolation from the object. Intentionality highlights the interaction between subject and object, and the "image evoked is that of humans engaging in their human world. It is in and out of this interplay that meaning is born." (Crotty, 2014, p. 45).

Social constructionism maintains that knowledge is inseparable from human action and is historical, cultural and social (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). It highlights the influence of culture on how we see things in the world and make meaning (Crotty, 2014). This is pertinent to the current study as I investigate the reproduction of ableist practice in coaching, but it is also valuable for understanding that the findings from this research are bound by the interactions between myself and the participants:

> "This means our lived experiences shape us, and these will always come out in the knowledge we generate as researchers and in the data generated by our subjects" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018, p. 116).

This reinforces that the 'findings' of this study are not discovered in the transcripts but are constructed through an iterative process that oscillates between theory and data.

Further, epistemology influences theory selection, and thus, the theories drawn on must reflect and cohere with the paradigm in which this research was conducted (Collins & Stockton, 2018). Bourdieu aligns with constructionism, as discussed in the previous chapter, and Bourdieu's own philosophical paradigm of the structuralist constructionist also rejects the objective/subjective dualism and, thus, aligns with this research project's paradigmatic position (Bourdieu, 1989; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Indeed, as Bourdieu suggested:

> "Knowledge of the social world has to take into account a practical knowledge of this world which pre-exists it...those who suppose they are producing a materialist theory of knowledge when they make knowledge a passive recording and abandon

> the 'active aspect' of knowledge...forget that all knowledge, and in particular knowledge of the social world, is an act of construction implementing schemes of thought and expression" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 469).

5.2.1 Researcher positionality

For Bourdieu, reflexivity is a key component of his sociology and is distinct from the larger field of literature on the topic (Deer, 2014b). Reflexivity for Bourdieu entails "the systematic exploration of the 'unthought categories of thought which delimit the thinkable and predetermined the thought'" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 40). It was Bourdieu's view that this reflexive approach would help prevent the common failure among researchers to recognise, let alone control, the effects and influence of their own relation (as in internalised doxa, habitus, social position) to the object of research (Deer, 2014b). Bourdieu demands researchers 'turn the tools oneself' to control better the distortions introduced in the construction of the research object (Wacquant, 2008). Thus, in exploring this topic, I must apply the same scrutiny to myself. This is not to overstate my importance in the research. It is, however, an attempt to provide an insight into the habitus and doxa I bring to this research.

I am a Pakeha (white), cis-gender, young, non-disabled woman, and I am acutely aware that I am afforded an inherent privilege simply for existing as such. Further, my position in the field, coupled with my identity, influences this research project. I began this research while employed by Sport New Zealand Ihi Aotearoa, the Crown Entity (central government agency) that is a 'kaitiaki' (Māori for guardian) of play, active recreation and sport in New Zealand. My motivation in applying for this role was that I believed, as a recent graduate with a Bachelor's Degree in Health, Sport, & Human Performance and research experience in elite disability sport, that I could contribute to positive change in the provision of sport for disabled people. Eighteen months into the role, I had not witnessed change and had, in fact, contributed - what I felt was - very little to the agenda for change. I was critical of decisions made by the organisation, but they were explained away as I became attuned to the logic and doxa of the field. Frustrated at why things continued as they always had, I began to question how and why nothing had changed despite enlightened conversations with colleagues. This experience, coupled with an opportunistic partnership between Sport NZ and the University of Waikato

related to disability sport coaching research and a brief understanding of the ableism disabled athletes and disabled young people experienced, led to the development of this project.

While the Sport NZ role provided access to connections for recruitment, it also created a power dynamic above and beyond that which usually exists between researcher and participant. I knew all but two coaches before engaging in conversations about participating through my role. To mitigate this, it was made clear that they were not obligated to volunteer to participate, and their decision had no impact on their standing with me or the organisation I worked for. Additionally, it was made clear that Sport NZ would not know they were asked to or did participate, nor would the organisation they worked for. However, the existence of this power dynamic was not forgone by these reassurances, and it is likely to have affected the data. This effect could mean participants were more honest and open with me because of our prior familiarity. Alternatively, they may have been more reserved and thoughtful in their answers.

Further, my view of the sport system as ‘broken’ contributes to my desire to provide solutions through methodologically rigorous empirical research. It is my view that for too long, the sport field has relied on taken-for-granted, accepted ways of doing things and as such, sociological investigation into its reproduction of the marginalisation of groups, especially disabled people, is necessary and overdue.

5.3 Method

The University of Waikato Human Research Ethics Committee provided ethical approval to conduct semi-structured interviews with community sport coaches who coach disabled children and young people. As will be discussed in further detail below (section 5.3.3.1), disabled young people were included in the original design of this study. However, issues in their recruitment emerged, and thus, the research pivoted. This was informed by a view of not interrogating disabled people’s experiences but interrogating the reproduction of able-bodied privilege as it manifests in coaching and its institutions and practice. As Inckle states: "It is not the Other (raced, disabled, gendered) who should be explored, explained and interrogated, and this is precisely how oppression is

operationalised. It is rather positions of privilege that need to become self-conscious and the subject of critical investigation" (Inckle, 2015, p. 43). Given that this research is focused on the coaching system and its culture, it is, therefore, necessarily 'arms-length' from disabled young people. However, Charlie's story was at the forefront of my mind throughout this research.

5.3.1 Research design

The focus of the research is informed by a conversation with Charlie (a young person with physical impairment), whom I spoke with to understand if coaching and coach education were indeed impacting young disabled people's access to and experience in sport. This conversation is presented in Chapter One of this thesis as Charlie's Story. Through this conversation, the inherent ableism of sport and coaching practice became alarmingly clear. Following this, I decided that interviews with coaches of disabled children and young people in community sport should be conducted. These interviews aimed to understand coaches' learning and development related to disability sport coaching. The coaching data was analysed abductively by drawing on both Bourdieu's theory of practice and ableism.

5.3.2 Semi-structured interviews

Interviews were deemed the best data collection method as they allow an in-depth and detailed exploration of a person's opinions, feelings, and experiences (Denscombe, 2010; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Interviews can be viewed as a process of knowledge co-construction between the interviewer and interviewee that is situational, contextual and dialogically produced (Gubrium et al., 2012; Sparkes & Smith, 2014). The researcher is not a passive recipient of information from the interviewee but an active influence (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Thus, the researcher-participant interaction during interviews is complex as each brings biases, predispositions, attitudes, and physical characteristics that influence the data elicited. Additionally, "the interviewing relationship is fraught with issues of power - who controls the direction of the interview, who controls the results, who benefits" (Seidman, 2013, as cited in Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 130). As mentioned previously, the meaning given to the data from the interviews is interpreted through our ontological and epistemological perspective - that is, "the 'big

interpreter'" (researcher) holds the exclusive power of analysing and reporting "what the interviewee really meant" (Brinkmann, 2018, p. 589). Thus, the interviewer must be aware of and account for these factors in the interview process and data reporting; there is an ethical and moral obligation to represent the data 'correctly'. As I do not experience disablement, this obligation is even more acute.

Structured interviews would not allow the flexibility to explore coaches' opinions, practices and experiences. Thus, semi-structured interviews were utilised (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Questions were developed from a thorough reading of the literature in disability sport coaching, ableism and Bourdieu and related to coaching career progression, coaches' learning and education related to coaching and disability, their coaching practice and their coaching beliefs, perceptions and assumptions about disability coaching. I used probing questions (detail-oriented, elaboration and clarification probes) throughout the semi-structured interviews to elicit deeper explanations and richer data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Sparkes & Smith, 2014). The probing questions were to understand the coach's learning journey and how they may have come to know the 'rules of the game' of disability sport coaching (Bourdieu, 1990, discussed in Chapter 3). Further, the questions were oriented towards understanding coaches' knowledge about disability, namely, how they understood, defined and described 'disability'.

5.3.3 Participant recruitment and sampling

In qualitative research, sampling is purposeful because the participants need to have some level of knowledge or experience with the phenomenon being studied (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Purposive sampling ensures that participants can provide rich information, and thus, participants are selected based on specific characteristics. In this research, I drew on my network built through my role at Sport NZ to recruit both participant groups.

5.3.3.1 Young Disabled People

I attempted to recruit young disabled people through criterion-based sampling and reliance on purposeful network sampling. The criteria of this cohort were young people aged 14-18 who experience disability and had recently been or are currently being

coached in a sport. Flyers and information sheets were distributed on my behalf by national and regional disability sport organisations to their members. It proved difficult to recruit young disabled people who fit these criteria, and only four potential participants engaged with me. Two participants did not respond after my reply with further information; one was not suited to the research (as discussed shortly), and one young person who was somewhat familiar with me agreed to an interview but had to cancel due to other commitments (overseas) and was unable to reschedule within the time constraints of this project.

In the early stages of recruitment, I met informally with one young person and their mother to understand better if they fit the research criteria and for the young person to become familiar with me before deciding if they wanted to participate. In this meeting, their mother disclosed that they have never encouraged their child to participate in sport as they believe that coaches "will not know how to deal with her" and will not be able to provide a positive sports experience. This young person only engages in personal training sessions with a trusted trainer at a private gym. While it is beyond this project's scope to discuss this as a finding, it was an encounter that 'slapped' me in the face. There is an entire group of young people missing out on sport because of the perception and understanding of parents that coaches are ill-prepared to coach young people with intellectual impairments.

It was not an easy decision to not have young disabled people involved in this research further than Charlie's story. However, this recruitment process and the challenges are somewhat evident of the lack of young people engaging in sport with coaches. After debating the implications of not having a variety of disabled young people's experiences represented in the research - and processing what I felt was both a moral and ethical dilemma - I decided to foreground Charlie's story. Additionally, the focus of the study turned to scrutinising the system of privilege in sport rather than disability (Inckle, 2015).

5.3.3.2 Coaches

Ten community coaches were recruited via snowball sampling. Coaches were selected based on being community-level coaches working with disabled athletes aged 8-18 in either a mainstream, disability or Para sport. Community-level coaching here means all sport lower than a regional representative level, and coaches' role at this level is focused

on achieving a broad range of social outcomes in addition to performance (Cronin & Armour, 2015). Participants were provided with an information sheet and, after indicating their interest in participating, were provided with the consent form. The information sheet and consent form were discussed at the beginning of their interview. Coach's profiles are present in Table 1. I have chosen not to report the sport each participant is a coach within to ensure their confidentiality and anonymity. New Zealand's community is intimate, and the disability community is very small – some may describe it as a community in which 'everyone knows everyone'. Therefore, it was imperative to protect the participants' anonymity and confidentiality beyond the mere use of pseudonyms (Sparkes & Smith, 2014).

Table 1. Coach participant information

Pseudonym	Coaching details	Coach education details
Adam	7 years coaching in an integrated programme (disabled and non-disabled athletes together).	Undergraduate degree in Sport Coaching. Additional disability module of NSO coach education.
Anna	25 years mainstream, first disabled athlete about 5 years ago.	Governing Body's Level 1 Para course. Halberg Inclusion Training. PNZ LevelUp.
Ben	20 years at various levels, including the Olympic level. Community coaching of disabled athletes for 2 years.	Various mainstream coach education courses. Halberg Inclusion Training.
Hugo	30+ years mainstream, disabled athletes in the last 6-7 years.	No formal coaching qualifications.
Liam	8 years coaching across two mainstream sports.	Has completed the NSO requirements for coach education. Halberg Inclusion Training.
Luke	15 years coaching, the last 10 disabled athletes	All mainstream and adaptive coach education available through NSO.

