Order on the Court:
The Interactional Organization of Basketball Practice Activities

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Over the lengthy, often challenging, sometimes unbearable, but ultimately deeply rewarding process of researching and writing this thesis, there were a number of people without whose involvement the whole affair would have been vastly more difficult, if not impossible. I feel privileged to have the opportunity to acknowledge those people here. Firstly to my supervisory panel, to whom I owe a great debt. Thank you to Professor David Rowe, whose initial bemusement at my seeming taste for “experimenting” with theory must surely have turned to consternation as I declared that I was going to become an ethnomethodologist two years into my candidature. Your openness to my pursuit of an approach to studying sport that you would not have taken yourself is a testament to your academic generosity. That generosity did not, however, extend to an acceptance of shoddy writing, and after several years of your pointed comments I have hopefully improved in that area at least to some extent. Professor Gregory Noble, you did me a great favour by agreeing to join the panel some time after I had already begun my candidacy. Your detailed points regarding the theoretical and methodological problems that you found in my work had me on the back foot in our early encounters, and forced me to approach such matters with far greater rigour than I would have otherwise. In the end, I came to look forward with pleasure to our regular sparring sessions during supervisory meetings. Many of the conceptual understandings presented in this thesis were developed as an outcome of our “debates”.

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Statement of Authentication

This thesis is submitted in order to fulfil the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Institute for Culture and Society at the University of Western Sydney. The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in full or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.

__________________________________
Bryn Evans
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Abstract

The aim of this research is to investigate the local production of basketball practice activities in order to explicate the methods that participants collaboratively employ to accomplish these activities as recognizable social facts. The empirical data for the study consists of video recordings of a youth development basketball team’s training sessions. Ethnomethodological methods of membership categorization analysis, conversation analysis and embodied analysis are employed to unpack the reflexive configurations of methods to which members orient in producing and recognizing accountable social actions and objects within basketball practice sessions. The research demonstrates the detailed situational considerations that a coach must orient to in visually locating relevant errors in player performances, and outlines some of the ways in which correction sequences are collaboratively organized in order to make problematic actions and their correct replacements visually available to multiple participants. The study is intended to contribute to two distinct bodies of knowledge. Firstly, it suggests a radical alternate to the prevailing studies of sport within the sport studies literature, and demonstrates the analytic payoff of taking up an ethnomethodological perspective on sport. Secondly, it aims to contribute to the field of ethnomethodology and conversation analysis in both an empirical and methodological sense. Empirically, it expands the corpus of studies of social interaction by investigating a setting that has received little attention - that of sporting activity. Methodologically, it argues and seeks to demonstrate that separate analytic methods from ethnomethodology, conversation analysis and workplace studies can be integrated into a hybrid methodology for examining the accomplishment of sporting conduct. Overall, the thesis makes an original contribution to the fields of sport sociology and ethnomethodology by explicating in detail some of the constitutive methods used by participants to construct basketball practice sessions as intelligible activities.
Introduction

The aim of this study is to examine the situated interactional work of basketball practice activities in order to explicate the cultural methods that members use to build these activities as the things they are. This description serves to situate the study within two distinct bodies of literature. The substantive topic of the study positions this work as a contribution to the sociology of sport. The methodological election to investigate sport as situated practical activity locates the study within the set of approaches to studying social phenomena constituting the field of ethnomethodology and conversation analysis. This thesis aims to provide an original contribution to the current state of knowledge in each of these two bodies of literature. In this introduction, I outline the nature of the insights that the thesis seeks to develop. I begin by providing some background into the personal context of my research topic and my reasons for selecting this particular methodological approach.

I began my PhD studies with the general motivation to do research that would develop my understanding of the social significance of sport. Sport had been a topic in which I had been interested for some time, as a participant and a spectator, and also as an academic researcher. I had previously written an MA thesis on the political economy of the America’s Cup yachting contest, and while I found the process of conducting a research project rewarding, at the end of the study I was left with a feeling of dissatisfaction with what I had actually discovered about the sport of America’s Cup yachting. I had learned a great deal about large-scale economic and political structures and the ideological functions of sport, but I was not convinced that this had provided me with much, if any, insight into what America’s Cup yachting actually was.

Along with possessing a desire to get closer to the “heart” of sport, I had also become deeply preoccupied with a set of interrelated questions regarding more abstract philosophical and methodological problems. These were questions including:

What is “social” about social action?
How do cultural meanings, discourses, or categories actually relate to singular occasions of social action?

What constitutes an “adequate” description of some social event, activity, or object?

My objective, at the outset of my doctoral studies, was to work through these problems in the process of conducting research into sport. As I began reading the existing sociology of sport literature, however, I became increasingly frustrated by two features that seemed to characterize this corpus of work. Firstly, there appeared to be an overemphasis on the ordering effects of large-scale social and discursive structures on participants’ conduct, at the expense of an empirical focus on embodied practice. Secondly, this emphasis on structure tended to be combined with a political agenda concerned with critiquing relations of power. The outcome of these two tendencies, as I saw it, was that social studies of sport were overwhelmingly preoccupied with a rather narrow concern to uncover the underlying, “hidden” power structures organizing sporting activities. To this end, research tended to focus on evaluating people’s sporting practices – either negatively as forms of domination, positively as forms of resistance to power, or as some combination of both – based on some set of theoretical presuppositions held by the analyst about how society is organized.

My thinking on this issue was influenced and clarified through my engagement with the writings of Garfinkel on ethnomethodology and Sacks on conversation analysis. During my MA and the first year and a half of my PhD candidature, I had been reading around, and trying out, different ways of doing sociology and cultural analysis. Critical political economy, British cultural studies, and critical discourse analysis, in particular, had seemed promising approaches at first, but, for various reasons, had disappointed me. My experience during this period was similar to that described by Sacks’ colleague Schegloff (as cited in Cmejrkova & Prevignano, 2003), who recalls:
I would encounter some kind of sociology – some substantive sub-field or some methodological stance – and work at it for a while. There would then be colleagues who would ask challenging questions about it, or I would read a critical literature that found trouble with that way of working, and those critiques would seem to me compelling, and I found that I just couldn’t do that (kind of) work anymore. It wasn’t that I was determined to do the perfect inquiry; I just couldn’t do the work if I already felt that I knew it – the genre – was wrong. (pp. 34-35)

It was around this time that I “discovered” ethnomethodology and began to read key works in the field, in particular Garfinkel (1967) and Sacks (1995). The critiques of “mainstream” social and cultural research that I found in Garfinkel’s and Sacks’ writings consolidated and articulated many of the separate (and at that point still fairly vague) issues that I had with the various theoretical perspectives that I had been reading and attempting to practice. In particular, Sacks’ (1995) critique of the conception of culture that prevails within social theory seemed to encapsulate my frustration with sport studies’ preoccupations with theorizing sport and unearthing the hidden social forces that are expressed in concrete sporting activities. Sacks argued that implicitly underpinning most qualitative social research is a decontextualized conception of culture that treats phenomena such as knowledge, meanings, and categories as explanations for people’s talk and action (Stephen Hester & Eglin, 1997a). The problem with this idea of culture, for Sacks, is that it fails to provide any insight into the procedures by which people actually go about selecting which categories to assign to people or events on actual occasions of interaction. The alternative, proposed by Sacks, to the search for underlying and determinative cultural categories is to explicate the methods through which social objects are produced and recognized by members in specific contexts of social action. This general research ethos is one shared by ethnomethodology and conversation analysis, and is succinctly encapsulated by Lynch (1999) as follows:

The idea is not to describe social objects as though they were subject to physical laws or governed by mechanisms, but to come to terms with just the sorts of thing they are for those who routinely produce and recognize them.
There is no reason not to treat an embodied gesture, a greeting sequence, a traffic jam or a service line as an object, but the difficult task that lies ahead is to discover and describe how this object is produced. The “how” is an achievement in action, of action, and as action. (p. 221, emphasis in original)

After coming to grips with some of the fundamental principles of ethnomethodology and conversation analysis, I was able to rearticulate my earlier, relatively vague feelings of discontent with sport studies. It was clear that, as consequence of the field’s preoccupation with excavating the underlying structural forces expressed in (or challenged by) sporting activity, the sociology of sport literature contains a sizeable gap which might be termed the “missing whatness” (Garfinkel & Wieder, 1992, pp. 180-184) of sport studies. What I mean by this is that sociological studies of sport provide very little insight into the in situ processes of perception, sense-making, action design, and interactive organization through which members of society collaboratively accomplish their sporting activities. As I see it, then, the gap in the sociology of sport literature consists of an absence of detailed descriptions of the actual, embodied, artful practices employed by participants in producing sporting activities as recognizable social phenomena. The distinction between conventional sociological accounts of sport, and the ethnomethodological “alternate” (Garfinkel, 2007) to such accounts that this study seeks to provide, will be developed in detail over the course of this thesis.

The most important outcome of my time spent learning about ethnomethodology was that it allowed me to reconceptualize my original research interest in investigating the social significance of sport. My overarching research motivation had, as noted above, initially been to contribute to the sociological project of theoretically explaining sport as a social phenomenon. This would have involved finding some relevant sporting practice and situating it within its broader context in order to illustrate that what appeared to be “just sport” had a deeper social significance or was the outcome of some more fundamental social or cultural force(s). After I had taken my “ethnomethodological turn”, my motivation became instead to contribute to the ethnomethodological project of describing how members’ mundane activities, as accountable social objects, get built in situ by those involved in their production.
This would involve finding some mundane activity, recording and transcribing it, and subjecting it to repeated scrutiny in order to explicate the organizational methods used by members to accomplish it as a “social fact”.

At this point, I chose to focus my investigation on members’ procedures for producing and recognizing basketball practice activities. I selected basketball because, having played and watched the game for over twenty years, I already understood its workings reasonably well. This experience meant that I could satisfy the *unique adequacy* requirement of ethnomethodological research, which holds that, in order to be able adequately to recognize and describe the social objects relevant to the setting of study, the analyst must themself possess “vulgar competence” in the local production of those phenomena (Garfinkel & Wieder, 1992). The decision to focus on practice sessions specifically, rather than actual games, was based primarily on the fact that practice sessions tend to have extended periods of talk-in-interaction in them, which I believed would make the activities more amenable to analysis than games. Utilizing methods from conversation analysis, which recommends collecting recordings of naturally-occurring interaction, I filmed an elite youth development team’s practice sessions over the course of a single season. Selected fragments of the video were compiled into a data corpus, transcribed, and analyzed. During the process, the decision was made to focus on one particular type of event occurring during these practice sessions – the coach’s correction of player errors in performance¹. The detailed analyses of the interactional organization of basketball correction activities are presented in the data chapters of this thesis.

As mentioned above, this research is intended to provide an original contribution to both the sociology of sport and to the field of ethnomethodology and conversation analysis. The study’s principal contribution to the sociology of sport is to suggest a “radically alternate” (Garfinkel & Wieder, 1992) form of sociological inquiry into sport, one which investigates sporting activity as a purely practical production (Sharrock & Anderson, 1980). The empirical chapters provide a demonstration of the

¹ The reasons for selecting this particular facet of basketball practice sessions are discussed in Chapter 5.
sort of analytic payoff that can be achieved by taking up this methodological suggestion. Specifically, it is proposed that taking up an ethnomethodological perspective toward sport provides the researcher with a unique access to its “missing whatness”: the situated methods upon which members rely to constitute their activities as recognizable phenomena. These methods constitute a domain of phenomena that is unavailable to conventional social studies of sport, concerned as they are with theorizing sport settings as sites where hidden social forces and processes (of whatever kind) can be observed. The analytic chapters attempt to “cash out” this programmatic claim. The empirical analyses featured in the data section provide detailed accounts of some of the methodical ways in which people, in concert with one another, actually go about practising sport together. The features of sport brought into focus in these chapters are radically different from those that appear in conventional studies of sport, and it is in the distinctiveness of the phenomena that it presents that this study’s original contribution to the sociological investigation of sport lies.

Alongside its contribution to sport sociology, this research aims to make a modest accession to the field of ethnomethodological and conversation analytic research. This contribution, in fact, involves two separate aspects, one empirical and one methodological. Firstly, the empirical objective is to enrich the corpus of studies of social interaction. The study does this by providing a description of members’ practices for organizing their activities in a setting that has not been the subject of a great deal of ethnomethodologically-informed research – the realm of sporting activity. Additionally, the research contributes to existing bodies of ethnomethodological findings surrounding four substantive themes: embodiment, instruction, visual perception, and moral order. Each of these themes has been the focus of substantial existing ethnomethodological studies, in which they have been respecified as members’ phenomena; in other words, matters oriented to, displayed, and managed by members in and through their accomplishment of situated social interaction. All of these topics become relevant, at different times and in various ways, during the basketball practice activities examined in the empirical chapters. Overall, by explicating the situated organization of these activities, the study adds a
number of empirical observations to the existing corpus of literature on social interaction.

Secondly, the methodological goal of the study is to contribute to ongoing debates and controversies internal to the ethnomethodological community, particularly those arising between ethnomethodologists and conversation analysis over how best to investigate the methods members use in producing the accountability of their conduct. A key aim of the methodological discussion in Chapter 4 is to clarify some of the fundamental issues that divide (some) ethnomethodologists and (some) conversation analysts, and to argue that the division between the two sides of this dispute does not constitute a fundamental incompatibility between the two approaches. Building on recent attempts to overcome this divide, a methodological framework that combines an ethnomethodological sensitivity to membership categorization analysis with a conversation analytic focus on sequential organization, as well as methods for analyzing visible conduct drawn from workplace studies, is outlined. There is little existing ethnomethodological research that attends to the reflexive relations between members’ categorial, sequential and visible/embodied orientations in their organization of interaction. It is argued that the hybrid methodology that I present comprises a coherent analytic framework, in alignment with ethnomethodology’s “analytic mentality” (Schenkein, 1978), that is methodologically adequate to the task of capturing the “incourseness” (Rawls, 2002) of basketball practice activities. The empirical analysis in this thesis attempts to apply this approach in order to demonstrate both its methodological coherence and its utility for analyzing the situated organization of embodied activities. These three projects of: a) specifying some of the “missing whatness” characterizing the sociology of sport literature; b) adding to the substantive body of ethnomethodological findings; and c) contributing to methodological debates internal to the broad field of ethnomethodological research, comprise the analytic threads that run through and connect the theoretical, methodological, and empirical chapters of the thesis.

The thesis is organized into three main sections. The first, comprised of Chapters 1 and 2, reviews existing literature relevant to the study. Chapter 1 explores the field of
sport sociology. It summarizes a range of empirical studies of sport, and, in doing so, highlights a variety of theoretical perspectives, thematic interests, and research agendas that have underpinned conventional sociological studies of sport. The discussion of these studies is intended to provide a demonstration of the picture of sport that tends to be presented in the conventional sociological literature. The chapter is perhaps unusual for a literature review in that it is not concerned to criticize the sociological studies it discusses. Rather, its purpose is to establish a basis upon which “sport as conceived via conventional sociological approaches” and “sport as conceived by ethnomethodology” can be contrasted.

Chapter 2 turns attention to the corpus of ethnomethodological literature relevant to my research. It begins by outlining studies that have taken sport as their central focus. While there are only a small number of such studies, the insights developed in this body of research form an important framework upon which my study seeks to build. Along with outlining studies of sport and explicating their relevance to my work, this chapter also discusses ethnomethodological research on the thematic topics mentioned above – embodiment, instruction, and visual perception. It summarizes key studies on these themes and identifies the central empirical and conceptual discoveries that have emerged from the research. The discussion then explicates the relevance that these themes have to the activities this study investigates, and details a set of issues and questions, emerging from the previous research, that will be taken up in the empirical analysis.

The second section of the thesis, comprised of Chapters 3, 4, and 5, is concerned with expounding and analyzing issues of theory, methodology, and method. Chapter 3 outlines the philosophical and theoretical assumptions upon which ethnomethodology is based. This central purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate that ethnomethodology diverges from other sociological approaches in fundamental, irresolvable ways. This is shown by explicating Garfinkel’s early work, in which he examined the methodological implications of operationalizing various theoretical

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2 The fourth thematic topic identified above, moral order, is not considered in Chapter 2, but is discussed fully in Chapter 8.
standpoints, in particular those developed by Parsons and Schutz. As this chapter argues, Garfinkel’s decision to build an approach to the study of social life based on Schutzian insights involved the operationalization of basic, pre-sociological presuppositions divergent from those underpinning conventional sociological theorizing. “Following Schutz” resulted in the development of a perspective incommensurate with conventional sociological approaches. As a result, ethnomethodological studies are neither competitive with, nor complementary to, the findings of sociological research. Rather, they consist of a radical alternate to such literature. This chapter additionally lays out the domain of phenomena that the ethnomethodological approach makes available for study: the ways in which members accomplish the intelligibility and recognizability of their activities from within those activities themselves.

While Chapter 3 focuses on theoretically distinguishing ethnomethodology’s project from that underpinning conventional sociological research, Chapter 4 is concerned with the task, outlined above, of developing a methodological approach for studying sporting activities as situated practical productions. This is accomplished by identifying a set of relevant methodological tools from conversation analysis, membership categorization analysis, and workplace studies, and suggesting a way of combining them into a complex analytic framework for investigating how parties to basketball practice sessions collaboratively accomplish their activities as recognizable events. The overall approach proffered in this chapter is one that inspects sequentially unfolding courses of action for how they are built through members’ orientations to and invocation of complex layers of categorization devices. This methodological approach is taken up in the empirical chapters.

Chapter 5 concludes this section by describing the research process, from the initial stage of gaining access to the research participants through to the collection, transcription, and analysis of the data. It provides some contextual background to the research by describing the team that I studied and its location within the organizational structures of junior basketball in Australia. It then turns to the issue of methods, arguing that the use of recorded materials as a research technique is in deep alignment with the analytic mentality of ethnomethodological conversation analysis.
Further discussion is devoted to the practical and technical issues that arose during data collection, and the decisions I made in attempting to resolve them. The remainder of the chapter outlines the process by which the data was analyzed, again highlighting consequential decisions that were made along the way and attempting to justify the choices that were made. In particular, the election to analyze single cases of interaction, rather than working with collections, is explained by showing that this approach is in accordance with the theoretical and methodological commitments established in earlier chapters.

The third section consists of the empirical analysis of basketball correction activities. Chapter 6 focuses on an event that precedes the initiation of any correction activity during the practice sessions I filmed: the coach visually identifying some aspect of player performance as warranting correction. These visual practices are highly consequential for the ways practice sessions unfold, as it is through locating correctable events that the coach is able to identify relevant absences of player competences and therefore determine the skills in which they need further instruction or practice. The analysis is taken up with investigating the coach’s observational practices in order to specify how he is able, in real-time situations of action, to assess player performances for “correctables” (Weeks, 1985). By working through a single correction event, and drawing on other fragments to illustrate relevant points, the analysis demonstrates that multiple membership categorization devices are oriented to and invoked by the coach and players alike in order to establish the sense of observable events. As the action unfolds sequentially, various categorization devices become activated and serve to generate relevant next sequential actions. Further, the analysis introduces the notion of “ball-relative categories” to argue that spatial positions can function analogously to membership categories, generating sets of rights, responsibilities, and sequential relevancies to their occupants. Overall, the chapter argues that the coach of this team employs his knowledge of interlocking categorial, sequential, and spatial domains of organization in order to identify relevant correctable actions.

Chapter 7 builds on the analysis in Chapter 6, examining how correctable objects, once identified by the coach, are dealt with and resolved in practice sessions. The
particular analytic objective of this chapter is to explicate how correctional activities are collaboratively organized and accomplished by the coach and the players in ways that provide for the resolution of certain practical problems. More specifically, it explores several organizational features of these activities that appear to be designed to deal with the problem of making correctable events and their corrections visible. Since the objects of basketball corrections are primarily players’ embodied activities and “missed objects” such as “a gap to pass into”, the effectiveness of the coach’s corrections depends to a large extent upon his ability to make these phenomena visibly available for instructional work. As this chapter argues, certain features of basketball practice activities, such as the dynamic and ephemeral nature of players’ actions and “basketball-relevant objects” as they appear and then vanish during unfolding activities, means that work must often be done to recreate such phenomena before correctional work can be undertaken. Further, the exact sense of correctable objects frequently depends upon their precise location within complex spatial, categorial and sequential background contexts. As a result, the interactional work of reconstructing these environments is a key feature of correctable activities. Once built, the participants have at their disposal a highly manipulable three-dimensional embodied representation of the prior play that affords a range of instructional practices. The chapter goes on to specify some of the practices used in this space, including what I have termed “environmentally coupled enactments” and the “spatial mapping procedure”. As a whole, the chapter illustrates how corrections are organized through the embodied construction and use of a powerful pedagogical resource for coaching.

Chapter 8 shifts analytic attention to the explication of a thematic topic – the moral order of practice sessions. Taking as its starting point Garfinkel’s (1967) argument that “a society’s members encounter and know the moral order as perceivedly normal courses of action” (p. 35), the chapter explores several activities in which the normative expectations of the setting are breached and, as a result, members’ practices of reasoning in establishing “local configurations of moral organization and sense” (Housley & Fitzgerald, 2009, p. 346) become visible. In detailing how certain performance errors are found to be “unreasonable”, the analysis demonstrates some of the ways in which background moral expectancies are reflexively made relevant in
and through sequentially organized interaction. Additionally, through the investigation of a dispute between multiple participants over the moral sense of an altercation between two players, it is demonstrated that the players possess a fine-grained understanding of the setting, its available identities, relations and norms of conduct, and of morally appropriate ways of characterizing their actions and those of others. Further, they display a detailed knowledge of how to integrate these orientations through the production of sequentially organized action through, for instance, the skilful employment of preference structures. In illustrating some features of the moral organization of basketball practice activities, this chapter both adds an important dimension to the thesis’ overall project of describing how parties to basketball practice sessions accomplish these events in and as situated practical action. Further, it contributes to the corpus of ethnomethodological studies concerned to respecify the sociological topic of the normative organization of society as a members’ matter.

Finally, the conclusion brings together the threads developed over the previous chapters. Returning to the three projects, outlined above, that constitute the central objectives of the study, the chapter summarizes the points that have been made with regard to each over the course of the thesis, crystallizes the arguments that have been developed, and evaluates the extent to which the stated objectives have been met. With regard to the first goal, that of supplying some of the “missing whatness” of sporting activity that characterizes the sociology of sport literature, the argument is made that the analysis has successfully depicted a range of features of the social organization of one type of sporting activity, basketball practice sessions, which are unavailable to conventional sociological research. As such, the chapter contends that the study has achieved, at least to some extent, the goal of demonstrating the analytic payoff of adopting an ethnomethodological perspective on sport. The second stated aim was to contribute empirical findings to the corpus of ethnomethodological studies of social interaction. In one way, this is achieved simply by virtue of the study’s topic, since there is little existing ethnomethodological work that has taken sporting activity as its focus, and none that has specifically addressed team sport training and coaching. Further contributions, however, have been made by this study with regard to each of the themes of embodiment, visual perception, instruction, and
moral order. The conclusion outlines the substantive details of these contributions, and sums up their nature by defining them as incremental additions to the existing ethnomethodological knowledge. Finally, the third aim of this thesis outlined above was to weigh in on methodological debates internal to the ethnomethodological community. It is argued here that the hybrid methodological approach developed in Chapter 4 and then applied in the empirical chapters, which combines analytic resources from conversation analysis, membership categorization analysis, and workplace studies, enabled access to members’ reflexive use of multiple organizational resources in their accomplishment of basketball activities. Ultimately, the validity of this approach turns on its pragmatic utility for “making studies”, and this chapter argues that in making empirical objects such as ball-relative categories available, the method is a useful one for investigating the organization of embodied activities such as sport practice sessions. The chapter ends with a final statement of the study’s overall contribution to knowledge.

There is, however, much ground to be covered before such assessments can be made. The process is initiated in what immediately follows with a survey of sociological research on sport.
Chapter 1: **The Sociology of Sport and its “Missing Whatness”**

If one was to read the entire literature of the sociology of work, one would find out very little about the work that people actually do, about the work that is the stuff of their daily lives. *(Sharrock & Anderson, 1986, p. 85)*

By the notion of the “missing whatness”, Sacks drew attention to the fact that in the writings of ethnographers of music such as Howard Becker, one is informed about many aspects and organizational features of the activities of musicians – such as the characteristic attitudes of musicians towards their audience, the economic vagaries of the musician’s lifestyle and so on. However, what is noticeably absent from such ethnographic accounts is any discussion, let alone detailed examination, of the way in which musicians actually make music together. *(Stephen Hester & Francis, 2007, p. 7)*

1.1 **INTRODUCTION: SPORT AND SOCIOLOGY**

Speaking in the most general terms, the focus of this thesis is the investigation of sport as a mundane social activity, that is, as something that people do as part of their ordinary lives together. There already exists, of course, a field of research – the sociology of sport – which by its very name would appear to be concerned with inquiring into precisely this subject. Sport has been a topic of sociological interest for some time. Mainstream sociologists brought their attention to sport, leisure activities, and games as far back as the late 19th century in works by, for example, Veblen (1899), Simmel (1917), Weber (1904/1930), and Mead (1934) *(Malcolm, 2012)*. The sociology of sport emerged as a distinct and legitimate subdiscipline in its own right in the mid-1960s *(Ingham & Donnelly, 1997; Malcolm, 2012)*. This period saw several key events, such as the publication of Kenyon and Loy’s programmatic paper *Toward a sociology of sport* (1965/1969) and Kenyon’s edited collection *Aspects of Contemporary Sport Sociology* (1969), as well as the establishment of the International Committee for the Sociology of Sport (the forerunner of the International Sociology of Sport Association). The field has since developed into a sizeable one, with its own academic journals, annual conferences and symposia, and undergraduate and postgraduate courses.
This chapter outlines a range of sociological studies of sport. Taking a (roughly) chronological approach to the field, it discusses sociological research on the general topic of sport and (some of) the variety of theoretical perspectives, thematic interests, and research agendas that have underpinned such work. Perhaps unconventionally for a literature review, however, this chapter is not concerned with critiquing this sociological research on sport for its theoretical or methodological shortcomings. Nor is it suggested that the analysis of sport to be presented in this thesis is in some way “better” than existing studies. Rather, sociological studies of sport and their various research agendas are outlined here in order to illustrate the pictures of sport that sociology is in the business of producing, and to provide a contrast with the ethnomethodologically-informed version of sport that will be developed in the analytic chapters of this thesis. A few points on the nature of this contrast will be useful at this juncture.