Mabel	30+ years, always in disability	Physical Education Degree. All mainstream and adaptive coach education available through NSO.
Melissa	8 years mainstream, two seasons included a young person with an intellectual impairment.	Mainstream coach education, no disability specifics.
Ox	30+ years coaching mainstream, disabled athletes in the last 5 years.	No formal coaching qualifications. Halberg Inclusion Training.
Thomas	Special Olympics, 10 years.	No formal coaching qualifications.

5.3.4 Data Collection

All participants were given the autonomy to choose where the interview would occur. Most coaches decided to meet via Microsoft Teams or Zoom. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, online meetings have become much more common and a 'normal' part of working life for most people; thus, coaches were happy to use such technology. Interviews with coaches ranged from 44 minutes to 95 minutes (totalling 623 minutes).

Interviews were recorded via a method most suitable to the situation – the Otter.AI app, the built-in Microsoft Teams record system, or the Apple IOS Voice Memo app. All transcriptions were produced verbatim from the recordings using Otter.AI automatic transcription software. Transcriptions were edited for accuracy and then shared with the participants for any amendments – no participant requested amendments. It was reiterated to participants that no identifying data would be included in the report, including their mentions of other people or organisations, to uphold their anonymity and confidentiality.

5.3.5 Data Analysis

The approach to data analysis for this research is abductive thematic analysis, conducted largely as outlined by Thompson (2022). Abduction is an intermediate between deductive and inductive analysis that is more creative and certainly not linear (Blaikie, 2007; Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Its central aim is to uncover largely tacit, mutual

knowledge and symbolic meanings that inform (subconsciously) social action (Blaikie, 2007). This is achieved by investigating the knowledge people draw on in producing, reproducing, and interpreting the phenomenon under study (Blaikie, 2007). Given that a critical objective of this research relates to the reproduction of ableism in sport, abduction is a fitting data analysis method.

Through abduction, empirical data is understood in relation to pre-existing theory. However, this is not a restrictive process; rather, it is also a generative process. In this sense, theory and theories are sensitising concepts that inform research but do not determine the scope of the findings (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012). I approached the data with Bourdieu's theory of practice and ableism as sensitising concepts, and given that previous research has shown potential links between the two, this research explores how that link may be conceptualised (see Chapter 4). Below is an outline of the abduction process undertaken.

5.3.5.1 Transcription and Familiarisation

Like other thematic analysis approaches, abductive thematic analysis begins with a familiarisation period (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The process of editing the transcription for accuracy in Otter.AI line by line while listening to the recording acted as the first familiarisation step of data analysis. A further active re-read with the audio for editing purposes included note-taking and highlighting points of interest, key ideas, possible connections and questions along the way. The transcriptions were then uploaded to NVivo 14 for the formal coding process.

5.3.5.2 Coding

This process involved condensing the masses of qualitative data into codes based on related characteristics. The data was coded twice through – the first to turn raw data into codes and the second to ensure consistency of the codes used across the data set and to consolidate similar codes. The NVivo software helped with consistency in applying codes. During this second and third coding process, there was an opportunity to revisit and defamiliarise (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012). Revisiting allowed a revaluation and rethink of what might have at first been considered insignificant data by connecting the transcript data with field notes. Defamiliarisation was about ensuring I mulled over the taken-for-granted, which I may have glossed over initially.

I began coding rather informally, noting anything that came to mind. By the fifth transcript, I moved previous codes into sub-codes under parent codes as I started to see a pattern across the individual coaches' data. Some of these parent codes remained as themes later in the process. Upon completing the coding process, I had 54 codes – 38 parent codes and 16 child codes. These were exported to Microsoft Word to begin the theming process.

5.3.5.3 Themes

Codes were exported to Microsoft Word and sorted into themes. They were moved to MS Word to make it easier to move codes under broader headings as one would if they were printed. While codes are specific and concise, themes are complex and consolidate many codes to explain the data theoretically (Thompson, 2022). Rather than choosing themes based on the frequency of a code, themes were constructed with Bourdieu's theory as a framework. The overarching themes became Field, Habitus and Capital. Parent codes were moved under each of these headings and then further grouped within to produce the sub-themes. Ableism sat across all themes and subthemes and within specific examples within the coach's quoted data.

5.4 Conclusion

In summary, this chapter detailed the methodological process undertaken in this research. Situated within a social constructionist perspective, the research involved semi-structured interviews with community sport coaches who work with disabled children and young people. The data was approached through abductive analysis in which Bourdieu's sociological opus and ableism acted as sensitising concepts. Chapter Six presents the research findings through a combined results and discussion section.

Chapter 6 Results and Discussion

This research seeks to understand the ways in which ableism is reproduced through coaching and coach education. The connection between ableism and Bourdieu's Theory of Practice is explored to understand how the systems and structures of sport contribute to the reproduction of ableism in and through coaching. The chapter first focuses on the field of disability sport, coaches' entries into that field and its socialising conditions. I then locate the key social actors within the disability sport field to understand the influence on habitus and, thus, coaching practice. The education and learning of the coaches is explored to establish the mechanisms through which ableism may become embedded in coaching habitus. This exploration shows that the field produces and reproduces disability sport as an optional other through institutionalised ableism. The chapter concludes by demonstrating that ableism exists as doxa within the field, and as such, ableism is embedded in coaching habitus.

6.1 Field

As discussed in Chapter 4 (section 4.2.1), Bourdieu's notion of field relates to structured social spaces with their own rules, beliefs and ways of being that simultaneously exist as sites of struggle. Sport coaching has been defined as a field by some (e.g. Leeder & Cushion, 2020) and a practice within fields by others (Townsend & Cushion, 2022). In this research, coaching is understood as a practice that exists across the field of sport and sub-field of disability sport. I argue that disability sport is a sub-field of sport, kept at arm's length, existing relatively autonomously, with its own rules, logic, valued forms of capital and doxa. The analytical usefulness of field is in unpacking the set of logics that legitimate knowledge and practices within them (Hall et al., 2022). This section begins by developing an understanding of the field of power and its influence on the disability sport sub-field. I start with field because if "we want to know where a field has come from and where it is going and why", then it is necessary to identify the historical interactions and relationships with other important fields (Schirato & Roberts, 2019, p. 171). Bourdieu became increasingly concerned with the field of power because of its interventionist role and "ability to influence, inform, infect and on occasion determine the rules of the game operating between and within fields" (Schirato & Roberts, 2019, p. 170).

6.1.1 The Field of Power: Inherently Ableist

Bourdieu described the field of power as a universal field that overarches all fields and of which everyone is a part (Thomson, 2014). The field of power is the field from which all other fields stem; thus, the economic, education and political fields closely reflect the field of power. The similarities across fields are referred to as homologies. Homologies between the social actors who hold power within various fields can also be seen. The field of power shapes our understanding of the body and its value, which is then reflected in the value (capital) all other fields ascribe to different forms of embodiment (habitus) (Edwards & Imrie, 2003). Thus, the field of power is instrumental in defining what forms of embodiment are valued and in what contexts within fields.

In investigating the value inscribed in disabled bodies, Edwards and Imrie (2003) show that a) the rise of capitalism contributed to disabled people being perceived as unable to contribute to the labour market, b) the evolution of the built environment has never considered the requirements of bodies other than those that are ambulant, with two arms, two hands and two legs and c) that the medical field has heavily influenced the value attributed to disabled bodies. Therefore, fields such as sport circulate and maintain an implicit expectation of “compulsory able-bodiedness” (McRuer, 2013), which is generative of practices that coaches are attuned to. As coach Ben discussed, issues of inclusion of disabled young people relate to the foundations of sport:

> “There's a group that the world's designed in a way that doesn't really cater to their needs particularly well...Again, sport systems are designed in a way for an able world. There's the system that sits on top of it or under it [coaching] that stops people from coming in or hinders or is unhelpful for the coach [to be inclusive]. For example, officials officiating against rules that dictate a particular way that sport needs to be governed. The officials, while they might be compassionate and really wanting to meet the needs [disabled people], they have to stick within the rules or the confinements of how ever the sport has been designed. So, if you don't address those, no matter how much the coach wants to change things, it's not going to change anything.” (Ben, coach)

Ben’s point highlights that while coaching significantly influences inclusion, it is not the only factor to consider – sport itself has been designed based on an able-bodied ideal. Therefore, all rules and governance practices in sport are inherently ableist. Here, the

data illustrates how the social structure of sport is inherently ableist – that is, value (as capital) is placed on able body and mind, and that forms a framework for the socialisation of coaches that is tied to neoliberal-ableism (Goodley, 2014). Neoliberalism, bound by the logic of capitalism, results in individualism, where every person "strives to become more independent, self-sufficient and productive" (Goodley, 2014, p. 28). A neoliberal self is an able mind and body. Just as ableism favours normative ability - be that the "'species-typical body' (in science), the 'normative citizen' (in political theory), the 'reasonable man' (in law)" (Goodley, 2014, p. 22) - so too does neoliberalism. Thus, neoliberal-ableism recognises the intertwinement of the two, where neoliberalism provides "an ecosystem for the nourishment of ableism" in which the able-bodied, productive citizen is upheld as ideal (Goodley et al., 2014, p. 981). Neoliberal-ableism enforces compulsory able-bodiedness as individuals must find ways to emulate the desired abilities required by the field of power and the key fields that structure fields (economic, education, and political) to secure their place in the social world. It commands that disabled people internalise ableism and become 'able-disabled' citizens – that is, emulate an able body (Goodley et al., 2014).

Thus, neoliberal-ableism and compulsory able-bodiedness are reflected in the sport field's logic of practice. The logic of practice is a field's reason to be and is embedded within its culture. Sport exists to value a "normative neoliberal body politic (sculpted, healthy, fit, heteronormative, and sexual)" (Pullen et al., 2020, p. 720). While it is most often reflected in sports media via celebrating disabled athletes who most closely associate with an enhanced neoliberal body politic (Pullen et al., 2020), it is also evident in sports organisations' and practitioners' readiness and capacity to be inclusive. Under such conditions, configurations of disability as non-normative do not fit in a neoliberal sport sector that creates spaces only fit for normative citizens, leading to institutional and individual preferences for non-disabled participation. The logic of practice informs how coaches should coach, how coaches see and place value upon athletes, and the way in which practice within the field is structured.

6.1.1.1 Perceptions of Disability

While the disability sport sub-field's 'reason to be' is to provide sport for those bodies that are excluded from the mainstream sport field, it still exists to assess bodies and

place value against the same neoliberal body politic informing mainstream sport. This valuation is evident in how the coaches described their understanding of disability as a deviation from the ‘norm’ - the able-bodied ideal. Luke’s answer captures all the coach's description of disability:

> “I guess overall disability would be someone whose body or mind doesn't work the way of the perceived normal or the average population, would be, I guess my terminology there.” (Luke, coach)

The neoliberal-ableist field of power and its compulsory able-bodiedness acts as a set of socialising conditions and transmits certain orientations towards disability, bodies, and sport. The broader understanding in the field of power contributes to a binary conceptualisation of dis/ability in which disability was defined as “not being able to do something” (Adam, coach) in comparison to the (able) norm.