Interestingly (but perhaps unsurprisingly to those familiar with sociological inquiry), while the sociology of sport is responsible for producing a substantial output of high-quality work, the observation made by Sharrock and Anderson (1986) regarding the sociology of work in the quote that opens this chapter could be directed equally well toward sport studies. Although sociological studies of sport adopt a wide range of theoretical and methodological approaches, and pursue a variety of lines of inquiry, what most of these studies have in common is the overriding concern to produce theorized explanations of the patterns of activity that we, as members of society, unproblematically recognize as “people playing sport” when we encounter them. What we do not learn about is how such recognizable activities are put together, assembled in situ through the practical understandings of participants, in such a way that they are subsequently recognizable to us as sport. It is important to note that this observation is not a criticism of conventional sociological research on sport. My discussion remains resolutely “ethnomethodologically indifferent” ³ (Garfinkel &

³ Garfinkel and Sacks (1969/1986, pp. 345-346) describe the policy of ethnomethodological indifference as follows:

Ethnomethodological studies of formal structures … [seek] to describe members’ accounts of formal structures wherever and by whomever they are done, while abstaining from all judgements of their adequacy, value, importance, necessity, practicality, success or consequentiality. We refer to this procedural policy as “ethnomethodological indifference”
Sacks, 1969/1986) regarding the epistemological or methodological validity of theoretical accounts of sporting activities. Rather than passing judgment on the adequacy of sociological studies of sport, my intention in this thesis is to offer a radically alternate version of what a sociology of sport might be. The sport sociology I recommend deliberately attends to a domain of phenomena to which other sociologies, due to their presuppositions, are blind – indeed, phenomena that are irrelevant to conventional sociology’s purposes⁴. Such phenomena consist of the practical methods involved in producing social life. I will develop the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of this alternate sport sociology in later chapters. In what immediately follows, however, I summarize the literature constituting what I have referred to as conventional sport sociology.

1.2 THE SOCIAL FUNCTIONS OF SPORT

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, a number of formative studies investigated how sport, as a social institution, interacts with other social institutions, and how it may be functional (or dysfunctional) for the organization and stability of social systems (Coakley & Pike, 2009). These studies drew on the structural-functionalist perspectives developed by Durkheim and Parsons that comprised the sociological orthodoxy in North America at the time (Ingham & Donnelly, 1997). As such, they were underpinned by a central preoccupation with exploring the ways in which sport had evolved to support certain functional imperatives of society (Jarvie & Maguire, 1994). Indeed, though it is an oversimplification to say that structural functionalism

⁴ Although, as Sharrock and Anderson (1980) concede, to make such a point is, in a way, to engage in criticism of sociologists, but not for the ways in which they do their sociological work. Rather, it is a criticism of their tendency to present their way of doing sociology as the only way of inquiring into social life and their attempts, on these grounds, to discredit ethnomethodologists for doing what they want to do.
dominated the first wave of studies in sociology of sport proper, it is clear that it was a highly influential approach (Malcolm, 2012).

An important exemplar of this literature is a paper by Luschen (1967), in which he discusses sport as a subsystem of the wider socio-cultural system and speculates on its structural functions for culture and society. He suggests that sport’s main social functions are pattern maintenance (via its capacity for socializing values, norms and behaviours) and integration (aiding social harmony by, for example, affording community or national identification with sporting representatives). Stevenson and Nixon (1972) expand upon Luschen’s functions of socialization and integration, assert that sport also serves to maintain socio-psychological stability, to serve political/ideological purposes, and to provide a source of upward social mobility.

While there have been a number of conceptual explorations of sport’s social functions, such as the two papers mentioned above, there are relatively few applications of functionalist theory to specific sporting phenomena (Loy & Booth, 2000). In one notable example, however, Curtis, Loy and Karnilowicz (1986) draw on Durkheim’s arguments regarding suicide and religious life (i.e., that suicide rates are functions of a lack of social cohesion and, since Catholics have greater social cohesion than Protestants, suicide rates ought to be lower for Catholics) but replace religious denomination as a source of social integration with public ceremonial occasions. They hypothesize that suicide rates ought to be lower on ceremonial days, including Super Bowl Sunday and the last game of baseball’s World Series (the study is restricted to American society), and they discover evidence to support this Durkheimian notion. In a more recent study, Hussein (2011) explores the social functions of street soccer in Cairo. He argues that children’s involvement in street soccer functions as a means for them to become included into networks of relationships among their families and communities and leads to more community involvement, thus fostering greater social solidarity.

Functionalist work on sport has been criticized along the same lines as standard critiques of functionalism in general. Perhaps the most consequential line of criticism of the functionalist perspective has been that informed by Marxism. Marxist
perspectives have argued that the functionalist view of society as an integrated whole made up of parts, each of which fulfills certain requirements of the social system, tends to de-emphasize structural conflict between social groups and asymmetrical distributions of power in society. A neo-Marxist alternative to functionalist analyses of sport began to emerge in the late 1960s, in the wake of the worldwide cultural and political radicalism and social unrest marking that turbulent decade (Carrington & McDonald, 2009). The following section discusses studies informed by this perspective.

1.3 Sport, Capitalism, and Ideology

Neo-Marxist approaches to sport can be characterized by a view that sport’s modern form is a product of power struggles between competing class factions in capitalist society, and thus largely a tool of exploitation and domination. This general perspective sets the neo-Marxist view of sport firmly against functionalism’s implied view of it as a beneficial phenomenon functioning to help oil the wheels of an essentially just social order (Rowe, 2004). In his book Rip Off the Big Game (1972), Hoch argues that professional sport mirrors capitalist society in its political economic structure, and that it functions as a mechanism for socializing members of society into ideological values supportive of capitalism, such as consumerism, militarism and elitism (Gruneau, 1983/1999). Similarly, Brohm’s Sport: A Prison of Measured Time (1978/1989) argues that modern sport is an historically-emergent institution tied to the material conditions of modern capitalist industrialization in which, as an ideological state apparatus, it functions as an important site for the development of false consciousness. Sport, according to Brohm, offers alienated workers a false sense of escape, undermines revolutionary consciousness, and legitimizes commercialism, technocracy, and the coercive state (Gruneau, 1983/1999).

Rigauer’s Sport and Work (1969/1981) is somewhat distinct from Hoch’s and Brohm’s studies in that it was influenced more by Frankfurt School critical theory than by orthodox Marxist ideas (Jarvie & Maguire, 1994). Rigauer asserts that sport under capitalism has taken on characteristics comparable to work, and that athletes, like modern factory workers, are alienated and dehumanized by their practices.
Rather than linking this oppression directly to the profit motive of capitalism, however, Rigauer draws on concepts from Adorno, Horkheimer and Marcuse to argue that bureaucratic, scientific and technological rationalization have become the paramount forces of oppression in modern societies, and have colonized sport as much as they have work. The ideologies of efficiency and performance have come to dominate sport and, as a result, athletes are subjected to dehumanizing scientific analysis and gruelling training regimes, effectively becoming alienated parts of highly rationalized athlete-production systems designed to maximize performance output (Horne, Tomlinson, & Whannel, 1999).

It was a reaction to the residual economism, reductionism and left-functionalism of neo-Marxist analysis, and a corresponding desire for a more adequate treatment of culture as a constitutive force in its own right, that led many leftist/critical scholars of sport in the mid-1980s to turn to Gramscian cultural studies in the hope of establishing a more theoretically satisfactory foundation for a critical social research (Carrington & McDonald, 2009). In the process, Neo-Marxist studies such as Brohm’s and Riguaer’s became subject to critique from leftist sociologists of sport for their simplistic treatment of sport as purely economically determined institutions, and for their assumption that sport functions simply to maintain capitalist relations of power (Rowe, 2004). Sport studies informed by the “Gramscian turn” form the topic of the next section.

1.4 SPORT, POWER, AND HEGEMONY

Though cultural studies does not comprise a single theoretical or methodological approach, it is nonetheless widely acknowledged that the influence of the Italian Marxist Gramsci has been pivotal in its development (J. A. Hargreaves & McDonald, 2000). Gramsci’s work held deep appeal for leftist scholars who were interested in the politics of culture yet troubled by orthodox Marxism’s economic determinism. From the mid-1960s, Raymond Williams and scholars at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) at Birmingham University had been attempting to develop a non-deterministic Marxist approach to the analysis of culture. At the end of the 1970s, scholars at the CCCS, in particular Stuart Hall,
found in Gramsci’s idea of hegemony a resource for treating the “superstructure” of everyday cultural activity, including sport, as a complex site of struggle and contestation for power between dominant and subordinate groups, rather than a simple ideological reflection of underlying economic relations.

With his concept of hegemony, Gramsci (2009) emphasized that the maintenance of political power in modern societies is not a matter of mere brute domination by the ruling class. Rather, in order for a class to gain and hold power, they must secure the consent of subaltern classes to being led. This consent is achieved through establishing the widespread acceptance of a version of social reality which supports the interests of the ruling faction “so that the power of the dominant classes appears both legitimate and natural” (Hebdidge, 1979, p. 16). Importantly, hegemony highlights the fact that the pre-eminence of a particular version of reality is the contingent and temporary outcome of an ongoing process of struggle between dominant and subordinate groups, which can never be settled once and for all. There will always remain the possibility that elites will be unsuccessful in their attempts to control the definition of a certain aspect of reality, because counter-hegemonic accounts may arise to challenge official versions and thereby destabilize standing relations of power (Hughson, 2009). This conception of hegemony as a work-in-progress thus provides for the structural possibility of strategic intervention by and gradual social transformation in the interests of dominated groups (McDonald, 2002).

Gramsci’s idea of hegemony, particularly as it was interpreted and developed by Hall in CCCS publications and elsewhere, provided critical sport scholars with a resource for arguing that sport was not simply a mechanical ideological support for capitalism, but a socially significant arena in its own right which could in fact constitute a site of popular resistance. For example, Hall is quoted in one sociology of sport text as follows:

5 Interestingly, the fourth issue of the CCCS’s Working Papers in Cultural Studies included an early ethnomethodological study of sport, Watson’s (1973) article on the public announcement of a crash at a Formula 1 motor racing event.
Popular culture is one of the sites where this struggle for and against a culture of the powerful is engaged: it is also the stake to be won or lost in that struggle. It is the area of consent and resistance. It is partly where hegemony arises, and where it is secured. It is not a sphere where socialism, a socialist culture – already fully formed – might be simply expressed. But it is one of the places where socialism might be constituted. That is why popular culture matters. (Hall, 1981, as cited in Jarvie & Maguire, 1994, pp. 120-121)

Since being enthusiastically taken up by sport scholars in the 1980s, Gramsci, with the possible exceptions of Elias, Bourdieu, and Foucault, has “arguably become the most frequently cited theorist in literature on the social and political significance of sport” (Bairner, 2009, p. 196). The period between 1982 and 1995 was a particularly fertile one for research on sport and hegemony, seeing the publication of a number of influential studies. A brief list of such work includes, Clarke and Critcher (1985), Donnelly (1988), Gruneau (1983/1999), J. E. Hargreaves (1986), Ingham and Hardy (1993), McKay (1991), Rowe (1995), and Whannel (1992).

Two works, in particular, are often cited as pioneering Gramscian sport studies (Bairner, 2009): Gruneau’s *Class, Sports, and Social Development* (1983/1999) and J. E. Hargreaves’ *Sport, Power and Culture* (1986). For my purposes here, discussion of Gruneau’s book will suffice. Influenced by non-Marxist social theorists such as Veblen and Giddens as well as by Gramscian cultural studies, Gruneau’s book critiqued extant theorizations of sport for their one-dimensional voluntarism or reductionism. In their place, he advanced a theoretical argument that games and sport comprise distinctive fields of practice that are both structured by and structuring of social reality, and that function as sources of both freedom and constraint. Gruneau offers a view of sport as:

constitutive practices set in a whole social process in which humans interact with one another and generally try to make sense of themselves as agents in their association with other agents... [sport] can be understood as the skilled accomplishments of players and organizers – accomplishments that involve constitutive elements of practical consciousness as human agents produce,
reproduce, and produce anew the conditions of their own existence. (pp. 30-31, emphasis in original)

Despite his concern to stress sport as a constitutive domain of social practice that contributes to the production of meaningful human experience, Gruneau also wished to emphasize the role of material capitalist relations in structuring sport structures. Ultimately, for Gruneau, sport “can only be understood in the broader context of the conflicts of interest and unequally distributed social resources that exist in any form of social organization” (p. 102).

Writing in 2004, Rowe observed that the “Gramscian moment” in sport studies appeared to have passed. The emergence of poststructuralist and postmodernist perspectives within the academy, the demands for recognition by feminist, gay/queer, and black groups, and the recognition of the complexity of contemporary sport culture under conditions of late capitalism and globalization (Andrews, 2009), together saw sport research moving away from narrow concerns with class towards a consideration of a broader set of issues surrounding the politics of identity in contemporary society (Carrington, 2007). Alongside this turn to identity, an increasing interest in the works of Foucault and Bourdieu, along with an embrace of the ideas of others such as Giddens, Goffman, Elias, and Butler, contributed to the emergence of a new era of research on sporting bodies (Atkinson & Wilson, 2002; Laberge & Kay, 2002; Malcolm, 2012).

As J. E. Hargreaves and McDonald (2007) observe, people’s identities are “fundamentally and irredeemably embodied identities” (p. xiii). As such, I have incorporated a discussion of the topic of identity, as it has been addressed in the sociology of sport, into the following section on bodies. Further, given the centrality of the body to the activities focused on in the present enterprise, I devote a substantial discussion to this topic.
1.5 **Sporting Bodies**

It has been argued that until the last two decades of the 20th century, the body was something of an “absent presence” in modern social theory (J. E. Hargreaves, 1987; Shilling, 1993). Sociology’s early concern with carving out an independent field separate from the physical sciences involved establishing the meaningful domain of “the social” as a reality sui generis, possessing its own governing principles separate from the physical world, and acting on the individual at the level of language, rationality and cognition. However, the rejection of biological determinism in favour of an emphasis on the social constitution of social action and experience had the consequence that the corporeality of the social actor was neglected, at least to some extent (Casey, 2000; Crossley, 1995; Howson & Inglis, 2001; Shilling, 1993; Turner, 2008). A recognition of the significance of embodiment to social and cultural life emerged in Britain at the beginning of the 1980s (Turner, 2009), leading to an “explosion” of sociological research and theorizing focusing on the body6 (J. E. Hargreaves & Vertinsky, 2007).

The centrality of the moving, performing body to sporting practice and experience would seem to make the topic of embodiment a logical preoccupation for the sociology of sport. Until recently, however, the non-body bias of social theory in general was largely reflected in the sociology of sport. Writers in the late 1980s and early 1990s lamented the neglect of the body in sport studies, and emphasized the crucial need to develop an understanding of, and orientation to, the body. Theberge (1991) pointed out the irony that “in studying sport, where the body is essential to the experience, we have largely missed its meaning and importance” (p. 124). Similarly, Maguire (1993) noted that the body’s historical neglect in sport studies was “rather strange” given that embodied acts largely constitute sport participation and spectatorship. Since then, however, a substantial sociological literature taking the sporting body as its focus has emerged.

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6 Shilling (2007), however, points out that there has been a neglect of the fact that the classical social theories of Comte, Durkheim, Simmel, Weber and Marx were substantially informed by considerations of the body as a factor in moral orders, social formations and social actions.
In a review of the literature on the then-emerging sociology of sport and the body, Maguire (1993) divides extant work on the topic into four categories: the disciplined body, the biomedical body, the commodified body, and the symbolic body. Subsequent reviews have classified research along roughly analogous lines (e.g. Atkinson & Wilson, 2002; Cole, 2000). I use Maguire’s typology here as a heuristic device for organizing a discussion of central studies in the outpouring of work concerned with sporting bodies. I consider the first three themes together and treat the fourth, symbolic bodies, as a separate topic, as it relates more closely to my research.

A first branch of sport-body studies informed by the theories of Elias, Bourdieu, and Foucault has focused on sporting bodies as objects of disciplinary practices (Maguire, 1993). Foucault’s concept of discipline as a modern form of power that uses normalization rather than repression as a technology for the domination of bodies (Rail & Harvey, 1995) has been particularly influential in this strand. For Foucault, disciplines involve sets of conditions and procedures through which corporeal capacities, norms, and identities can be inculcated. One central focus of studies of disciplined bodies has been how practices and discourses of physical education and sport training were implicated in the development of the modern state (see, for instance, Dunning (1993), Dunning and Sheard (1979), Gruneau (1983/1999), Gruneau and Whitson (1993), J. E. Hargreaves (1986), Kimmel (1990), and Messner (1992)). To provide one example of this strand of research, J. E. Hargreaves (1987) argues that sport and physical education in mid-nineteenth century English public schools implemented a new bodily regimen “governing ‘correct’ shape, health, diet, appearance, work and rest, sexuality, and so on” (p. 143).

A second theme in the analysis of disciplined bodies has been the contribution of sport to the construction of gendered and raced bodies. For instance, studies have proposed that sport was historically central to the production of masculinity in English public schools, and to the exclusion of women from sport on the grounds of their physical frailty (J. A. Hargreaves, 1994; Theberge, 1989); that the fitness and aerobics movement of the 1980s resulted in the sexualization and trivialization of
women’s physical activity (M. MacNeill, 1988); and that during the turn of the century “crisis of masculinity”, sport was instrumental in the reassertion of male authority and bodily ideals (Gruneau & Whitson, 1993; C. Howell, 1996; Kimmel, 1990). Several studies have shown that sport and physical education played a key role in the process of colonizing indigenous peoples. A key theme of these studies has been to show how sporting practices both drew upon and contributed to racist discourses distinguishing between “civilized” and “savage” bodies, and in so doing, identified black people as more physical, instinctual and “bodied” than, and intellectually inferior to, whites (see, for example, Bale and Cronin (2003), Gardiner (2003), Hoberman (2007), and Hokowhitu (2003a, 2003b)).

Several sport scholars have claimed that the “medicalization” of elite sport – that is, the institutionalized use of techniques of biomedical science to enhance sporting performance – has occurred alongside sport’s professionalization and rationalization (Miller, Lawrence, McKay, & Rowe, 2001; Safai, 2007; Theberge, 2007). Sport specializations have emerged in a number of different health professions and it has been argued that modern athletes, in the pursuit of sporting supremacy, have been increasingly brought under the disciplinary gaze of medical experts (Waddington, 1996). In their study of gymnasts, for instance, Johns and Johns (2000) argue that biomedical discourses on diet and weight management have become imbricated in athletes’ daily lives, with their eating patterns subject to surveillance by coaches, other athletes, and the athletes themselves.

Studies of commodified bodies have been concerned primarily with understanding the effects of capitalism through investigating the relations between sport, bodies, the media and consumer culture. Gruneau (1983/1999) argues that the positive values associated with the healthy, civilized sporting body have been appropriated by advertisers as a means of capturing consumers. J. E. Hargreaves (1987) declares that the desires stimulated by sport and fitness advertising have encouraged individuals to discipline their bodies in the direction of normalization. Similarly, Featherstone (1991) claims that the media encourage practices of self-scrutiny through presenting images of the ideal body. Several studies have examined the emergence in the 1980s of media images valorizing the fit, “hard” body, the appearance of celebrity workout
products, and the development of a “yuppie” fitness culture, and have suggested that these phenomena were intricately connected to neo-liberal economic policy (Cole & Hriber, 1995; Ewen, 1988; J. Howell, 1991; Jeffords, 1994).

The work on sporting bodies outlined in this section has been concerned predominantly with identifying and critiquing those social conditions, discourses and power relations involved in the construction of the athletic body. The literature comprising Maguire’s fourth category – symbolic bodies – consists of sport research focused more directly on describing sporting participants’ embodied experiences. I summarize this research in the next section.

**Symbolic Sporting Bodies**

Studies of symbolic bodies can be divided roughly into two main theoretical strands: on the one hand, studies of sport subcultures (or more recent theoretical replacements of subcultures such as “neo-tribes” (Maffesoli, 1996)) informed by symbolic interactionism (SI) and cultural studies (CS), and on the other, studies drawing on the “later” Foucauldian concept of “technologies of the self”.

SI/CS studies of embodiment and sporting subcultures have tended to focus on alternative or extreme sports such as surfing, skateboarding, snowboarding and hang-gliding. Alternative sports have been described as hedonistic and risky pursuits, characterized by valuing pleasure, intense experiences, and the affective body as opposed to the commodified, disciplined and medicalized body (outlined above) characteristic of modernity (Wheaton, 2004). Researchers have argued that the meanings of these sports for their participants is rooted in the self-actualizing potential offered by such activities, with emphasis placed on the creative, aesthetic, and affective aspects of participation (Humphreys, 2003; Lewis, 2000; Midol & Broyer, 1995; Stranger, 1999; Wheaton, 2004). These studies have frequently suggested that subcultural involvement can lead to the development of new and transgressive forms of embodied subjectivity (Wheaton, 2007). Atkinson and Wilson (2002), for instance, argue that skateboarders can symbolically subvert discipline and control through physical expression; although an innovative skateboard trick “might be only symbolically subversive, it represents at least a temporary escape or sense of
empowerment through movement” (p. 386, emphasis in original). Similarly, Cronan and Scott (2008), in their study of a women’s triathlon training group, hold that participation in the activity provides for embodied experiences through which women are able to recreate their bodies and their identities, in the process experiencing themselves as athletes rather than “ornaments”.

Foucault’s “technologies of the self” concept reflects a move, in his later work, away from the focus on how individual bodies are constituted by technologies of domination and power and toward investigating processes of “subjectification” – that is, the means by which subjects actively recognize themselves as subjects, constitute themselves, and transform themselves (Rail & Harvey, 1995). Various studies, primarily by feminist scholars concerned with investigating the political production of female bodies, have explored sport from this perspective (Pringle & Markula, 2005). For instance, Chapman (1997) investigated the weight management practices of the members of a women’s rowing team. She argues that these practices could be seen to operate as disciplinary technologies involving restrictions on food consumption and high levels of physical activity and self-surveillance through which thin and toned female bodies culturally defined as attractive were produced. However, Chapman asserts that these practices could also be understood as technologies of the self through which the women used available discursive elements in transgressive ways. For example, she argues that the rowers employed biomedical discourse to categorize extreme dieting as a pathogenic practice, in order strategically to resist dieting practices.

Markula (2003), however, disagrees with Chapman’s contention that the rowers were challenging relations of power through their practices of weight management. For Markula, the rowers’ freedom to choose practices of shaping their bodies was submerged within dominant discourses of femininity and high performance sport – for example, regardless of their strategic practices, “the rowers believed that weight management was a necessary part of their sport and thus, unquestioningly applied biomedical principles in their training” (p. 90). Their ostensible “freedom” thus consisted of “tricks” for coping with the situation rather than practices for actually transforming relations of domination. Markula argues that, in order for bodily
practices to be truly technologies of the self rather than “technologies of domination”, they must not merely be used to cope with dominant discourses, but to increase actively one’s critical self-awareness. Chase (2006) takes up Markula’s point in her study of women’s rugby, in which she examined ways in which competing and contradictory discourses may be involved in shaping the female rugby body. Chase asserts that, although the players she interviewed could be described as valuing a docile and disciplined rugby body characterized by strength, size, fitness, and tackling power⁷, the women were acutely aware that they were challenging ideas of normative feminine body size, shape, and movement, and that, as a result of this awareness, women’s rugby could be considered a form of resistance.

A smaller number of Foucauldian studies have examined the construction of masculine bodies. Pringle and Markula’s (2005) study of men’s experiences of rugby highlights the contradictory nature of the relationships between sport and masculinities. The researchers argue that rugby provides a context for the negotiation of masculine identities, and that, rather than a generating a simple reproduction of dominant discourses of masculinity, multiple and competing discourses enter into the men’s understandings of masculinity and rugby. The availability of alternative discourses enabled the men in their study to question the dominant male values of pain tolerance and physical toughness. As a result, although rugby remained a central element in the production of masculine subjectivities, those emerging were not unambiguously dominant ones, but were instead diverse and paradoxical. In another study, Atencio and Wright (2008) investigated the relations between American urban basketball culture and black masculine subjectivities, and contended that young black men actively engage with basketball as a part of a process of “subjectification”. On the one hand, they argue, the men that they interviewed used basketball to reinforce normalized versions of racial masculinities. A neo-liberal “sport versus gangs” discourse, in which young black men are regarded as sovereign agents with the opportunity to “make something of themselves” through sport, compelled the young men in the study to take up socially dominant identities and practices in which

⁷ There is an obvious irony here in Chase’s description of the women’s big, muscular, powerful bodies, built through lifting weights, as “docile”.
high-status masculinity was based on the ability physically to dominate others on the basketball court. On the other hand, however, they found that the young men who had achieved high social status in their neighbourhoods as a result of their basketball abilities used their position to pursue more diversified and democratic masculinities.