A further socialising condition of the field relates to the classification system in Para sport. Historically, classification only recognised physical impairments as what the International Paralympic Committee termed “eligible” (International Paralympic Committee, n.d.). More recently, some intellectual impairments have become eligible in the classification systems of some Para sports, such as swimming and athletics. Others continue to exclude intellectual impairment. The classification system acts as a socialising condition in that coaches discuss disability as having “grown” to a “wider spectrum” (Anna, coach), with more children and young people coming “out of the woodwork” (Hugo, coach). This discourse reflects these coaches’ understanding of disability as existing in relation to classifiable bodies and that sport is for those who are classifiable.

Classification as a socialising condition of the field is further evidenced by coaches who discussed not knowing much about certain impairment groups because their sport does not offer classifications for them. For example:

> “I don't have much experience around the hearing loss side of sport because generally, it's not a Para component.” (Luke, coach)

> "Before, I just wouldn't have thought that there were vision impairments or intellectual impairments to be honest…within our sport, the classifications are only for people with physical impairment" (Anna, coach)

This is evident of the exclusionary practice inherent in classification, as highlighted by Ox, who discussed the limitations classification places upon young people's opportunities to participate at the higher levels of sport:

> "Para sport is very descriptive in the way that you have to meet a classification. But if you're autistic, you don't meet a classification. But you're still disabled from doing a sport…Out of that [school] class there's probably 10 kids there today with impairments but there will be one, maybe two, that would be classifiable. But they all have conditions that inhibit their physical capability or their capability of being involved in sport." (Ox, coach)

Furthermore, coaches stated that physical impairments were "visual" and "straightforward". For example, Luke noted that based on my (OC) physical appearance, he would make a series of assumptions based on an able-bodied ideal that I appeared to fit:

> "So, like, if I met you and I was gonna take you out and coach you or something, I would make a lot of assumptions, right? I'd make an assumption that you can move your leg and turn your hips, you can rotate your shoulder and you'll have an average strength and all that kind of stuff." (Luke, coach)

Luke also preferred working with physical impairments because it was easier to troubleshoot technique-based coaching points,

> "Someone with a physical disability is like, I can see what's going on. I can see what's happening." (Luke, coach)

This 'easiness' view was shared among coaches,

> "Physical disability, it's the easy one to deal with." (Ox, coach)

> "So, there's the really straightforward things where people have got physical impairments, which means they're unable to do, well sometimes the really basic and fundamental movements they simply can't do or are challenged by." (Melissa, coach)

Thus, the discourse that physical impairments are straightforward is a doxic understanding within the field that coaches are socialised into. This is evidenced by Charlie's experience with a coach who thought she would be easy to work with. In returning to Charlie's story, the compulsory able-bodiedness of the field is evidenced in her exchange with her coach when he admits to assuming she would be "simple" to coach because she appears able-bodied,

> "My coach told me ... that I wasn't as 'simple' as he thought I was, ... like I look less disabled, and I don't look as complicated as most others. You know, I have heaps of friends that you can just see their disability straightaway... You see me, and you're sometimes like, 'What the hell's wrong with her?'" (Charlie, disabled young person)

The dominant discourse informs coaches' understanding of what disabled bodies look like and, in turn, informs how they engage in practice. Further, ableism and compulsory able-bodiedness structure coaches' understandings of what sport 'should' look like. Liam spoke about keeping his sport as close to traditional as possible,

> "We kind of tried to keep it as traditional as possible within need so that it was still identifiable as our sport. So based off of the programs that we offer to able-bodied in our traditional pathways, and then made slight modifications...So, if someone walks by, they can point out that these kids are playing cricket or playing rugby or playing football" (Liam, coach)

In attempting to ensure the sport 'looks' traditional, there is a risk that certain impairment types and 'severity' levels continue to be excluded and the ableist ideal is perpetuated. Inclusion will be placed back on an individual – that is, if a disabled person cannot make themselves fit the offering, they will be excluded. Thus, coaching practice reflects the field of power and its neoliberal-ableism. The data presented demonstrates coaches' understanding and assessments of disability and its uniqueness as difficult to place within mainstream sport, which gives rise to a disability sport sub-field. I turn now to understanding the disability sport sub-field structure, its key social actors and its relation to the field of power.

6.1.2 A Scattered System – the Sub-field of Disability Sport

In the last section, I argued that coaches' understandings and perceptions of disability are shaped by the compulsory able-bodiedness and neoliberal-ableism of the field of power and classification systems in Para sport. It is important to understand the sub-field of disability sport as it influences coaching practice through habitus and a determination of the value attributed to different capital. Furthermore, it is crucial to understand disability sport in relation to the mainstream sport field and field of power, as while disability sport is a relatively autonomous field, it will always be influenced by surrounding fields. As Schirato and Roberts (2019) state, "Every field, from its inception, is infected by other fields and their values, logics, imperatives, forms of capital, technologies, identities and discourses" (p. 170). Thus, coaches' orientations towards disability are shaped by the systems and principles they are exposed to within the field of sport. Disability sport is a complex term in that it captures a variety of activities, modes of delivery and contexts for coaches to negotiate. It is, therefore, necessary to understand the existing sport pathways and opportunities.

In New Zealand, the historical exclusion of disabled people from 'mainstream' sporting opportunities has resulted in a community-driven response in which sports provision for disabled people is provided by a range of specialist and non-specialist bodies "all competing for attention and funds" (Thomas and Guett, 2014, p. 390). While relatively immature, the disability sport sub-field comprises a range of actors, each with differing levels of influence and focus. Paralympics New Zealand (PNZ), Special Olympics New Zealand (SONZ) and the Halberg Foundation are regarded as the three leading organisations for disability sport and inclusion in New Zealand. This is reflected in their receiving the highest levels of Sport NZ investment for disability outcomes. However, there are 13 regional organisations (dubbed 'Parafeds', *inter alia*), and various other national impairment-specific organisations (e.g. Blind Sport New Zealand and Deaf Sports New Zealand), who also deliver sport and support other organisations to be inclusive. More recently (some) mainstream National Sports Organisations (NSOs), Regional Sports Organisations (RSOs) and even local sports clubs have started to offer disability sport opportunities too. Despite the numerous organisations that provide sport for disabled people, competition for resources and recognition (capital) results in a

scattered system that athletes, parents and coaches must try to navigate – thus, questions about 'what' is on offer and 'for whom' arise (Townsend & Peacham, 2021). As one coach discussed, the numerous organisations available create confusion for young disabled people and their parents:

> "These organisations, they don't talk to each other. Not everybody knows how to approach them. So, people are just in the dark. Like, where do we go? Where? Where is there a pathway? Where is the club, my son, my daughter can train?" (Hugo, coach)

The confusion is not only experienced by participants and their whānau (family) – other coaches discussed not knowing where or who to go to and what support they could get to enhance their coaching practice:

> "But I wasn't aware of what different organisations did, to know what support around that athlete other than Paralympics" (Ben, coach)

> "It was quite hard I found to actually to try find PD opportunities that were like targeted at the disability sector, aside from Halberg's inclusion training" (Liam, coach)

Thus, coaches operate within a scattered field demarcated by competition between disability sport organisations vying for recognition and resources. In applying a Bourdieusian framework, the competition between organisations is for economic capital as well as cultural capital (being recognised as the 'top' disability sport organisation). The competition results in a political economy of disability (cf. Thomas, 2004a) in which each of the 'big 3' organisations (PNZ, Halberg and SONZ) seek to maintain or gain more capital and solidify their position within the field. As outlined in Chapter 4, capital relates to the resources that can be effectively used within the field, and one's volume and type of capital determines one's position within the field. Sport NZ's investment (economic capital) is misrecognised in the broader sport field, and organisations receiving their funding are attributed symbolic capital. That is, the 'big 3' have been bestowed prestige and authority within the disability sport sub-field. As discussed in depth later in this chapter, coaches engage with these organisations to increase their cultural capital. This stems from the idea that to coach disability, you must complete a separate education

process to gain a specialist skillset (Bush & Silk, 2012; Wareham et al., 2017). The 'big 3' feeds this narrative by continuing to produce separate coaching resources such as Halberg's CoachMate content, PNZ's LevelUp online modules and SONZ's recent move into coach development.

> "Actually, this morning I was doing the Level Up ACC one...its quite low level, which I think will be great for an intro into sport. But nah, I'm unaware of any other para specific qualifications that even exist out there." (Ben, coach)

> "Halberg is the main obviously, provider of those courses, but there's not much that I could find outside of that." (Liam, coach)

NSOs, RSOs, clubs and coaches look to the 'big 3' for guidance on disability inclusion. However, because these organisations represent disability, their ability to climb the hierarchy in the mainstream sports field is limited by the negative symbolic capital attributed to disability. Negative symbolic capital arises from the value placed on an able body. Thus, when disability is present, the social agent is devalued. Therefore, the 'big 3' are offered a limited position – they can advise coaches on disability inclusion and are upheld as experts in disability sport contexts. Still, they will always be kept at arm's length from mainstream ('real') sport. Therefore, disability sport exists as a separate world – a world that coaches come across serendipitously or avoid entirely.

6.1.3 Serendipitous Entries

As a result of a scattered and complex system consumed by competition and struggle for recognition within both the sub-field of disability sport and field of sport, coaches' entry into disability sport is serendipitous, with all coaches in this study having begun their coaching 'careers' in mainstream sport first. Mirroring the literature on disability coach education (e.g. MacDonald et al., 2016), most of the coaches found themselves 'doing' disability sport coaching without any prior training or education (Townsend et al., 2021) and were 'dropped in at the deep end' (Townsend et al., 2017) with little support. For example, Melissa volunteered to coach her young daughter's team, and a disabled child happened to have joined that team. Similarly, Hugo knew the head coach of a para programme, but he never coached para until a disabled young person arrived at his training wanting to join the club,

> “So [my friend] was a para coach as well and continued having camps here and I tagged along and I spent quite a bit of time with him and all these para athletes as well. But it wasn’t till about, six years ago, seven years ago, a girl here came to me says ‘Hey, this is me. I have a disability. I really would like to join your club.’ So, that was my first personal athlete I worked with.” (Hugo, coach)

Thomas talked about wanting to impress a girl (now his wife) whose brother’s team needed a coach. Liam got involved through the Halberg Games, and Ben got a new job at an NSO that saw him responsible for disability inclusion,

> “And in my role, now, there wasn't anything other than informal development opportunities. And then since then, we've obviously made coach development, but Halberg was my first exposure to anything around supporting disabled participants, and that was last year.” (Ben, coach)

Adam summed his journey up by stating,

> “I've just been dragged into a lot of para-focused activities” (Adam, coach)

Each coach's individual trajectory reflects a serendipitous entry and ad hoc support to perform in the sub-field of disability sport. All coaches ‘happened’ to become involved in coaching disabled young people rather than seeking it out or it being the norm to do so. This is indicative of the difficulty moving seamlessly between the two fields. Some sports in NZ, such as Athletics and Swimming, have direct ‘touch points’ with disability because they are integrated sports – that is, Para athletes are integrated into the mainstream system, training and competing in the same squads and competitions as non-disabled athletes. However, for the majority of sports in NZ, disability provision happens outside of their system or within dedicated programmes, isolated from the mainstream. For example,

> “So we started doing our own disability sessions every now and then where we could with schools. And then tried to partner up with [the local Regional Sports Trust] and deliver at their disability days” (Liam, coach)

Thus, coaches within these mainstream sport systems may never ‘come across’ disability in their entire coaching career. The complex and scattered system results in serendipitous entries to disability sport coaching, with coaches left under-prepared and dropped into the deep end (Townsend & Peacham, 2021).