As the studies outlined above illustrate, Foucauldian research based on the technologies of the self concept has attended to the ways in which embodied sporting actors actively negotiate, challenge, and transform the discursive structures in which they are embedded. Nonetheless, critics of this tradition, such as Crossley (2004), have argued that the Foucauldian influence on studies of athletic corporeality has resulted in an overemphasis on the ordering effects of discursive structures at the expense of an empirical focus on embodied practice. For Crossley, Foucauldian-inspired studies have a tendency to overstate the “docility” of bodies and to reify sporting practices as technologies of body modification, while “ignoring the active role of embodied agents in these practices and eliding the differences between texts which prescribe ways of acting and the more messy and complex reality of those ways of acting” (p. 41). In a similar vein, Wacquant (1995b) complains of a lack of attention in sociologies of the body “to the diverse ways in which specific social worlds invest, shape, and deploy human bodies and to the concrete incorporating practices whereby their social structures are effectively embodied by the agents who partake of them” (p. 65). A general recognition of the validity of critiques along the lines of those made by Crossley and Wacquant has inspired a turn, in the sociology of the body in general and in body-sport studies more specifically, to the work of Bourdieu. Recently, Turner (2009) has asserted that “Social theory and empirical work inspired by the legacy of Bourdieu are currently the most promising framework for developing sociological perspectives on the body” (p. 521). As such, the Bourdieusian approach to embodied sporting practice warrants discussion in its own right. In the next section, I focus on Wacquant’s writings on boxing as an exemplar of this work.

**WACQUANT’S BOURDIEUSIAN SOCIOLOGY OF BOXING**

alongside boxers in a neighbourhood of Chicago’s ghetto and interviewed fighters, trainers, promoters, and other associated boxing personnel. He observed that (then-) existing sociological studies of the body offered “precious few insights into the actual practices and representations that constitute the body as an ‘ongoing practical achievement,’” to borrow an expression of Garfinkel’s” (1995b, p. 65). It is his contention that in order to understand boxing one must engage with the daily lived experiences of prizefighting, for “Only by prying into the sentient, perfervid, suffering body of the fighter, this ‘wonder of the world’ through which he feels, thinks, and actualizes his life project, can we begin to explicate the profession of pugilism” (1998b, p. 329).

Boxing is a bodily craft; boxers’ bodies form “the template and epicentre of their life, at once the instrument and object of their daily work, the medium and the outcome of their occupational exertion” (1995b, p. 66). The central objectives underlying Wacquant’s various publications on boxing are to describe the boxer’s “habitus”8, “the mental and corporeal schemata immanent in pugilistic practice” (p. 72), and to delineate the relations between this habitus and the “pugilistic field”9.

This field is comprised, in his words, of:

8 Bourdieu (1977) defines habitus as:

the subjective but not individual system of internalized structures, schemes of perception, conception, and action common to all members of the same group or class and constituting the precondition for all objectification and apperception. (p. 86)

The dispositions comprising the habitus are shaped by individuals’ experiences, which are largely determined by their objective social position. The habitus thus operates as a matrix or generating principle through which social positions are translated into practical dispositions that contribute to the determination of cognition and action in particular contexts. Bourdieu takes pains to develop the concept of the habitus as a set of corporeal, and not just cognitive, dispositions. Drawing on Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology of the lived body, Bourdieu emphasizes that the practices which the habitus determines are deeply inscribed in the bodies of individuals (Crossley, 2001). The practical logic embedded in the habitus is exercised via “motor schemes and bodily automatisms” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 69). These motor schemes and automatisms, as forms of corporeally inscribed know-how, are the foundation of our actions, intuitions, and perceptions: it is therefore, for Bourdieu, a habituated, acting body that is responsible for the production of social action.

9 For Bourdieu, a “field” is an objective structure of social relations, specific to some domain of practice, which forms the context within which actors’ actions take place:

a field may be defined as a network, or configuration, of objective relations between positions. These positions are objectively defined, in their existence and the determinations they impose on their occupants, agents or institutions, by their present and potential situation (situs) in the structure of the distribution of species of power (or capital) whose possession
the social organization of commercial performances, the rationale of boxing careers and their determinants, and the mechanisms of production of value and of distribution of the resulting streams of material and symbolic profits…

the multiplex network of objective relations that bind boxers to trainers and managers, promoters, the media, and the public. (Wacquant, 1998a, p. 3)

Wacquant’s approach to analyzing boxing practice thus involves attending both to “objective” social reality and the “subjective” mechanisms through which agents constitute their meaningful life-worlds. His dialectical method demonstrates his affiliation to Bourdieu’s “structuralist constructivist” sociology (Bourdieu, 1990). Bourdieu’s sociological project involves an attempt to preserve the gains made by both the objectivist and subjectivist/phenomenological sociological traditions while transcending what he perceives as their respective limitations: objectivism’s tendency to reify structures and treat subjective experience as mechanistically determined; and phenomenology’s tendency to view subjective acts of consciousness as unconstrained by social structure. Bourdieu’s concepts of field, group, and class comprise the “structuralist” element of his work, while the habitus forms the theoretical centre of his “constructivism” (Berard, 2005). His theoretical contribution consists of the development of a dialectical combination of fields and habitus.

In Pugs at Work: Bodily Capital and Bodily Labour among Professional Boxers (1995b), Wacquant focuses on the ways in which boxers conceive of, care for, and rationalize the use of their bodies as a form of capital. The logic of body as capital, for Wacquant, shapes the ways that fighters perceive, orient to, and talk about their bodies – for instance, as an asset, as an object with a limited life expectancy, and as

commands access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field, as well as by their objective relations to other positions (domination, subordination, homology, etc.) (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 97)

Fields operate as arenas of struggle for control over the resources that are valued within that field (i.e., whatever counts as capital) between the incumbents of that field’s positions. Social action is an effect of the class dispositions of the habitus intersecting with the structural relations and logics of particular fields (Swartz, 1997).
something which must be carefully managed and maintained. He argues that boxers’ orientations to this logic explains the unremitting work they perform on and with their bodies to transform its volume and shape, build “muscular armour”, and develop a specific “bodily sensitivity”:

What we may call body work – by analogy with Arlie Hochschild’s (1979) notion of “emotion work” – thus consists of a highly intensive and finely regulated manipulation of the organism whose aim it is to imprint into the bodily schema of the fighter postural sets, patterns of movement, and subjective emotional-cognitive states that make him into a conversant practitioner of the Sweet science of bruising. (Wacquant, 1995b, p. 73)

The time that boxers spend in the gym is intended to convert their “abstract” bodily capital, the “raw material” that the fighter possesses, into “pugilistic capital”. This form of capital consists of the embodied capacity to produce value in the field of professional boxing in the form of recognition, titles, and economic capital. Further, Wacquant asserts that an ethos of “sacrifice”, which comprises an ensemble of rules designed to steer boxers’ conduct towards behaviour that will optimize their bodily capital, forms a core aspect of the boxers’ habitus. Sacrifice organizes the boxers’ daily routine both in and out of the gym, requiring a constant vigilance over bodily functions and a moral commitment to abstinence in the key areas of food, social life, and sex:

The notion of sacrifice penetrates deep into the boxer’s personal life, so deep indeed that it effaces the divide between the private and the public, the gym and the home, the ring and the bedroom, as his entire existence, down to the tiniest details, becomes subordinated to the imperative of care and accumulation of bodily capital. (Wacquant, 1995b, p. 78)

For Wacquant, then, the objective relations and exchanges comprising the pugilistic field become translated into the subjectively-meaningful behaviour of boxers via the development of an embodied habitus. The “rules of the game”, the field’s stakes and logics, become lodged “deep within” the boxer’s body. In this way, the same
schemata govern both “the boxer’s body-mind complex and the operation of the pugilistic field itself, structuring at once his corporeal and mental categories of perception, appreciation, and action, and the functioning of the material-cum-moral economy of boxing” (Wacquant, 1995b, p. 88). The boxer is “inhabited by the game he inhabits”, and it is through the embodied storage of practices constituting the habitus that the boxer reproduces the very social structures that conditioned them.

So far in this chapter, a range of sociological approaches to sport have been summarized. The sociological topics considered to this point have been relevant to my study in a somewhat tangential way, and the point of presenting them has been to provide an illustration of the kinds of analyses that sport studies commonly produce. In particular, the objective has been to demonstrate the theoretical interests that tend to drive sociological studies of sport, and how these interests shape the ways in which sport gets discussed in sociological accounts. The next section considers a tradition of study that has a more direct relation to my research: the relatively recent field comprising the sociological study of sport coaching.

1.6 SPORT COACHING AND INSTRUCTIONAL PROCESSES

For much of the twentieth century, the study of sport coaching was the province of the sport sciences, with the disciplines of sport physiology, sport psychology, and biomechanics underpinning theories and empirical research on coaching processes (Potrac, Brewer, Jones, Armour, & Hoff, 2000). Beginning in the mid-1990s, scholars from within physical education and coaching science increasingly asserted the need for a more sociological treatment of sport coaching (e.g., Jones (2000), Schempp (1998), and Woodman (1993)). Since then, a small but burgeoning sociological literature on sport coaching has emerged (for a recent collection of essays, see Jones, Potrac, Cushion and Ronglan (2011)). I will restrict my discussion to the sociological strand of coaching scholarship, leaving aside contributions to the topic made by sport science researchers. This selectivity is not to dismiss the contributions of sport scientists, but rather reflects the specific interest of my study in how sport (including sport coaching) is accomplished as a fundamentally social practice. In other words, my interest lies in showing how sporting activities are
accomplished via the coordination of the actions of multiple participants (Sharrock & Watson, 1988).

Several programmatic articles over the last twenty years have criticized how coaching practices have been theorized by coaching science. Potrac, Brewer, Jones, Armour and Hoff (2000) argue that conventional models of the coaching process, predominantly developed along narrow bio-scientific lines, depict coaches as mere “technicians” involved in an unproblematic process of transferring knowledge to athletes. Such models, they assert, neglect the situational, ideological, cultural, and ethical social pressures that impact upon the coaching process, and, as a result, fail to capture the social and interactional complexities of coaching practices. Jones, Armour and Potrac (2002) observe that coaching is essentially a social activity, subject to the realities of human interaction, but note that little work locating coaching in its social context has yet emerged. Cushion, Armour and Jones (2006) claim that existing coaching research is underpinned by positivist assumptions and research methods, which has resulted in the production of generalized and simplified models of coaching practice. According to the authors, this situation has stifled the development of a more holistic understanding of the coaching process. Potrac and Jones (2009b) argue that the conventional portrayal of coaching is mechanistic and fails to capture the social logics at work in the coaching process – in particular, the “micropolitical” struggles over power that, they assert, structure much of the behaviour that takes place in coaching activities.

Various theoretical and methodological suggestions for developing a more holistic understanding of the coaching process have been offered. For instance, it has been recommended that researchers combine systematic observation to identify the instructional behaviour of coaches in practice settings with interpretive interview techniques to establish why they choose such practices and how coaches and athletes understand them (Potrac, et al., 2000). Additionally, the sociological concepts of role, interaction, and power have been endorsed as a framework for analyzing coaching practice that attends to the interplay between structure and agency, and power and resistance, in the constitution of social action (Jones, et al., 2002). The importance of attending to power, in particular, as an explanatory concept has been
repeatedly stressed (Jones, et al., 2002; Potrac & Jones, 2009a, 2009b, 2011). Several different conceptualizations of power have been offered as useful for studying sport coaching, such as the typology developed by French and Raven (Jones, et al., 2002); Goffman’s dramaturgical perspective (Potrac & Jones, 2009a; Potrac, Jones, & Armour, 2002); Foucauldian concepts (Denison, 2007; Johns & Johns, 2000; Jones, Glintmeyer, & McKenzie, 2005; Shogan, 1999; Taylor & Garratt, 2010); Giddens’ structuration theory (Cassidy, 2010; Purdy & Jones, 2011); and Bourdieusian ideas (Cushion & Jones, 2006; Taylor & Garratt, 2010).

Since 2000, the number of empirical studies attempting to examine coaching processes as fundamentally embedded within social worlds and contexts of social interaction has greatly increased. I outline several examples of such work here. Cushion (2001) conducted a season-long ethnographic study of a youth soccer academy. He argues that the club, the coaches, and the players constituted different forces that interacted in complex ways to shape the coaching process. Potrac, Jones and Armour’s (2002) case study of an expert English soccer coach was similarly interested in how context influences the ways in which pedagogical strategies take shape. Based on comments made by the coach during interviews, the authors argue that the coach’s high levels of “instructional behaviour” during training sessions represented a conscious effort on his part to display his knowledge of the game to players in order to gain what they term “informational power”. Purdy and Jones’ (2011) analysis of elite men’s rowing program had a similar emphasis on instructional behaviour but focused on how the athletes responded to the coach’s pedagogical practices. They argue that the rowers drew upon their knowledge of appropriate coaching behaviour in order to judge coaches’ actions, and a coach’s failure to “act like a coach” could lead to a loss of respect.

A subgroup of these studies is comprised of analyses that have focused more explicitly on the issue of power. I briefly summarize three such studies here. Cushion and Jones (2006) examined the coaching practices of professional youth soccer coaches at an elite academy. They note that the coaches at the academy employed highly authoritarian modes of behaviour such as abusive language, castigation, and threats of physical exercise. The players and the coaches “bought into” the
legitimacy of these practices, perceiving them as being in the players’ best interests. Drawing on Bourdieusian concepts, Cushion and Jones describe this perception as a “misrecognition” or “collective deception” on the part of the players. They argue that the players’ failure to “perceive the actions of the coaches as overly abusive or discouraging” (p. 155) is due to the players’ development of a habitus, through long-term participation at the club, imposed by the more powerful coaches. In a second study, Taylor and Garratt (2010) also employ Bourdieusian ideas in analyzing the professionalization of sport coaching in the UK. They conclude that the establishment of a coaching profession under state orchestration has resulted in the imposition of new coaching practices by privileged sporting bodies, and that some coaches misrecognized what was, in fact, their manipulation and disempowerment by these dominant forces as being a worthwhile and necessary set of developments. Finally, Potrac and Jones’ (2009a) case study of a coach of a semi-professional soccer team depicts coaching as an “arena of struggle”, within which a coach must interact with a diverse range of other actors, including athletes, assistants, and administrators, who may be pursuing disparate and conflicting interests. They demonstrate the micropolitical strategies relied upon by the coach to manipulate other actors in order to achieve desired outcomes.

This chapter has summarized a range of sociological research on sport and outlined the sociological themes and interests that sociologists have pursued in studying sport. This review of the field has been conducted in an effort to illustrate the types of accounts that sport studies tend to generate. In describing the ways sport has been explored, described, and explained in conventional sociological research, the chapter has demonstrated the central concern of the field has been to study, explore, and argue sociological categories and theories using sport as data. Building upon this key observation, the remainder of this chapter serves to connect this review to the thesis as a whole. It contrasts the interests that conventional sociologists pursue in studying sport with the ethnomethodological interests informing this thesis.
1.7 CONCLUSION: THE “MISSING WHATNESS” OF SPORT STUDIES

As the preceding discussion has demonstrated, the sociology of sport consists of a large body of scholarship, some of which (but by no means all) is undoubtedly excellent and interesting work. From reading the literature, one can learn a great deal about a range of topics, such as, inter alia, the functions of sport for the maintenance of harmonious – or oppressive – social systems; how sport works to secure the consent of subordinate groups to their own conditions of domination; sport’s role in constructing disciplined, medicalized, and commodified bodies; the potentially radical forms of embodied subjectivity enabled by sport subcultures; the *habitus* of athletes; and the sport coaching process as a site of complex power relations. That is, one can gain deep insights into any number of important sociological topics and themes. As mentioned above, my intention here is not to criticize these studies.

It *is* my intention, however, to observe that despite (or because of?) the sophisticated theoretical analyses on offer, one learns very little from reading this literature about how people actually go about accomplishing their sporting activities as organized practical productions. The practical business of how members do “playing sport”, “sport training”, “sport coaching”, or “sport spectating”, along with myriad more specific sporting activities, is generally marginalized by sport sociologists, who are instead concerned with producing an account of the underlying societal forces and configurations that they contend structures, organizes, and explains such activities (cf. Rouncefield & Tolmie, 2013). The ways in which athletes, coaches, administrators, spectators and other sport participants actually go about practicing, playing, competing in, organizing, and watching sport together, as concerted courses of action, thus comprises the “missing whatness” of sport studies. Some sociological studies of sport do, nonetheless, contain detailed empirical observations of sport; that is not at issue here. The point is that these studies do not problematize the common-sense availability of recognizable sporting activities – they do not ask how recognizable instances (for members) of, for example, “players’ mistakes”, “training

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10 My point here, that ethnomethodology is not critical of conventional sociology but rather is just not interested in the same things, and the philosophical basis of this claim, will be developed in detail in Chapter 3.
activities’, “coaching demonstrations”, or “picking up new skills” in a sport training session is achieved by participants so as to be observable as “just that” observable activity.

An example taken from the sociological work on coaching outlined above will help to clarify my argument here. Jones and his colleagues, as outlined above, have explicitly declared that their aim is to develop a sociology of sport coaching. The work of these scholars is admirable for its commitment to working out what is social about coaching processes, in contrast to the psychologizing approaches that dominate the field. But while they declare their intention to problematize the taken-for-granted social competencies required to accomplish coaching activities, they immediately propose to fill the space that they have opened up by drawing on concepts from conventional sociology’s theoretical armoury. A programmatic statement by Jones (2011) clearly illustrates my point:

Like other sociological work, our previous efforts marked an attempt to put into words the secrets everybody seemed to know but never discussed; to deconstruct and dispel the fog of taken-for-granted knowledge, thus developing a critical coaching consciousness (Jones, 2009a, 2007). It was an effort to “decode” a culture (Hatchen, 2001) through realizing the sociologist’s alchemy of uncovering the “constitutive rules of everyday behaviour” (Goffman, 1974, p. 5). What helped frame the analysis here was Gardiner’s (2000) social project into mundane daily action. Following Hegel’s maxim that “the familiar is not necessarily the known”, Gardiner’s (2000, p. 5) central thesis was to explore the “fine grain” and “connective tissue” of human activities by critically focusing on the “practical accomplishments of skilled social actors in the course of their day-to-day lives”. As with Gardiner’s (2000, p. 6) book, the purpose of our project is to problematize coaches’ everyday practice better, “to expose its contradictions and hidden potentialities”, thus raising “our understanding of the prosaic to the level of critical knowledge”. In essence, to help us understand “what is going on” in coaching. At the heart of such micro-action lies the omnipresent phenomenon of power. (pp. 6-7)
The final sentence of this statement is telling. Immediately following his proposal to interrogate the taken-for-granted social skills that members use to accomplish their sporting activities, Jones asserts that a theorized sociological phenomenon, the “omnipresent phenomenon of power”, functions as an organizing force responsible for the way such activities turn out. Sport is thus presumed from the outset to comprise a site where the analyst can observe the structuring work of underlying, hidden social forces – in this case, “the omnipresent phenomenon of power”.

From an ethnomethodological perspective, describing the “mundane daily action” constituting sport coaching is not something that requires more theorizing to understand what is going on. By shifting analytic attention to the hidden, theoretical order presumed to structure coaching activities, Jones in effect bypasses the problem of explicating the “witnessable order” (Livingston, 2008b) of these activities: the problem, that is, of how members make their sporting activities unproblematically visible (to each other, in the first instance, but also to social scientists) as just those activities in the first place. The observability of these sporting activities to analysts as, quite obviously, sporting activities, presupposes that the analysts, like the members producing the activities, are competent users of methodical procedures for producing and recognizing the activities as such: competencies that they possess by virtue of their membership of society. In constructing their theoretical accounts of sporting activities, sport sociologists thus treat the mundane methodical competencies that they share with members of society as an unexplicated resource (Zimmerman & Pollner, 1971). That is, they take these methods for granted in the same way that members themselves do.

This thesis, by contrast, proposes to treat the mundane constitutive competencies employed by members to produce and recognize the witnessable orderliness of sporting activities as the topic of analysis. This proposal is underpinned by ethnomethodology, an approach to the analysis of social life whose fundamental concern is to describe how people put their ordinary social activities together in orderly, recognizable ways in and as the “doing” of those activities (Garfinkel, 1967). Ethnomethodology’s central problematic, the orderliness of social life, is thus
handled in a way demonstrably divergent from (and incommensurable with) how this problem is conventionally treated by sociology:

ethnomethodology does not take as its puzzle the fact that people act in stable, regular ways (such that we have the problem of what keeps them behaving like that) but the quite different one of how it is that the stability and regularity of conduct is recognizable and discoverable, and recognizable and discoverable from within its own midst (which gives us the problem of how we go about the business of identifying people’s actions and finding explanations for them). (Sharrock & Watson, 1988, p. 62)

The philosophical foundations of ethnomethodology’s distinctive take on social life, and the argument that these foundations are so different from those underpinning conventional sociological approaches that they make ethnomethodology a radically alternate approach to the study of social life, will be developed in Chapter 3.

Along with summarizing the sociology of sport literature, this chapter has made a few very preliminary remarks regarding what a sociology of sport built on ethnomethodological insights might comprise. The next chapter delves further into this alternative, presenting a review of existing ethnomethodological studies of sport. The body of ethnomethodological sport research is, however, a very limited one. The chapter also outlines ethnomethodological studies on several substantive topics relevant to my study, summarizing key discoveries that have been made and identifying particular thematic areas to which my research can contribute new findings.
Chapter 2: Discovering the “Work” of Sport - Ethnomethodology, Sport, and Social Interaction

2.1 INTRODUCTION: ETHNOMETHODOLOGY AND SPORT

While the previous chapter was concerned to summarize conventional sociological studies of sport, this one turns attention to the corpus of ethnomethodological research relevant to my topic. Ethnomethodological studies are not selective in the types of activity that they explore. As Livingston (2008b) describes ethnomethodology’s research focus:

Our interests in skill and reasoning lie as much in activities such as dancing the tango, performing close-up magic, and playing soccer as they do in arguing legal cases and producing theorems of logic. All these activities are ones in which skill and reasoning are observable features of people’s participation in them. (p. 9)

Ethnomethodology’s topic of attention is members’ situated, practical, and methodical accomplishment of their activities, of whatever kind, and the social phenomena that we define as sport and leisure surely consist of activities. As such, what variously could be described as pastimes, leisure activities, hobbies, games and play have occupied a prominent role in the history of ethnomethodological work. The corpus of ethnomethodological research includes, for instance, studies of the situated production and coordination of such activities as bird-watching (Law & Lynch, 1988), magic tricks (Laurier, 2004), yachting (Button & Sharrock, 2013), children’s play and games (Butler, 2008; M. H. Goodwin, 1998, 2001; Sacks, 1995), video gaming (Reeves, Brown, & Laurier, 2009; Sudnow, 1984), rock climbing (Jenkings, 2013), playing improvised jazz piano (Sudnow, 1978), playing with pets (Goode, 2007), playing checkers, chess, and bridge, making origami, and doing jigsaw puzzles (Livingston, 2008a, 2008b, 2012). As these diverse interests demonstrate, there is no in-principle reason why ethnomethodologists should not turn their attention to sporting activities. Surprisingly, however, relatively few ethnomethodologically-informed studies have focused specifically on sport (Hockey...
& Allen-Collinson, 2013). This introductory section summarizes this small corpus of research.

An early ethnomethodological study of sport is Kew’s (1986) investigation into the procedures used by participants to accomplish sporting activity as a “special” sphere distinct from, though subsumed under, mundane everyday interaction. In order to expose these procedures, Kew conducted a kind of “breaching experiment”\(^{11}\). Kew devised a strategy in which he told a group of participants to set up and play a game, only providing them with the basic instruction that the game should involve players getting an object into a prescribed area. He video recorded the participants’ responses to this request, anticipating that it would induce them to decide upon a general game structure, specify the rules of play, and elaborate increasingly skilled responses the emerging game as it unfolded. The members’ development of the game should, he figured, thus demonstrate some of the tacit background knowledge involved in playing these types of games (which he terms “invasion” games).

Kew reports that the participants immediately entered into a discussion in which they decided on the basic format or structure of the game. In order to determine the structure, he notes, the participants greatly elaborated the sense of his instructions: “players”, for instance, was taken to mean “two equal teams”, and the “area” into which they must move an object was taken to mean “goal” or “target”. Members

\(^{11}\) Garfinkel employed such “experiments” (which, he made clear, were not properly speaking experimental, but rather “aids to a sluggish imagination” (Garfinkel, 1967, p. 38)) as a methodological strategy for rendering visible the “seen-but- unnoticed” practices involved in accomplishing social order. In his words:

> Procedurally it is my preference to start with familiar scenes and ask what can be done to make trouble. The operations that one would have to perform in order to multiply the senseless features of perceived environments; to produce and sustain bewilderment, consternation, and confusion; to produce the socially structured effects of anxiety, shame, guilt, and indignation; and to produce disorganized interaction should tell us something about how the structures of everyday activities are ordinarily and routinely produced and maintained. (Garfinkel, 1964, p. 227)

These experiments involved, for instance, students performing such activities as insisting that a partner in conversation clarify commonplace remarks, and pretending to be a stranger in their family home. The point was to provoke respondents to attempt to interpret and repair the sudden disorder, thereby bringing to light some of the procedural work involved in achieving a shared sense of events as orderly.
were also concerned to impose restrictions on possible action, such as “no running with the ball”. These members’ concerns illustrate some of the tacit knowledge held by members about what a good game must include (e.g., equality, constraints to make the game challenging, formal rules). This initial process was quickly superseded by a considerably longer period in which the basic rules that had been decided upon were treated as no longer up for discussion (i.e., they had become tacit features of the game), and the participants’ focus turned to formulating strategies that would enhance the game-play actions determined by the basic rules. For instance, repeated discussions were held over how and how long any one player may hold the ball as a response to the “unfair” play of one player. Kew respectively terms these two periods the “establishment” and “consolidation” phases, and asserts that these are present in the formation of any game.