Further, the scattered system results in a lack of variety of sports available to disabled young people, with one coach stating that some sports or events within sports are simply "not suitable or adaptable" (Ox) for certain impairments. As mentioned, Anna added that their sport only allows people with physical impairments because of the sports classification system. These views signify the inherent ableism of the sport field and the sub-field of disability sport, too. Hugo mentions that it is "cool" as a coach that kids he works with never skip their training,

> "They don't go like 'I'm gonna miss this training cause I have soccer practise or I have tennis lessons' cause they don't [laughs]" (Hugo, coach)

While Hugo may see this as positive, it speaks to a broader issue in the field - the lack of opportunities and choice of sports available for young disabled people. In Chapter 5, I reflected on a conversation I had with a potential participant's mother. Her daughter does not engage in sports because the parents do not trust that coaches have the skills to coach their daughter and provide a great experience (see 5.3.3.1). This is evident of a sporting field that, by its very existence, excludes and marginalises an entire group of people because they do not see themselves fitting within that particular field. This places coaches as powerful actors within the field to the point where coaches' practice and dispositions (habitus) structure other's perceptions (habitus). So, while Hugo is glad to have his athletes never miss training for other sports, it is, in fact, a rather sobering thought that an entire generation is alienated from certain sports (or all sports), and it is legitimised or misrecognised.

6.1.4 Discussion

So far, I have outlined the separation and delineation between what is considered 'mainstream sport' and the sub-field of disability sport. This is evident in the structure and function of the respective fields, their inherent forms of capital, and how these shape and structure individual dispositions towards disability. Furthermore, the clear separation of the two fields has implications for coaches' mobility within and between the two and coaches' motivation to work in disability.

It might be reasonably argued that the disability sport sub-field is heavily influenced by the field of power, which defines what forms of embodiment are valued and in what

contexts. This section has shown that coaches understand disability as deviant – that is, a deviation from the able-bodied 'norm'. The neoliberal-ableist field of power places value on an able body (and mind), and in turn, the field of sports places negative symbolic capital on disabled bodies. Thus, the sub-field of disability sports emerged as somewhere for these devalued bodies to go. However, valuing an able body has seeped into disability sport through its emergence from, and long history of, rehabilitation practice – a practice that seeks to return a body to the abled norm (Peers et al., 2022).

This section has highlighted the subtle ableist structuring of coaching discourse and practice. The (ableist) field of power structures the dominant discourse within the disability sport sub-field and simultaneously structures the organisation and genesis of the disability sport sub-field. Disability sport is an effect of ableism, and this simultaneously limits and shapes coaches' mobility, ambition, motivation and understanding of coaching in this context. As an organising principle of disability sport, ableism is reinforced through various mechanisms, one of which is coach education. Education, or in the case of disability, the lack of education, produces certain understandings of disability, which becomes embedded in a coach's habitus through practice.

6.2 Habitus

Habitus relates to the dispositions through which one perceives, judges and acts and allows one's decisions and actions to become almost second nature (Bourdieu, 1990b). An individual is socialised into a field's rules, structures and dominant understanding. Thus, habitus can be shared by people subjected to similar experiences – class habitus. That is, habitus is simultaneously individual and collective, as Wacquant explained; one's habitus is the "unique individual variant of the common matrix" (Wacquant, 2008, p. 267). Habitus is also influenced by pedagogic action (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). As discussed in Chapter 4 (see section 4.2.4), pedagogic action is the "imposition of a cultural arbitrary by an arbitrary power" (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, p. 18). Coach education, development, and training are all forms of pedagogic action; the goal is to impose a certain coaching practice. For pedagogic action to succeed, pedagogic authority must exist – an arbitrary power to act, misrecognised as legitimate that is

bestowed, not earned (Jenkins, 2002). Pedagogic action is achieved through pedagogic work, of which practices in coach education are a part.

This section explores how ableism is incorporated into the fabric of coaching – its structure and culture – through habitus. I argue that the coach education practices (pedagogic action) within the field of sport and sub-field of disability sport work to position disability sport coaching as an 'optional other' and socialise coaches through continued socialisation into institutionalised forms of ableism. This section aims to show that ableism is inculcated within and through the collective coaching habitus. Thus, no matter the individual habitus, ableism is legitimised in disability sport.

6.2.1 The Optional Other: Coach Education Structures

So far, I have argued that exposure to the field of disability sports for the participants was largely inconsistent and fragmented due to the separation of the disability sport field from mainstream sport. A second function of immersion in the disability sport field is that it forms a primary habitus or set of dispositions towards disability, incorporating dominant understandings of disability into everyday practice – or class habitus (Bourdieu, 1984). These collective dispositions towards disability reflect an ableist disposition in which disabled people are deviant, different, and other, as evidenced above. Importantly, coach education has been positioned in the broader coaching literature as a means of challenging and shaping coaches' habitus (Cushion et al., 2003). In disability coaching, however, the extent to which disability-specific coach education challenges and shapes dispositions towards disability and inclusion is not well understood.

The field of sport and disability sport in Aotearoa, New Zealand, is ripe with discourses related to the education of coaches (Townsend & Peacham, 2021). As discussed earlier, the Sport NZ Disability Plan discusses developing a skilled and confident workforce as necessary to achieve the inclusion of disabled people in sport (Sport New Zealand Ihi Aotearoa, 2019). However, Sport NZ's diffusion of responsibility approach positions NSOs as responsible for disability coach education despite being ill-equipped to do so (Owen, 2022). Therefore, there is a general lack of infusion of disability

content within mainstream coach education (Townsend et al., 2022). Coaches are left to 'self-source' effective disability sport practice (Owen, 2022).

In Chapter 3, the different types of disability coach education (categorical, inclusion, infusion) were discussed. A categorical, non-formal learning approach is the most common way to educate coaches in disability sport in NZ. It is common to see more non-formal learning opportunities arise as new 'trends' within coach education. For example, in NZ, with the rise in awareness of the inequity faced by women and girls in sport, many more workshops, conferences, and webinars related to coaching women and girls have surfaced. Further, many have become embedded in sports organisations' standard formal offerings. Similarly, due to increased investment from Sport NZ via the Disability Inclusion Fund (Sport New Zealand Ihi Aotearoa, 2022), many more National Sports Organisations (NSOs) have developed non-formal coach education resources. However, these disability offerings continue to sit outside of and in addition to their standard coach education.

In NZ, Halberg's Inclusion Training is the most common form of 'coach education' specific to disability. It consists of a one-and-a-half-hour session with one of the organisation's Advisers that can be "tailored to your needs" (The Halberg Foundation, 2023). The focus is on adaptability and introducing coaches to the STEP framework; for example,

> OC: "With the Halberg inclusion training that you did, what did you learn, or what do you remember from it?"
>
> "Probably, the biggest one I took away was probably just designing games and what considerations to go through to adapt them" (Liam, coach)

Furthermore, Special Olympics NZ offers three online learning modules, including a foundation course, a development course and a 'coaching athletes with autism' course. Their website states that their primary focus is on the athletes they serve, and therefore, SONZ "partners with sports organisations to provide the highest and most up-to-date level of coaching knowledge", furthering the diffusion of responsibility (Special Olympics New Zealand, 2020). In continuing the theme of separation, Paralympics New Zealand developed and released LevelUp - 9 online modules – broken down by (eligible)

impairment type. These modules were funded through Sport NZ investment via the Strengthen and Adapt fund. Here, it is evident that the disability sport field continues to reproduce disability knowledge as separate and 'othered' from mainstream sport.

It could be reasonably argued that these 'big 3' organisations have responded to a perceived need in coach education because of the lack of disability knowledge available and infused within mainstream sport. However, they have done so in a way that reifies difference as they continue to perpetuate the optional other by not advocating for and ensuring the infusion of disability within NSOs coach education systems. Further, the lack of infusion and the reliance on separate online modules and training indicate the separation of the fields of sport and disability sport and the knowledge systems that circulate. One of the pedagogic effects of ableism is the particular system of coach education described above - one that places disability sport and coaching as an optional other. Thus, it is typically only engaged with when required, such as by an inclusion policy or because a disabled athlete has shown up (Townsend et al., 2022).

By positioning disability coaching knowledge as the optional other, the coach education system reinforces that disability sport coaching operates in a separate and distinct space from all other sport coaching (Bush & Silk, 2012). In doing so, disability knowledge is isolated and marginalised (Townsend et al., 2022). This relates to the earlier point of coach education as a political act and an influencer in what is determined to be legitimate knowledge. Lemyre et al. (2007) discuss the need to critically reflect on how coach education is structured as it contributes to coaches' understanding of what is important and what is not. When coach education systems continue to position disability knowledge as the 'optional other', coaches continue to understand that coaching disabled people is an 'optional other'. The primary beneficiaries of the optional other positioning are organisations that have been able to fill the market gap (Townsend et al., 2017). Disability sport coaching knowledge becomes part of the disability 'industrial complex' where it is in the best interest of these organisations to reproduce 'othering'. This is evident in the institutionalised ableism within the disability sports field in that the key social actors (e.g. Sport NZ, Halberg, PNZ) reinforce the marginalisation of disability knowledge by perpetuating the optional other approach.

6.2.2 Structuring Habitus: How Coaches Learn

Bourdieu (2000) suggested that education is an attempt to present a set of dispositions to produce "transcendental" (p. 285) cognitive structures that are common to all members of a discipline – in the current context, coaches. The success of this production is dependent on accounting for the "distance between the habitus it aims to inculcate and the habitus produced by previous pedagogic work" (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, p. 45). Thus, coach education must expose the social conditions of its history if it is to have any impact on changing coaches' practice (through habitus). However, as will become evident, the practices within the current system of coach education do little to challenge the ableist habitus of coaching and thus actually serve to reproduce ableist practice.