Based on the fact that the participants orient procedurally to these two “moments” of game-formation, Kew argues that games can be understood as having two “layers” of meaning: a “deep”, formal structure (the definitive rules constituting the game as such); and “surface” rules (rules which serve to enhance the display of the depth features). He suggests that all rule-changes to established games occur at the surface level. Rugby union’s adoption of a rule preventing players from kicking the ball out of bounds “on the full”, for instance, was an attempt to reemphasize rugby’s depth feature of passing and running with the ball. The same could be said of the introduction of the three-point field goal in basketball (adopted by the American National Basketball Association (NBA) in 1979, but in other leagues as early as 1967) in attempting to emphasize the depth feature of shooting for baskets. Kew’s study can thus be seen as arguing that sports possess both their own internal deep logic, which is “context-free” and unchanging, and a surface logic of alterable, “context-sensitive” rules that may be transformed by groups according to their interests. This insight is an important one for the purposes of my study. The idea that game rules are both context-free and context-sensitive will be developed in Chapter 6 with specific regard to the “turn-taking organization” of basketball practice.

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12 See Chapter 4 for a detailed discussion of turn-taking organization as a topic of conversation analytic investigation.
activities. Further, it will be demonstrated that the coach uses this organization feature as a resource in the process of identifying player errors. In this way, my research builds upon Kew’s findings.

Macbeth’s (2012) remarks on the play of pick-up basketball (originally written in the late 1980s) are produced, in contrast to Kew’s experimental observations, from a first-person perspective. A long-time basketball player, Macbeth’s objective is to describe how some of the witnessable, orderly detail of playing basketball is found from within the play itself. He organizes his discussion as a set of general observations regarding playing basketball, followed by a series of “vignettes” of moments of play. The general section is centrally concerned to point out that the meaningful visible phenomena of basketball play, such as “a teammate waiting to receive the ball”, are only locatable within momentary developing configurations of details, and finding them involves the member producing the very thing that they have found.

Macbeth turns to his memories of specific moments in pick-up games to flesh out this general point. He recalls making a pass to a player who appeared to be moving toward the basket in perfect, spontaneous synchrony of purpose with himself, only to find that the player was not a teammate but in fact an opponent, and that the perceived joint movement was merely imagined. Drawing on this memory, he observes that “basketball floors”, as “enveloping ensembles” of detail within which relevant features such as “openings” can be found, do not exist to be found by just anyone. They can be found only in the course of their production, discovered and then cultivated to be the thing that they are as-yet-only-becoming by the players involved in their joint production. In the case of the errant pass, the shared movement Macbeth discovered, and believed himself to be jointly shaping with the other player, turned out to be a chimera: “The floor I thought we were producing collapsed and dissolved” (p. 203).

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13 Pick-up basketball, as the name implies, is generally an informal affair, with individuals turning up at a park or a gym looking for a game. It is distinct from “organized” basketball, with its leagues of coached teams, seasons, referees, clocks and scoreboards, and so on.
In a second example, Macbeth discusses the achievement of “trailers” (offensive players who bring up the rear during a fast-break, “trailing” behind their team as it pushes down court to the other basket). His elegant description illustrates how the court becomes transformed as the play moves through it: “As they move down court together, offense and defense, they fill and empty the floor space as they press forward, creating something of a ‘whoosh’, and with it the sense of a trailing vacuum. Trailers fill the void” (p. 203). When the trailer shouts out his position to his teammates (by literally shouting “trailer”), players’ attention is turned to the “backwater of quiet lines and varnish” (p. 204) now inhabited by the trailing player, who may be undefended and available to receive a pass and take an open shot. Trailers trade on the observable structure of the fast-break – placing themselves at a distance from it and using the attention it draws, and the relative inattention paid to places further afield, in order to accomplish their project.

Macbeth also notes that defensive players similarly utilize the un-noticed places of the court as a resource for action. Defenders find places slightly off to the side of the action, where “nothing is happening”, and occupy them as spots from which to “stalk” the play, emerging to steal the ball. For these “stalking” defenders, features of the floor, such as open shooters, become resources for projecting what offensive players might do next, enabling the stalker to anticipate opportunities for steals: “As a stalking defender, you trade on those productions, and wait for them to be found by others, first” (p. 205).

Macbeth’s central point is that these visible material organizations of jointly produced details are what any basketball player looks for as they walk onto the court and, simultaneously, are what players embed themselves within in order to produce basketball’s witnessable details. In his words, “they afford its structure, regularity, reproducibility, and also the possibility of its instruction. Embedding ourselves in contextures of our own handiwork, we find the play of the game and produce its every evidence of structure in bodily crafted durations” (p. 207). The order of detail to which Macbeth’s inquiries are directed is thus not comprised of mere details, trivial in comparison to the explanatory concepts offered by conventional
sociological accounts. Rather, Macbeth asserts, these are constitutive details, the identifying “whatness” of the game itself.

In attending to the visible objects of basketball play as phenomena collaboratively found and used by participants who, in the very act of finding and using these objects constitute them as intersubjective social facts, Macbeth’s notes comprise an important starting point for my study. The notion that visible objects exist within dynamic, unfolding contexts comprised of players’ bodies, floor markings, and the organizational structures built from such visibility arrangements is a central premise of my empirical chapters. I build upon this core general idea by unpacking in detail the layers of sequential, categorial, and embodied organizations that comprise the contexts within which basketball-relevant objects get discovered within practice activities. The empirical chapters of this thesis can thus be seen as developing, in detailed ways and with specific regard to basketball practice activities, Macbeth’s general point about the situated production of visible basketball phenomena.

A third relevant study is Coates’ (1999) research on boxing, which analyses video recordings of boxing bouts. She notes that sociological studies of boxing tend to focus on why people engage in such a violent sport, offering up explanations for such non-rational behaviour in the form of causal social forces. Her approach, by contrast, is to begin with the methodological question of how to describe boxing as coordinated social activity. Coates explores the tradition of studies of body movements and bodily communication (kinesics) as providing possible resources for describing boxing as organized social action, but rejects this approach on the grounds that it attempts to categorize movements into pre-formulated categories. She argues that movements in boxing cannot be adequately described without taking the specific context of the action into account: that is, actions are fundamentally “indexical”14. Fixed category systems thus “sacrifice the understanding of locally situated meanings” (Psathas, 1995a, p. 8). Coates also discusses Wacquant’s (1992, 1995b) boxing studies, arguing that, while Wacquant recognizes that boxing is

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14 Indexicality, as an ethnomethodological concept, will be considered in detail in Chapter 3.
interactionally accomplished in situ, he does not go on to analyze this spontaneous accomplishment of action as a phenomenon in itself.

Coates’ paper is a self-professed first attempt at describing the interactional organization of boxing, in which she offers some exploratory findings. First, she notes that boxers take up distinct spatial orientations in different phases of the fight. For instance, before and between rounds, the boxers keep to their individual corners of the ring, and as soon as the bell rings to signify the start of a round, they meet each other face-to-face in the centre. During rounds, boxers maintain a certain spatial proximity to one another, a “boxing distance”, which makes it transparent when boxers are “too far apart” or when one “crowds” their opponent. Her second observation is that boxing consists of “action-at-speed”. Individual punches and movements are coordinated into rapidly performed sequences of moves. Boxers continually rehearse standard action sequences in training, and rely upon this knowledge both to produce competent action and to interpret their opponents’ actions and anticipate their opponents’ upcoming moves – which allows them to make appropriate strategic interventions. It is this “readability” and “projectability” of embodied action that enables a pair of boxers to produce the coordinated patterns of action that constitute “sparring”. Third, she draws on the conversation analytic notion of turn-taking to point out that, analogously to the way in which conversation is organized sequentially into turns at speaking, boxing is organized in terms of turns at attack. Unlike conversation, however, “speaker-change” does not occur after each punch. Rather, the organization is more akin to situations of “extended turns” such as in story-telling situations. One boxer attacks until their opponent can find an opening for a counter-attack, thus taking control of the “next turn”.

Coates’ study provides an important backdrop to my research for two reasons. Firstly, her empirical observation that participants in sporting activities orient to their spatial position relative to one another in producing the sense of their actions forms a central feature of my account of how a basketball coach manages to identify aspects of players’ performances as erroneous, and how corrections are accomplished. Secondly, she applies the conversation analytic notion of sequences of action to address embodied activities in sport. The notion that participants utilize a fine-
grained orientation to the sequential position in which embodied movements occur to establish their sense is taken up in detail by my analysis. Coates’ observations on these two aspects of organization are relatively generalized. My study can be seen as building upon them by considering how both contribute to establishing the specific sense of particular events in sporting activities.

Taken together, the ethnomethodological studies of sport by Kew, Macbeth, and Coates discussed above provide important insights into some of the “missing whatness” of sport; the skilful procedural know-how relied upon by members to accomplish their sporting activities. My study can be seen as an extension of these interests into a specific substantive area of sporting practice: the team sport coaching and training process, including the knowledge and competencies used by participants in these settings to assemble team sport training sessions as distinctive, orderly activities. No ethnomethodological studies (as far as I am aware) have specifically investigated the practical accomplishment of team sport training and coaching.

As well as this substantive difference, the present study can be distinguished from the above studies by features of its methodological approach. A first point of difference in this respect is the extent to which my study is based on the analysis of video recordings of naturally-occurring sporting activity. The focus on using naturally-occurring data distinguishes mine from Kew’s, which analyzed an activity that occurred as a response to researcher provocation, rather than a spontaneously-occurring event. The other studies mentioned did investigate naturally-occurring events, but Macbeth’s observations were made on the basis of self-reflection, rather than on recordings of the activities in question. Coates did utilize video recordings in her analysis, but she makes the point in her conclusion that the standard of equipment to which she had access was very basic, and as a result she was not able to produce as fine-grained an analysis as she would have liked. Video recordings, which make repeated viewings of activities possible, as well as allowing for slow-motion playback, provide important opportunities for inspecting the practical and concerted accomplishment of embodied activities (Heath & Hindmarsh, 2002). The high-definition digital video recordings that I collected for my study thus comprise a critical resource in affording visible access to a level of embodied detail that would
otherwise have been largely unavailable to repeated analytic scrutiny (Heath & Luff, 2012).

A further methodological distinction can be made in terms of the mode of analysis employed. My investigations of video materials are informed by the two ethnomethodological approaches of sequential analysis (the primary approach used in the conversation analytic tradition of ethnomethodological studies) and membership categorization analysis, as well as by methods for analyzing visible phenomena developed within workplace studies (see below). Of the authors mentioned above, only Coates employed sequential analysis, and none of the studies utilized membership categorization analysis. Sequential analysis and membership categorization analysis, and the resources that these analytic technologies offer for producing rigorous analyses of members’ accountable social conduct, are discussed in depth in Chapter 4. This chapter now turns to consider further examples of ethnomethodological research which are concerned with topics other than sport but which have relevance to my study.

2.2 ETHNOMETHODOLOGICAL RESEARCH ON OTHER RELEVANT THEMES

While the corpus of ethnomethodological studies dealing with the topic of sport is relatively slight, there exists a substantial literature focusing on other topics that have relevance to the activities that occur during basketball practice sessions. The following sections of this chapter are occupied with outlining ethnomethodologically-informed studies on several thematic topics. These topics reappear later in the thesis, as I have employed them to organize my discussions of the data in the analytic chapters. Before moving into a discussion of the studies themselves, a justification for my use of themes as a heuristic device is in order. After all, ethnomethodological inquiry is supposed to begin with the “‘unmotivated’ examination of naturally occurring interactional materials – that is, an examination not prompted by prespecified analytic goals… but by ‘noticings’ of initially unremarkable features of the talk or of other conduct” (Schegloff, 1996, p. 172). This section attempts to warrant my decision to organize my data analysis by analytic
themes, drawing for support on Lynch’s (1993) suggestions for a program of ethnomethodological inquiry.

As a preliminary exercise before outlining his proposed research program, Lynch elaborates on Garfinkel’s assertion that sociological studies of human activities are characterized by an unacknowledged “missing whatness” consisting of the interactional and improvisational work that people do in accomplishing those activities together and in making them recognizable to one another. Lynch observes that the upshot of Garfinkel’s claim seemed to some to be a proposal to go out and find, via ethnographic studies, the unique “core practices” that are definitive of different activities. Such an interpretation, Lynch argues, is a misunderstanding. Rather than being attempts to discover the praxeological “essences” that make diverse activities what they are, ethnomethodological studies should instead be understood as aimed at explicating “the rational properties of indexical expressions by investigating the orderliness of singular occasions of conduct” (Lynch, 1993, p. 285).