Only four of the ten coaches began coaching disability sport after engaging in coach education – the others found themselves coaching disabled young people first or never engaged in disability coach education. Only two coaches, Mabel and Luke (of the same sport), completed disability-specific education as part of their sport's coach education structure. Mabel described how, in the past, disability training was separate and delivered by a charity organisation, but it became "embedded alongside the able-body qualifications" over 30 years ago. Describing it further, Mabel discusses that coaches complete their Level One (able-bodied) course first,

> "They have to have an able-bodied qualification before [the disability module]. So, they know how to teach, they know how to structure sessions and, what the premise of what we do [in the disability module] is, to say, well, you know how to teach someone, we just need to adapt it to that individual." (Mabel, coach)

And Luke, from the same sport, also described it this way,

> "I got my [able-bodied] qualification in 2008...I would have done [the disability module] in 2012 and I learned how to adapt the way that I currently teach and work with different athletes." (Luke, coach)

So, while this module is integrated within the broader coach education framework, it continues to position disability coaching knowledge as an optional other. Importantly, Mabel describes it as embedded, which shows a level of enlightened and institutional ableism in which the sport is believed to be doing the best to support disability inclusion;

however, by design of the system, disability is positioned as optional and other. Similarly, Adam's sport had a separate disability module coaches could choose to engage in,

> "They offered a normal teaching course and attached to it, you could do a para or disabled [athletes] education or something like that, so I did that" (Adam, coach)

Anna, Ben, Liam, and Ox also completed separated disability coach education, and they each completed the Halberg Inclusion Training. Their sports did not offer disability education within their coach frameworks, so these coaches had to step outside that framework and initiate this engagement themselves. Most surprising was that Ox mentioned there were no disability-specific modules or similar offered through his sports coach education programme when he started, despite it being an integrated[12] sport for several years. In the absence of anything formal, Ox learnt while doing, observing, and talking with another coach who has been doing it longer, and then he engaged in Halberg Inclusion Training. Ox also suggested a good strategy was asking disabled people about how to include them,

> "You know, ask them, how can you how do you think you could adapt this?" (Ox, coach)

This is problematic because the responsibility for inclusion is placed on the disabled person. As Charlie discussed, always upskilling her coaches about Para sport and her disability takes a toll and "getting all those messages across…is very complicated and very hard" (Charlie, athlete). This was a common occurrence for Charlie because "well, most of them had never coached a para before", which meant Charlie experienced a form of cultural taxation[13] in which they had to educate new coaches in order to participate in sport. Ox's view of simply asking disabled people how to include them is bound in enlightened ableism where, by seemingly placing disabled people's needs first, one is empowering them. However, this contributes to their marginalisation as coaches

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[12] An integrated sport in New Zealand is a sport in which the disability and non-disabled programmes are run together - squads are made up of non-disabled and disabled athletes.

[13] "forms of emotional, intellectual, and economic labor disproportionately paid by disabled people on a daily basis" (Olsen et al., 2022, p. 59)

can remain unknowledgeable, with responsibility for knowing placed upon disabled young people.

For Anna and Ben, their disability sport coach education opportunities only became available once the sport was included in the Paralympics.

> “We didn’t have any…A couple of years ago, when Paralympics, we had a couple of athletes in that sort of space and one [athlete] that just randomly came in, that started this [coach education] project off.” (Ben, coach)

> “At the time [the sport] had been announced to be in at the Paralympic Games…Umm, but it was like we're looking to educate coaches all around the world. So I was basically part of that group as a group of Guinea pigs [designing the training].” (Anna, coach)

The data from Ben and Anna speak to the differential value placed on Paralympic sport over disability sport – that is, these organisations did not educate coaches about disability until a Paralympic pathway existed. Before, disabled people’s participation in the sport was not seen as valuable. Now that an elite pathway that comes with increased funding existed, they were welcome.

In returning to the coaches’ experience of Halberg Inclusion training, Liam spoke of the “confidence” he gained by doing it,

> “Just the confidence you gain from a course like that and actually just knowing that you've gone through the right steps before you coach a session and actually know that you're on the right track.” (Liam, coach)

Similarly, Ben said,

> “Having someone [from Halberg] there supporting gave us a lot more confidence. That was something we reflected on the other day, was just having someone there that can bail you out when you think you're going to do something wrong. Or you're not sure what to say or do someone to support you.” (Ben, coach)

The confidence these coaches felt they gained can be linked to the capital Halberg holds within the disability sport field, as discussed earlier in this chapter. As one of the only disability sport organisations to deliver in-person training, they are highly regarded in the field and are (mis)recognised as *the* pedagogic authority. Pedagogic authority is

bestowed upon an organisation by misrecognizing the arbitrary power they hold as legitimate (Jenkins, 2002). Here, coaches misrecognise Halberg's position in the field as being a bearer of expert knowledge. However, it was established that Halberg's inclusion training is not based on up-to-date disability coaching research and literature but rather the 'expertise' and 'experience' of its Advisers, who design their own sessions within loose parameters. This means there is a regional difference in the knowledge disseminated based on who the Adviser is and their background. When asked about where Halberg sources the knowledge that informs the inclusion training, one adviser said,

> OC: "In terms of the development for that inclusion training piece, where is Halberg going to get that knowledge and that upskill?"
>
> "It's a good question, and I cannot answer that question for you, sorry, ah, straight up. Yeah. It's umm, each of us Advisors comes with our own backgrounds and our own strengths, and so each region is even different." (Halberg Adviser)

Halberg's cultural capital (perceived legitimate knowledge) is misrecognised as symbolic, attributing them more power within the field – the power to (almost) exclusively fill the market gap for inclusion training in NZ. Coaches and NSOs (mis)recognise the pedagogic authority of Halberg and its Advisors and simply accept that they are the experts and knowledge holders (Townsend, 2018).

Further, when Ben became responsible for leading an NSO's disability inclusion work programme, he turned to Halberg to discuss coach education. What emerged was a separate 'inclusive' sport programme complete with coach education separated from the mainstream system and delivered by Halberg. Again, disability coaching is positioned as an optional 'other' that coaches can engage with if they want to or is there for when an athlete suddenly 'turns up'. Here, optional othering is embedded in the logic of the field through institutionalised ableism and becomes doxic practice through pedagogic work. Pedagogic work results in the maintenance of the 'order of things', and the internalisation of the cultural arbitrary in one's habitus is obscured – the 'legitimate' culture becomes accepted without question (Jenkins, 2002). As shown, there are distinct boundaries between mainstream sport and disability sport. While disability sport organisations such as Halberg outwardly use discourse that they are actively working

towards dismantling those boundaries, it is in their interest to keep them firmly demarcated - optional othering is one such strategy to maintain them. Thus, NSOs do not infuse disability within their own systems and are complicit in perpetuating institutionalised ableism and the reproduction of disability sport as an optional other. Therefore, Halberg continues to hold the power to determine what disability knowledge is valuable or necessary for coaching in NZ.

Institutional ableism was also evident in Anna's experience and involved the international body, not just NZ. Anna was only offered disability coach education once the sport was included in the Paralympic games. After its announced inclusion, the international body then developed a coach education opportunity to be disseminated down to the national level. The disability module is part of the Level One course, which is typically six days long; however, sometimes it is only four days,

> "Some national federations have the opportunity to shorten the course and if they shorten it, that means they're actually removing the disability module. So that's why it's not a like a compulsory module." (Anna, coach)

Fields determine what is necessary and valued to be a competent actor within it. The removal of disability knowledge from the coach education course speaks to the devaluing of disability and an arbitrary decision by the governing body that, pragmatically, coaches do not need that knowledge. The decision reflects institutional ableism. The positioning of disability sport coaching knowledge as optional and other reinforces that disability sport is not valued and is non-essential.

Hugo, Melissa and Thomas had no disability-specific coach education at all:

> OC: "I'm keen to hear about if you've done any of that formal coach education during your time as a coach?"
>
> "No, it was because there was nothing - was or is nothing available like that." (Hugo, coach)

***

> OC: "In the coach education you have done, has any of the content related to working with disabled people or not?"
>
> "Not once. No." (Melissa, coach)

***

> "There is actually isn't much in terms of a formal education kind of programme when it comes to Special Olympics and coaches, because it's such a heavily volunteer based model, it's usually it's someone with either a passing interest in the sport or has some level of experience having played it in high school or played it in university. And usually, it's kind of left to your own devices to figure out how best to coach those athletes." (Thomas, coach)

In leaving coaches to their own devices, there is an increased likelihood that the coaches will revert to implementing the coaching practice they learnt outside of disability sport, contributing to the cultural reproduction of certain coaching discourses and practices. Thomas discussed that his coaching practice reflects that of his previous coach,

> "So I think that my first, I guess, source would have been the way that my high school coach taught me, and I took a lot of that. And you know, 'you become your coach' is basically what they always tell you, and it became true." (Thomas, coach)

Additionally, dropping coaches 'in the deep end' (Townsend et al., 2017) results in a reliance on trial and error. As Adam pointed out, "There was a lot of trial and error, which could lead to a lot of failure." Coaches will often revert to drawing on able-bodied practice in the absence of disability coaching knowledge.

Further, Thomas discussed that the lack of visibility of disability in sport more broadly prevents coaches from finding out how to "take the first step" into disability sport coaching. The invisibility of disability in sport, but more specifically, in coach education, reflects the marginal position of disability in coaching discourse and is a common theme across the coaches' interviews. Liam stated, "It's not an entirely different beast like it's made out to be". Liam had only done mainstream coaching qualifications through NSOs before attending a Halberg Inclusion Training, and he found that he already had the "tools" to coach disabled young people,

> "Like if I look back at the coaching qualifications, a lot of that stuff was relevant to coaching in the disability sector anyway, but it just wasn't called out." (Liam, coach)

The marginalisation of disability in mainstream coach education positions disability sport coaching as the 'optional other' and results in institutionalised ableism. The

structure of the system of coach education perpetuates the negative symbolic capital of disability by continuing to separate and keep disability sport at arms-length from the real world of (mainstream) sport. The sub-field's boundaries are kept clearly demarcated by the coach education system and practices employed.

Moreover, the optional othering of disability knowledge through coach education contributes to the idea that a different knowledge set is needed to coach disabled young people. This results in what some call the 'fear of the unknown' (Wareham et al., 2017), in which coaches become fearful of coaching disabled people because they do not feel they have the skills, knowledge, confidence and competence to do so, and thus, they leave it up to someone else. This contributes to a significant lack of coaches available and willing to work with disabled young people, limiting their opportunities to participate. The 'fear of the unknown' and its perpetuation and reproduction is explored further below.

6.2.2.1 Fish Out of Water: Fear of the Unknown

In describing how they first entered the disability sport field, a fear, apprehension and anxiety about coaching within this separated field was mentioned by all coaches, either as their own experience or what they had seen in other coaches. For example, Ben noted a need to alleviate fears and anxiety,

> OC: "And just curious to know where the anxiousness comes from, and going into that space when you have so many years coaching?
>
> **"**Yeah, someone asked me the other day, it was the unknown." (Ben, coach)

Ben has many years of experience coaching yet was still fearful of coaching disabled people – in his mind, it was an entirely different practice. This fear is heavily rooted in disability stigma and is evident in the difficulty in mobilising between the field of mainstream sport and the sub-field of disability sport. Liam touches on this in sharing his experience of bringing in a new coach to help him with disability-only sessions,

> "He was quite nervous getting into coaching in this space, but we actually just bought him alongside, and he watched a couple of sessions I ran, and his first comment was that it's not that different, and he's like loving it now... I just think there's a lot of unnecessary apprehension built up from this whole big stigma

> around what coaching disability is, but it's actually not a big change from what I've found." (Liam, coach)

Ox also experienced this,

> "So, we had this completely new coach join us, and so I asked him to come on and share his experience with these other coaches, and he says, 'I was absolutely shitting myself.' He said he was like, 'I've never worked with people with disability before. Oh my God. And I talked myself into a mess'. Then he said, after that first session, 'That was so much fun. And so easy.' And he said, 'It was actually really enjoyable'." (Ox, coach)

As a result of the invisibility and marginalisation of disability knowledge in coach education, coaches come to understand disability sport coaching as an entirely different practice requiring an entirely different skill set. The fear of the unknown and apprehension stems from an incongruence between habitus and field – what Bourdieu termed the hysteresis effect (Bourdieu, 1990b). That is, coaches do not have the skills, knowledge and confidence (habitus) to work within the disability sport sub-field, and thus, coaches feel like a 'fish out of water' (see Chapter 4). Mabel is the only coach who reported that disability was incorporated within her Physical Education degree. Mabel is also the only coach to mention having a friend with impairment doing the same degree as her. As Mabel shares, her habitus aligns with the disability sport sub-field because of these experiences, and thus, she feels comfortable; however, she can see others do not,

> "I think because of the education and because I've spent so long and I feel comfortable, very comfortable around anyone with disabilities - it doesn't worry me. And I watch other people, and I see that because they haven't perhaps spent a lot of time with people with disabilities, and if they don't understand, then you know, it can be you know, still in this day and age people can feel quite probably quite nervous around it" (Mabel, coach)

Mabel's comment further highlights the marginalisation of disabled people in wider society – in Aotearoa, New Zealand, nearly 25% of the population identify as having a disability, yet many (able-bodied) people have never interacted with disabled people in any aspect of their lives. As the field of sport reflects wider social life, the idea that disabled people do not participate in society, let alone sport, prevails.

Ox elaborated that his fear stemmed from not wanting to "hurt" Para athletes,

> "The first couple of times, I was probably thinking, 'Oh god, I don't wanna hurt anyone', and that sort of thing, you know, that's the first thing that comes to mind is 'I don't wanna hurt anyone', but we don't often have that thought when we're working with able-bodied kids." (Ox, coach)

As Ox points out, this fear of hurting an athlete by merely coaching them is not a fear mentioned in mainstream sports settings. Ox's fear is likely to stem from benevolent forms of ableism in which disabled people are seen as fragile (Nario-Redmond et al., 2019). There is fear that the 'fragile' disabled person will get hurt when engaging in sport. Here, the circulation of ableist ideas about disability within wider society manifests in sports coaching practice. The absence of disability in coach education, coupled with the dominant understanding of disability as a weakened state in the field of power, reinforces notions that disabled people do not participate in sports and do not belong in the sport field.

As discussed in Chapter 4, the doxa of a field determines the doable and the thinkable within that field. In the sport field, because of the optional 'other' position disability holds, coaching disabled people is part of the 'unthought'.

> "I think it's because people fear going into that Para space. The fear of the unknown, I think. Once somebody has achieved success in the Para space then it's easy to copy. But if it's never been done before, as with anything, like, why try something that's never been done before?" (Anna, coach)

These data are illustrative of coaches' learning entering a doxic mode. Campbell (2009) suggests, "the conundrum, disability, is not a mere fear of the unknown, or an apprehensiveness towards that which is foreign or strange. Rather, disability and disabled bodies are effectively positioned in the nether regions of 'unthought'." (2009, p. 13). Thus, it does not cross coaches' minds that the disability sport field is one in which they should be a part. Further, there must also exist an assessment by coaches that the stakes in the field are valuable, and that the game is worthy of contesting (*illusio*) (Kitchin, 2014). Illusio relates to a social agent recognising what counts as capital in a field and to take that form of capital seriously, which means they must also take seriously the rules of the game by which that capital is acquired (Frank, 2013). In other words, coaches must want to invest in the game (disability sport). However, positioning disability as an

optional other devalues the disability sport sub-field and does not entice interest. It is through illusio and doxa that ableism is embedded within the field yet remains elusive. Ableism is woven into the fabric of coaching. It forms a part of the classifying principles which are instilled in coaches' habitus through exposure to the social conditionings of the field of power and mainstream sport.

Almost all coaches mentioned that a level of integration within mainstream coaching would go a long way, and this is linked to habitus formation. If disability knowledge is absent from coach education, it is understood as optional or someone else's role. Looking back on his high school days, Thomas mentions that there were disabled students in a separate unit at his school and that there was a large Special Olympics Club in the area where he grew up. However, Thomas didn't think about coaching a Special Olympics team until he met his wife and her brother,

> "So, you know, even though it was all there around me, I just wasn't looking for it, so therefore I don't think I would have ever seen it. So, no, I don't think the coach, if they weren't really looking for it, I don't think they would see it. And I think that's quite interesting because I only ever started thinking about it when I met my wife and her brother. That was the first time it'd actually pinged to me that this is a thing." (Thomas, coach)

This is a clear example of how institutionalised ableism in coach education structures coaches' habitus to align with ableism – only those who are able-bodied play sports and require coaching (cf. Owen, 2022). Liam spoke similarly, stating,

> "I think with how separately it's treated, I think, in terms of coaching, it's always kind of pushed, like quite remotely. Like this is disability sport, and this is mainstream sport, and there's not really a connection that's portrayed between them essentially." (Liam, coach)

Bourdieu argued that education functions to determine the distribution of capital (Bourdieu, 1973). In the disability sport sub-field, education is hard to access, and thus, cultural capital – legitimate knowledge and social competencies to function in the field - is difficult to accumulate. Halberg has been positioned in the disability sport sub-field as a 'giver' of cultural capital. That is, they can bestow cultural capital upon coaches once they have completed Inclusion Training. Through this transfer of capital, coaches' fears, apprehensions and anxieties are alleviated as their habits more closely align with

the conditions of the disability sport field. However, combined, the above examples of how disability coach education is delivered paint a picture of institutionalised ableism that is maintained through optional othering. This institutionalised ableism has consequences for practice through habitus. Habitus is structured by the field while simultaneously structuring the field. The lack of mainstream sports that have disability built into their 'mainstream' offerings structures coaches' habitus in that they come to understand disability coaching as optional, other and not valued. Simultaneously, coaches either never engage in disability sport coaching or continue to turn to other organisations (e.g. Halberg), which reinforces their necessity in the field, and disability sport continues as an optional other.

As presented above, NZ's current coach education structure represents institutional ableism. The pedagogies employed within coach education also serve to further reinforce ableism in enlightened ways. Within coach education, there is an arbitrary decision made by those with arbitrary 'power' as to what knowledge is important and how that knowledge should be disseminated. These decisions have implications for coach learning and habitus formation. I now explore the practices within disability sport coach education in NZ and the implications of these pedagogies for reproducing ableism.

6.2.2.2 Practices within disability sport coach education

In the previous section, I argued that disability is positioned marginally in coach education. Disability coach education reflects culturally embedded and often arbitrary views of disability, which structure the pedagogic practices used to upskill coaches (Townsend *et al.,* 2017). The pedagogy used shapes the production of knowledge about disability within coach education as it is through pedagogic action in the Bourdieusian sense that arbitrary cultures are reproduced (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990).

Each coach who did engage with disability coach education was asked about what the course or workshop entailed and what they believed was most beneficial for their coaching practice. Three coaches explicitly discussed emulating disability as a key pedagogical approach in the courses they engaged in,

> "We ourselves were trying to simulate being disabled, like putting on blind goggles, or basically immobilising our arm, or we've had a very interesting exercise

> where we had tennis balls, either like in our armpits or between our joints simulating cerebral palsy.” (Adam, coach)

The use of emulating or simulation of disability as embodied pedagogy in teacher, post-secondary and coach education settings has been questioned (e.g. Leo, 2022; Leo & Goodwin, 2016; Maher et al., 2022). This embodied pedagogy is implemented under the assumption that the experience will provide meaningful insight for those without impairments into the everyday experiences of disabled people (Leo & Goodwin, 2016) and lead to outcomes such as improved attitudes towards disability, increased feelings of empathy and increased awareness of inclusion issues (Maher et al., 2022). However, when “insider perspectives” (individuals who experience impairments) are missing from the design and implementation of pedagogies such as simulation, the practice can also reinforce and ultimately produce ableism (Leo & Goodwin, 2016, p. 156). When disabled people are entirely absent from the activity, and there are poor debriefing or reflection sessions, non-disabled instructors risk “creating disability” (Leo & Goodwin, 2016, p. 165). That is, the imposition of impairment upon an ‘able, healthy’ body reinforces that disability is individual and that impaired bodies are created, as opposed to natural or ‘normal’.

Bourdieu discussed that ‘learn by doing’ is a powerful practice because it exerts an “educative effect which helps make it easier to acquire the dispositions necessary for its adequate use” (1977, p. 215). In implementing simulation pedagogies, the course reinforced entrenched medical model assumptions that disability is a ‘problem’ to be fixed and overcome by coaching. In pretending to have cerebral palsy, the coach embodied, reproduced and internalised stereotypical, stigmatised assumptions about people with cerebral palsy. Thus, in implementing simulation pedagogies, coach learning is based on implicit assumptions and stereotypes about disabled people. Through simulation pedagogy, nondisabled instructors cement disability’s place in the field as other, different and ‘happening elsewhere’, and disability is attributed negative symbolic capital. In the sport field, disability and impairment are attributed negative symbolic capital because the field is imbued with a logic of practice in which bodies are unquestionably recognised as well and able. Conceptualisations of ability are bound in neoliberal-ableist understandings, and so too is the body (Hammond et al., 2019).

Simulation pedagogies serve to reinforce these normative, ableist ideals. Coaches uncritically legitimise the pedagogic action of simulation activities through a process of symbolic violence and unknowingly act as “agents of disablism” (Thomas, 1999, p. 48). Symbolic violence occurs through the misrecognition of the course deliverers' pedagogic authority because “the pedagogic receivers are disposed from the outset to recognize the legitimacy of the information transmitted and the pedagogic authority of the pedagogic transmitters, hence to receive and internalize the message” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, p. 21). Therefore, while it is not the intention of coaches to reproduce disability practice, the pedagogic conditions of the course place them in such a position.

One of the potential outcomes of simulation activities is the reinforcement of benevolent ableism (Nario-Redmond et al., 2019). Benevolent ableism is the tendency to admire disabled people for ‘overcoming’ their disability to achieve everyday activities and is bound in non-disabled people’s feelings of pity, protection and charity. Ox talked about disabled athletes as more appreciative than non-disabled athletes,

> “It really opened my eyes to Para and how enjoyable it is and how much more appreciative those athletes are for your help. And often they have to work harder to get where they are because of their condition.” (Ox, coach)

This comment has undertones of benevolent ableism in that it is assumed disability is entirely negative, and all engagements with disabled people are charitable. When a coach allows disabled people to participate and affords them access to coaching, they will be more grateful. Ox’s comment about their achievements being harder and, therefore, more significant, dismisses the impact of the social world on disabled people’s access to success. It again places the problem within the individual – a symptom of operating in a field underpinned by neoliberal ableism. Here, a connection to Charlie’s story can be made. Charlie’s story highlights an inherent issue with the reproduction of benevolent ableism in coaching when she discusses not wanting to “contradict” people who think they are doing the right thing for disabled people’s inclusion because they will give up. This is also evident of the dysconscious ableism Charlie holds in that she understands her opportunities in sport as charity. Thus, Charlie believes she must remain grateful and appreciative of what is offered and not question it. "Such is the paradox of the dominated" that it is in disabled young people’s best

interests to conform, to their own detriment, to the arbitrary power of sports organisations (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 155; Schirato & Roberts, 2019).

In critiquing emulation pedagogies, Leo and Goodwin reported that "it is preferable for the students to interact with those with genuine experiences." (2016, p. 165). In Adams's experience, Para athlete's stories were discussed; however, Para athletes were not present on the day,

> "To clarify, we did not have Para athletes explaining their journey. We looked at, like, online, some Australian person and one in the US. And we looked at what their journey was through online." (Adam, coach)

Thus, disabled athletes were talked about but were not present in or contributing to conversations. No coaches in the preset study mentioned hearing from, meeting, or even working with disabled athletes as part of their disability coach education. The institutional ableism of coach education is again evident and reflected in the pedagogic action of the field as the perspectives and knowledge of disabled people are deemed not as valuable as those of nondisabled coach developers and are therefore excluded, further reinforcing the cultural arbitrary of the disability sport field.

However, not all coaches learned about disability in the same way. For example, Anna became aware of disability as a social construct through the Halberg Inclusion Training and began to question her approach to disabled people and her understanding of disability. She reflected:

> "I just saw a disability as that person cannot do something. But is it that person's? Is it because of the person, or is it because of the environment?" (Anna, coach)

However, Anna also completed the PNZ LevelUp modules. She stated that the LevelUp modules reinforced the medical model based on the way they are presented – they are broken down into separate modules for each impairment type eligible to compete in Para sport (i.e. under the Paralympic Movement),

> "[PNZ] created LevelUp but unintentionally, it's actually looking at impairments with a medical lens. Um, but didn't intend that to be to be like that." (Anna, coach)

This created a conflict of knowledge for Anna, which raised concerns for her about balancing the social and medical lenses in Para sport because of classification,

> "Uh, so you can tell someone to look at disability in terms of what someone can do, but we're still gonna put restrictions on it in terms of what they can do [because of classification]." (Anna, coach)

The separation or breakdown of disability knowledge by impairment type, as Anna experienced in LevelUp, was shared across the coaches' experiences despite engaging in different coaching courses. For example, Mabel, who has been coaching for many years and helped inform her sports coaching program, talked about the value of breaking disability down:

> OC: "Do you still see the value in impairment-specific knowledge and it being broken down like that?"
>
> "Yeah, we still see the value in it, and we still do it. Generically, we will teach people to understand what the common threads are with people with disabilities that tend to come to us. And then you always get caught out - because it's individual. So, we do, we do try to pass that on. And particularly as people go through the levels. At the level two, we are a wee bit more kind of 'you need to know these things, guys'. So yes, we still teach it." (Mabel, coach)

Luke, a coach within the same sport, discussed having impairment-specific knowledge as beneficial but simultaneously disadvantageous because of the assumptions made based on the stereotypes taught,

> "In the level one, you get a rundown of how spinal cord injuries happen and how it can affect the body and the muscles and the control and everything like that. And that's really good to just get a bit of a background information of how the disability works or what causes the disability. But then on the downside is, you know, everyone who has a disability is so different. You can have two people have the same diagnosis. And on paper, they're exactly the same, but their body works completely differently. So, I think there's an advantage of having an idea of how things work, but also the disadvantage of making assumptions that because they have this disability they fit into that mould or something along those lines." (Luke, coach)

In presenting the causes of disability or how disability 'works' as coach education, medical model understandings are reinforced. The pedagogic action of separating

impairments out by type serves to maintain the dominant understanding in the field of disability as deviant and serves to inculcate coaches with ‘correct’ responses and dispositions (Jenkins, 2002). Further, this pedagogic practice reflects a value judgement about what knowledge is important in coaching disabled people. There becomes a doxic belief within the disability sport field that coaches must understand the causes and (stereotypical) outcomes of impairments to be ‘good’ coaches. However, this understanding is bound in medicalised understandings of disabled bodies and thus serves to reinforce disabled people as different and does little to improve coaching practice. As coach Thomas, who has a background in pharmacology but no coach education, put it:

> “I don't think it actually made much difference because, for example, Down Syndrome if I know what chromosome caused it, how does that help me in a coaching sense? It's not like I can yell at that chromosome and say do something different. So, it was nice to have it just so that you're not walking in completely blind, but I don't think it actually changed how I conducted myself or how I did anything, to be honest.” (Thomas, coach)

What has become evident is that despite there being some awareness of the social construction of disability within some courses available to coaches, ultimately, the practices within the courses available in NZ reinforce ableist medical understandings of disability. This contributes to a dissonance where what is ‘learned’ contradicts the purpose and aims of teaching. What occurs through the institutionalised ableism of the coach education system is a reinforcement of enlightening ableism in coaching practice, as evidenced by Anna’s reflection on the contradiction above. The success of coach education relies on the degree to which it accounts for the “distance between the habitus it aims to inculcate and the habitus produced by previous pedagogic work” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, p. 45). Coaches come to disability sport coach education with an ableist habitus, informed by the field of sport and field of power’s medicalised discourse. This section shows that current coach education pedagogies do little to challenge and change that habitus. ‘Knowing’ disability becomes a doxic within the field of disability sport, and coach education pedagogics serve to reproduce this.

6.3 Ableism: The Reproduction of the Doxic Order

The analysis suggests that ableism is present in the field, as well as coaches' habitus and distribution of capital, and is, therefore, hard to challenge and predisposed to reproduction. The field acts as a set of socialising conditions for coaches, which transmits certain orientations towards disability, bodies, and sport. The field of power and sport is imbued with a compulsory able-bodiedness and neo-liberal-ableism that informs habitus. Coaches bring these dispositions, beliefs and values (habitus) to disability sport coaching. When coaches enter the field of disability sport, they gain access to disability coaching knowledge through ad-hoc, one-off, short workshops or online learning modules. These continue to position disability knowledge as optional and separate from mainstream coaching knowledge, solidifying the negative symbolic capital attributed to disability by the field. Therefore, the coach education system in its current form is simultaneously producing and reproducing institutionalised ableism.

While the extent to which an individual coach's habitus aligns with ableism will differ, individuals who share a similar location in social space are socialised into the same ideas and exposed to the same set of beliefs and dispositions. It is hard to shift and challenge habitus through short-term, standardised and isolated models of coach education. This means that the general trend is that coaches will fall into line with dominant understandings of the field (doxa) despite their individual biography and agency. Eventually, the weight of the field is so dominant and coupled with no active challenge to those dominant understandings of disability, results in a trend of coaches falling into line with ableism. As Adkins (2003) puts it, "the habitus will always submit to the field" (p.36).

Additionally, doxa informs habitus; thus, ableism guides how coaches perceive, interpret and act in the sport field. There is a tendency within coach education to focus on the removal of barriers, that is, a focus on disablism. However, as discussed in Chapter 4 (4.3), disablism is an effect of ableism. Thus, disablism proliferates because the preference for able-bodied values, beliefs and expectations is not addressed. Therefore, ableism continued in practice and was reflected by coaches in benevolent and enlightened ways.

Together, the structure of and practices within the field of disability sport result in pedagogic action that reproduces ableism within coaching habitus. Through pedagogic action, there occurs an imposition of systems of meaning that legitimise and solidify structures of inequity, resulting in symbolic violence (Jenkins, 2002; Stewart, 2016). Symbolic violence relates to the indirect, subtle, and even "gentle" processes in fields that serve to produce and control a social order that is "imperceptible and invisible even to its victims" (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 2). The inequitable social order, that is, the marginalisation of disabled people in sport, is legitimised and naturalised as doxa through a process of misrecognition. Indeed, Bourdieu stated that misrecognition is the key to the complacency of the dominated in their domination (Webb et al., 2002). What occurs in disability sport is a misrecognition whereby social practice appears as one thing whilst achieving something else that is not evident to coaches (Bourdieu, 1984, 1990b). That is, coach education appears to be instituting inclusive coaching practice; however, coaches misrecognise that the learning process they undergo instead reinforces exclusionary, ableist practices. The social order is naturalised as doxa through the internalisation of the order and its norms, structures and practices (Stewart, 2016). It is through an imposition of able norms in disability sport that symbolic violence occurs.

As has been discussed briefly, symbolic violence is perpetuated through the doxa of a field. Doxa refers to a socially and culturally constituted way of perceiving, evaluating and behaving in coaching that becomes accepted as unquestioned, self-evident, and natural (Bourdieu, 1977). Here, I argue that ableism constitutes doxa in the field of sport and sub-field of disability sport as it continues to operate in various forms (benevolent, dysconscious, enlightened and institutionalised) without question or recognition. The doxa (ableism) of the field results in social agents such as Sport NZ, Halberg, PNZ and SONZ accepting and perpetuating the optional othering of disability knowledge as the status quo for educating coaches. Further, coaches expect this is how disability coach education will be delivered (e.g. Townsend et al., 2017), and thus, coaches have come to accept the status quo as natural and 'correct', perpetuating the marginalisation of disabled people in sport. In other words, institutionalised ableism is misrecognised and reproduced through doxa (ableism).

Doxa is a product of the relation between habitus and field and functions below the level of consciousness and discourse (Bourdieu, 1984). Understanding ableism as doxa within the field of disability sports provides critical insight into how symbolic structures (coach education) constrain coaches' learning. The doxic order, that is, the preference for able-bodied values, beliefs and expectations, is reproduced in and through coaching practice because institutionalised ableism is perpetuated by the coach education structure in Aotearoa, New Zealand. Therefore, I suggest that the ableist doxa of the disability sport field – produced and maintained by institutional ableism – is more influential in coach learning than any coach education.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

A review of the literature on disability sport coaching and coach education, combined with Charlie's story and my position in the field, pointed toward ableism as present and immovable within coaching. As such, it set out to understand the mechanisms through which ableism is (re)produced through coaching, with the central question, 'How do New Zealand community sport coaches learn about disability, and how does this learning journey contribute to the reproduction of ableism?'. In answering this question, the research attempted to draw clear links between coach education, coaching practice and the reproduction of ableism.

Moving beyond a models of disability approach, this research drew on Bourdieu's sociology and ableism to critically explore the mechanisms of reproduction within the disability sport field and coaching practice. Taking an anti-ableist approach, as opposed to a disablism approach, allowed the problematisation of sport's role in reproducing and reinforcing ableism while highlighting its potential to enable change (Silva, 2022). This research was novel in that it simultaneously sought to explore the interconnectedness of Bourdieu's theory of practice and the theory of ableism to further our understanding of the reproductive power of coaching.

Coaches' learning was shown to be structured by the social context within which they operated and was thus predisposed toward reproduction. Ableism highlighted the inherent preference and valuation of abled ways of being and doing in sport. In drawing on these critical theories together, a more detailed understanding of coach learning was achieved, moving beyond research generally focused on describing and explaining sources or categorising learning according to formality. Findings revealed how compulsory able-bodiedness (ableism) is so embedded in the field of power that it becomes doxic. The disability sport sub-field contributes to reproducing ableism through the transmission of this doxic knowledge of what the body is, what it should do and how it should look. This doxic knowledge attributes negative symbolic capital to disability and disabled bodies and is further reinforced through the institutionalised ableism of the coach education system. Strong and explicit data shows that the optional othering of disability knowledge is a manifestation of institutionalised ableism, which informs the

logic of practice of the sport field. This resulted in coaches mis-recognising their contribution to the reproduction of ableist practice (Stewart, 2016; Thomson, 2014). In reproducing the doxic order, coaches exhibited enlightened ableism – that is, they have an inclusive discourse, yet their actions remain exclusionary in that only the most able disabled young people, those that can mould themselves to fit, are included (Hammond et al., 2019). No matter how well-meaning coaches are, ableism is inscribed in habitus through doxa.

Further, if ableism did not exist, it is unlikely that the disability sport field would be necessary. Here, disability sport is an effect of ableism. Ableism acts, in the first instance, as a structuring principle in the field of power and, in turn, gives rise to the sub-field of disability sport, kept at arms-length from the 'real' world of sport. Ableism simultaneously acts as an organising principle within both the field of sport and sub-field of disability sport and becomes a way of shaping and socialising coaches' understandings of disability (doxa). As an organising principle, ableism is reinforced through certain mechanisms, one of which is coach education. Education exists to produce certain understandings of disability (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990), which coaches take into their individual practices, and they become reinforced through practice. It is through the institutional ableism of the structure of disability sport coach education and the enlightened (and sometimes conflicting) discourse within that ableism is reproduced and embedded in coaching habitus through doxa.

7.1 Implications for coach education and future research

Moving to the implications of this research, it has evidenced the powerful structuring effect of existing coaching culture on coach learning and knowledge through doxa and how this is reinforced through current coach education practices. The data in this research has shown that disability coaching is characterised by separatist thinking and practices, in which institutionalised ableism (that is, the optional othering of disability knowledge) structures coach education, further reinforcing the notion that the segregation of knowledge about disability is necessary. Here, the double bind of exclusion in which the low visibility of disabled people in the mainstream sport field coupled with the marginalisation (effective exclusion) of disability within mainstream

coach education simultaneously contribute to the exclusion and marginalisation of disabled people in sport is evident (Owen, 2022). The indication from this research, therefore, is that in disability sport contexts, coaches and the doxa of the coaching culture they are a part of are as responsible for coach learning as coach education. Therefore, further research is necessary to understand how to shift the doxa of a field.

Further, coaches are largely unaware of ableism in general and even less aware of how their practice contributes to its reproduction through a process of misrecognition. There have been suggestions that an effective coach education programme would focus on exposing and deconstructing the dominant discourses and belief systems inherent in disability sport (e.g. Townsend, 2018). However, the simple "raising of consciousness" or making habitus or doxa explicit is not enough to overcome the inherent inertia of habitus to transform it (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 172). Indeed, Jun (2018) suggests that "deconstructing inappropriate dichotomous, hierarchical, and linear thinking styles/patterns is the main strategy for dismantling ableism at all levels" (p.263). However, simply thinking about deconstruction will change very little. Thus, deconstruction would involve an active daily practice. Jun (2018) rightly points out just how embedded a doxic belief is in comparing deconstruction to the 10,000 hours required to master a skill (Sennett, 2012, as cited in Jun, 2018), for example,

> "If you started ableism at age 3 (just like gendered beliefs) and you are in your 20s, your beliefs on ableism have reached more than one cycle of mastery. It is firmly grounded in your unconscious." (Jun, 2018, p. 263)

Thus, changing habitus is a significant challenge for coach education, and a 2-hour, one-off workshop reflecting on one's beliefs is unlikely to create a lasting, fundamental change in coaching practice upon return to the 'real world'. The question now is how to effectively disrupt the doxic practice in disability sport to dismantle ableism.

Enhanced visibility through the infusion of disability knowledge codesigned with disabled people in mainstream sport may go some way in contributing to this dismantling. However, a more radical approach is likely needed. That is, "while coach education offers a heterodox discourse to practitioners conditioned through field experiences, it will not hold the power to challenge coaching orthodoxy or facilitate coach learning" (Townsend, 2018, p. 193). Further investigation into how coaching habitus can be shifted

is necessary, especially when ableism is doxic within the field. This suggests the need for reframing the field, as well as its capital and doxa – something coach education is currently not ready to do. In any case, it is unlikely or realistically achievable through education alone.

7.2 Concluding remarks

This research has shown that coaches were socialised into a legitimate culture imbued with ableism, which influenced their understanding of and dispositions toward disability. The inherent institutionalised ableism within coach education positioned disability as optional and other, further reinforcing the oppression and marginalisation of disabled people in sport. Coach learning, from a Bourdieusian perspective, occurred within an ableist structure and followed a model of reproduction through the socialisation of coaches into a doxic understanding of disability. Thus, the ableist doxa of disability sport was responsible for learning and coach education merely reinforced this doxa.

In this modest attempt to connect the two theories (theory of practice and ableism), a robust understanding of how ableism is reproduced emerged. It is my hope that this research promotes further discussion and exploration of the inherent ableism in disability sport and coach education so that we (researchers) may find solutions. As has become evident, a sociological approach, specifically Bourdieusian, can expose the often misrecognised cultural arbitrary that produces specific (ableist) coaching discourse. A critical focus on coach education and the structure of the field is necessary for change in coaching, particularly in disability sport contexts.

The field of disability sport, while often well-meaning, currently subjects disabled children and young people to ableism in enlightened, benevolent and institutionalised ways. Disabled young people are limited to engaging in certain sports (depending on their impairment type), participating alongside their non-disabled peers only when they 'fit in' or do not disrupt the able-bodied norms and are subject to a doxic understanding of disability as a diminished state of being. We, as researchers and practitioners, can and must do more to disrupt the inherent ableism in sport coaching to ensure disabled children and young people can thrive in and through sport.

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Appendix 1 Participant Information Sheet for Coaches

You are invited to take part in research about disability sport and coaching. Whether or not you take part is your choice. If you don't want to participate, you don't have to give a reason, and it won't have any consequences. If you want to participate now but change your mind later, that is fine.

This Participant Information Sheet will help you decide if you want to participate. It sets out why we are doing the research, what your participation would involve, the benefits and risks to you, and what would happen after the research ends. We will go through this information with you and answer any questions you may have. You do not have to decide today whether or not you will participate in this study. Before you choose, you may want to discuss the study with other people, such as family, whānau, friends, or healthcare providers. Feel free to do this.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to sign the Consent Form on the last page of this document. You will be given a copy of the Participant Information Sheet and the Consent Form to keep.

This document is five pages long, including the Consent Form. Please make sure you have read and understood all the pages.

Who is doing the research?

Olivia Clare, from the University of Waikato (pictured).

What is the purpose of the research?

The research is for a Master's research project to understand coaches' knowledge of coaching disabled children and young people and to understand ableism.

What will I be asked to do?

In an interview, I will ask about your coaching career, learning journey, and what you

think about coaching disabled children and young people in sport. This is to support us in understanding the needs of coaches better and to enhance disabled people's opportunities and experiences in sport.

You are welcome to have a support person(s)/network with you for this process. You also do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to during the interview process.

This information will be recorded to produce a transcription of the conversation, and you will have an opportunity to review this and make any changes before the data is analysed.

Where will this take place?

This will take place in person at a location and time of your choosing, but if this is not possible or you prefer, it will take place online via Zoom.

Once I take part, can I change my mind?

Yes, you can withdraw at any time **up to three weeks after the interview** by letting me (Olivia) know in a method you chose (e.g. by text, email, phone call, video, letter, etc.) that you no longer wish to participate. You do not need to explain why you are withdrawing. I will let you know at the time of your interview the date when any withdrawal must be made. You also do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to during the interview process.

How long will it take?

It should be around 1 hour (no more than 90 minutes) and will depend on how much you want to share with me.

What personal information will be required from me?

Personal information will include years of coaching experience, training or education and, your experiences with disability sport and your opinions of coaching and inclusion.

Will I be kept anonymous?

Your name or any identifying features or details will not appear in the research unless you want to be identified. In any written accounts or discussions of the research, you will be given a pseudonym (a different, fake name) to protect your identity.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

I will not discuss your participation in this research with anyone. Under the Data Protection Act, interview, visual and audio data will be saved onto a password-protected file and only available to me (Olivia).

Are there any risks in participating?

There are no risks to participating in this research for participants.

What will happen to the research?

The research will be used to write a report (thesis) to fulfil the requirements of the University.

Because Sport New Zealand has funded this research, it will also provide a report with recommendations to Sport New Zealand, other National Sport Organisations and organisations focusing on supporting work to ensure sport is more inclusive. The research may be published in other ways (such as journal articles or book chapters) to share the recommendations with the broader research community.

I have some more questions: who should I contact?

Please contact Olivia Clare, Masters Student, School of Health, Sport and Human Performance, via email at oc16@students.waikato.ac.nz or phone 027 500 5678

What if I am not happy with how the research was conducted?

If you are unhappy with how the research was conducted, please contact Dr. Robert Townsend via email at Robert.townsend@waikato.ac.nz

If you think the research was unethical, email the University ethics committee at humanethics@waikato.ac.nz.

This research project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of Waikato as HREC(Health)2023#35

Appendix 2 Research Consent Form

(To be completed after the participant information sheet has been read).

Project: Habitus of Ableism: Understanding coaches' knowledge of disability and coaching disabled children and young people.

Lead Researcher: Olivia Clare **Supervisor:** Dr Robert Townsend

Research overview: The research aims to understand coaches' knowledge about coaching disabled young people in sport and to understand ableism.

Please tick to indicate you consent (agree) to the following:

I have read and understood the information sheet and this consent form.		
I have been given sufficient time to consider whether or not to participate in this research.		
I have had an opportunity to ask questions about my participation.		
I understand that taking part in this research is voluntary (my choice).		
I understand that I have the right to withdraw from this research at any stage, **up until 3 weeks after the interview takes place**, and that I will not be required to explain my reasons for withdrawing.		
I understand that my participation in this research is confidential and that nothing that could identify me personally will be used in any reports on this research.		
I understand my responsibilities as a research participant.		
I understand I do not have to answer any questions I do not want to.		
I understand the interview will be recorded, but only Olivia can access it.		
I know who to contact if I have any questions about the research in general.		
I want to receive a summary of the results of the research.	Yes ☐	No ☐
I agree to take part in this study.	Yes ☐	No ☐

Participant's name:

Signature: Date:

Declaration by member of research team:

I have given a verbal explanation of the research project to the participant and have answered the participant's questions about it.

I believe that the participant understands the study and has given informed consent to participate.

Researcher's name:

Signature: Date:

Appendix 3 Interview Guide

Interview Guide – Coaches

Objectives: to understand coaches' knowledge of disability and coaching disabled children and young people and ableism within this.

Research question: To investigate how ableism contributes to and shapes, the reproduction of coaching knowledge.

Beginning:

- Introductions
- Summary of the research – education means development or training
- Participant information
- Obtain informed consent
- Pseudonym – think

Theme: Coaching career

To start it would be great to hear about your coaching journey and career so

- Can you tell me about how you got into coaching and how long you have been coaching?
- What sports have you coached and for how long?
- When did you first coach disabled people? Mainstream or disability sport context?

Theme: Coach education or learning journey

Through this research I'm keen to understand how coaches learn/where they get their coaching knowledge from

- Have you done any formal coach education in your time as a coach? Were any of these required by the sport in order for you to be able to coach?
- Who was offering/delivering these opportunities?
- What topics or content were covered in these education opportunities?
- Have you completed any disability-specific education opportunities? Who was offering/delivering these opportunities?
- What did you get out of this training? Key takeaways?
- Where/how else have you learnt about coaching disabled people?
- Where did/do you learn the most about coaching disabled people?

Theme: Knowledge of coaching disabled children and young people

A key part of this research is understanding coaches' knowledge related to coaching disabled people

- Can you tell me a bit about your understanding of disability?
- Can you tell me what has informed your understanding of disability?
- What is your approach/philosophy to coaching disabled people?
- In what ways is your approach different to how you coach non-disabled people?
- Do you feel confident and prepared to work with all impairment types? Do you have a preference of who you work with?
- What knowledge or understanding do you think coaches who work with disabled children and young people need to have?

Check pseudonym, Transcript checking