Grasping this distinction between an activity’s “essence” and its occasioned orderliness is crucial to understanding the unique analytic objective of ethnomethodological studies. Unlike conventional social studies of human activities, the production of abstract representations of stable organizational orders (such phenomena as, inter alia, norms/rules, system, structure, agency, power, resistance, ideology, discourse, and practices) responsible for generating singular events is not the goal of ethnomethodological investigations. The mutually recognizable orderliness (and structure) of those singular, indexical events, and the situated methods “reflexively”15 deployed in achieving that occasioned orderliness, itself comprises the analytic object to be explicated. Lynch (1993) describes this distinctive analytic focus in the following way:

15 Reflexivity, as a concept understood in and used to inform ethnomethodological studies, is also detailed in Chapter 3.
Although ethnomethodology does not regard itself as an inductive mode of inquiry, its analytic program builds on the “social fact” that singular instances of conduct are intuitively recognizable and vernacularly describable; otherwise, how participants manage spontaneously to produce mutually coordinated activities would be a complete mystery. (pp. 285-286).

Lynch (1993) proposes a program of inquiry into the “demonstrably rational properties of indexical expressions” (p. 25) which focuses analytic attention specifically on the various “language games” (Wittgenstein, 1958) that comprise topics of classical epistemological and methodological discussions in the philosophy and sociology of science, such as observation, description, and explanation. These “epistopics”, as Lynch calls them, are to be ethnomethodologically respecified, that is, inspected as indexical actions recognizably accomplished in situated contexts of social activity:

I use the neologism _epistopics_ to suggest that topical headings provided by vernacular terms like _observation_ and _representation_ reveal little about the various epistemic activities that can be associated with those names. …once we assume that nominal coherence guarantees nothing about localized praxis, we can begin to examine how an activity comes to identify itself as an observation, a measurement, or whatever without assuming from the outset that the local achievement of such activities can be described under a rule or definition. (pp. 281-282, emphasis in original)

Lynch’s ethnomethodological research program involves taking up one or more of the epistopics as objects of inquiry, treating them as “glosses” for indexical activity, searching for naturally occurring examples of their performance to examine in detail, and explicating the embodied practices involved in the organization of singular cases of the named activity. As he argues, the descriptions of singular cases produced through these inquiries are not intended to function as generalizable representations of the language game in question, but nonetheless each investigation “says something” about the activity (Lynch, 1993, p. 302).
While the program Lynch outlines is intended to direct analytic attention specifically toward classical epistemological and methodological themes, it is clear that the general approach he recommends can be applied to any topic that academic social science has been concerned to theorize (Garfinkel, 2007; Lynch, 2007b). Any familiar topic of social-theoretical debate and argument can, in principle, be respecified ethnomethodologically as “local organizations, achieved as the competence of members to produce, recognize and render accountable their mutual affairs, in and as the circumstantial detail of those productions in their course” (Macbeth, 2012, p. 199).

It is thus acceptable within the analytic “rules” of ethnomethodology to use topics to structure one’s interrogation of the data, so long as the “language games” the analyst claims to be providing examples of are transparently recognizable as such activities, to readers, in the data at hand (Lynch, 1993). In line with this study policy, I have organized my study as an investigation into four different topics, which could vernacularly be termed: “using one’s body”, “showing people how to do things”, “seeing things properly” and “acting appropriately”. A caveat is in order at this point. There is no suggestion intended that the four chosen themes exhaust the possible topics of interest that could be found in the recorded materials; indeed, an indefinite number of other themes could have been elected. Nonetheless, I believe that the chosen themes refer to activities that are transparently recognizable in the recorded materials, and I make the recordings available in order that readers may verify this claim for themselves16.

Of course, these vernacular headings also point to themes of longstanding interest in the social sciences: “using one’s body” has been investigated as “embodied action”, “showing people how to do things” as “instruction” or “pedagogy”, “seeing things properly” as “visual perception”, and “acting appropriately” as “moral order”. The remainder of this chapter outlines how previous ethnomethodological research has

16 Several of the clips transcribed in this thesis have not been provided on the video disc, for reasons associated with issues of confidentiality.
respecified the first three\textsuperscript{17} of these social scientific as locally organized phenomena of order, and sets out some issues and questions that existing ethnomethodological research on these topics raises for my study.

2.3 **Embodied action**

Embodied conduct is central to the activities with which my study is concerned. Recognizably competent performances of basketball skills involve specific bodily movements possessing certain qualities, the occupation of specific spatial locations, the adoption of certain postures, and aspects of gaze (e.g., direction, focus, and duration). Further, the active bodies of the players and coach(es) comprise central resources for the accomplishment of instructional activities. For instance, in building demonstrations during the practice sessions I observed, the coach used his own body, as well as those of the players, to build embodied spatial fields within which relevant bodily competencies could be displayed. These issues will be discussed at length in later chapters; at this point it is sufficient to note the absolute centrality of the body for accomplishing the activities in question. The previous chapter outlined some ways in which embodiment has been addressed within sociology of sport research. The body has also been an enduring theme of ethnomethodological inquiry, although, as this section will illustrate, ethnomethodological accounts of embodied action differ markedly from those offered by conventional sociological theorizing\textsuperscript{18}.

A classic example of an ethnomethodological study of bodily conduct is Ryave and Schenkein’s (1974) brief but elegant account of the “art” of walking. The authors seek to treat “doing walking” as a problematic phenomenon and to describe how walking is produced and recognized as a members’ concerted accomplishment. Analyzing video recordings of walkers negotiating their way among the traffic of

\textsuperscript{17} The fourth topic, moral order, is dealt with in Chapter 8.

\textsuperscript{18} Embodied conduct has also been a topic of longstanding interest within psychology and social psychology, under headings such as nonverbal communication and gesture studies. Research in this tradition has been concerned primarily with unearthing the cognitive foundations of nonverbal behaviour, and as such contrasts starkly with ethnomethodology’s focus on the production and coordination of intelligible social action. See Heath and Luff (2012) for further discussion.
other walkers, the investigators note that there were, in their recordings, no instances of walkers bumping into one another. They treat this fact as indicating that walkers routinely and ongoingly solve the “navigational problem” of avoiding collision with other walkers, and the description of how walkers solve this problem becomes the focus of their study.

Ryave and Schenkein begin to explicate how members solve the navigational problem by noting that walkers are able to distinguish between parties walking-alone and parties walking-together, and that walkers attend to this distinction for its navigational relevance: it is a normative expectation (in the culture that they are describing) that a lone walker will not walk between pairs doing walking-together but will go around them. The question for the researchers then becomes how members produce and recognize “walking-alone” and “walking-together” as observable facts. They argue that observing walking-together as a recognizable activity involves attending to contextual factors such as time, place, and participants: it cannot be done anytime, anywhere, with anybody. One means by which observers can distinguish walking-together from walking-alone is through the use of membership categories. Members can orient to sets of identities, members of which may properly assumed to be doing walking-together. The recognition of some group of people as doing walking-together may thus turn on the visibility of their possible membership of some proper “togethering set”, such as parent-child or boyfriend-girlfriend. Ryave and Schenkein’s observations indicate that the observability of such embodied activities as walking-together and walking-alone are based upon categorial foundations. This point is taken up and explored in detail in my empirical chapters.

While Ryave and Schenkein’s study is an example of research on embodied conduct informed by membership categorization analysis, the conversation analytic tradition has been responsible for developing what is probably the most sophisticated strand of ethnomethodologically-informed research on embodied interaction. CA studies of embodiment empirically investigate how the production of orderly and coordinated social action involves the interplay of talk, gesture and other forms of bodily conduct. The central focus of such research has been on illuminating how the body
features in the organization of action. Methodologically, these studies have relied primarily upon the sequential analysis of face-to-face interaction, rather than deploying other methods of ethnomethodological investigation such as ethnographic description or membership categorization analysis (Llewellyn & Hindmarsh, 2010).

Streeck, Goodwin and LeBaron (2011) provide an historical overview of the study of embodied interaction. The 1980s saw the publication of key studies empirically establishing how talk and embodied conduct occurred interdependently in processes of interaction. CA analyses during this period focused especially on how non-verbal resources were involved in the interactional production of a single turn-at-talk. For instance, Goodwin (1979) examined video of a single spoken utterance taken from a dinner conversation and demonstrated how the speaker reshaped his sentence over the course of its production as he shifted his gaze between different recipients who possessed differential knowledge regarding the topic of his talk. Heath’s (1986) research on medical consultations showed how a patient may employ gesture and gaze during an utterance to direct the doctor’s attention toward relevant parts of their bodies. Such studies demonstrated that the production of talk both relies on the interplay of talk and visible conduct and involves speakers’ detailed sensitivity to the visible conduct of their co-participants, a finding “which called into question the linguistic notion of a sentence as something whose organization was lodged within the mental life of a single individual, the speaker” (Streeck, et al., 2011, pp. 7-8).

A second important focus of CA inquiry into embodied action has been the sequential analysis of hand gestures (e.g. C. Goodwin, 1986; M. H. Goodwin & Goodwin, 1986; Schegloff, 1984; Streeck, 1993). Particularly important was research showing that gestures can be coordinated in various ways with talk and gaze: for instance, Streeck (1993) illustrated that gesture may be finely timed to coordinate with indexical terms such as “this” and “here”. A further key finding was the demonstration of how some gestures may be produced and recognized through their relationship to the material features of the settings in which they are deployed (C. Goodwin, 2007a; Streeck, 2009). Such “environmentally coupled gestures” (C. Goodwin, 2007a) rely for their intelligibility on their elaboration by both the talk with which they are simultaneously produced and certain environmental features. In
the production of environmentally coupled gestures, the simultaneous use of gesture, verbal language, and relevant environmental features mutually elaborate one another to create a multimodal “action package” whose sense is, as a whole, greater than that of its individual parts.

The CA findings regarding the sequential organization of embodied conduct have provided me with a useful set of resources for unpacking the organization of correction activities in basketball practice activities. The CA observation that members attend in great detail to the visible orientations of their co-participants in producing their own actions is the basis of the central point, made in Chapter 7, that the coach designs his interventions into player performances by taking into consideration what the players are visually attending to. And Goodwin’s studies of gesture, in particular, inform my analysis of how the coach’s finely-timed use of gesture in concert with talk and the material environment works to establish the specific sense of “correctable” actions and their correct alternatives, which is the central task of correction sequences.

The emergence of the research field of workplace studies as a distinctive program of CA-informed study (Heath, Knoblauch, & Luff, 2000) has built upon and expanded CA’s focus on embodiment. Workplace studies’ research interest in explicating members’ accomplishment of specific and highly specialized work activities, rather than conversation per se, has necessarily required researchers to go beyond CA’s founding interest in the sequential organization of talk to include bodily, material and ecological features of the setting within their analyses (Heath & Luff, 2012). The workplace studies program has developed a substantial corpus of naturalistic studies of embodied interaction in a variety of workplace and institutional settings and activities, including science laboratories (Lynch, Potter, & Garfinkel, 1983), medical consultations (Heath, 2002, 2006), surgery (Hindmarsh & Pilnick, 2007; Koschmann, LeBaron, Goodwin, & Feltovich, 2011), transport control rooms

19 In seeking to explicate the unique configurations of methods used in accomplishing specialized and technical activities, workplace studies of embodied action can be distinguished from more general CA studies of embodiment in much the same way that “institutional” CA can be distinguished from “basic” CA. The distinction between basic and institutional CA is discussed in Chapter 4.
(Harper & Hughes, 1993; Heath & Luff, 1998), law courts (Lynch, 2007b), auctions (Heath & Luff, 2013), job interviews (Llewellyn, 2010), and business meetings (Hughes, Randall, Rouncefield, & Tolmie, 2011), along with a number of studies focusing on people’s workplace uses of tools and technology (e.g. Heath & Luff, 2000; Mondada, 2007; Rouncefield, Slack, & Hartswood, 2011; Suchman, 1987).

Workplace studies have demonstrated how the distinctive characteristics of specialized workplace tasks place particular demands on how members organize their actions in these settings, and have illustrated how, as a result of these demands, visible conduct may come to play a crucial role in the production of action (Heath & Luff, 2012). For instance, Heath and Luff (2013) examine the organization of auctions, describing how the strike of the auctioneer’s gavel serves to mark a sale and establish a contract between the buyer and seller. They observe that this embodied action works as a practical solution to problems that arise when many people (sometimes more than a hundred) are gathered in one another’s company: the sound and gesture of the gavel striking the rostrum is distinct from other actions occurring in the multi-party setting of the auction, and the action thus provides an unambiguous and transparent conclusion to a transaction. Further, the action is itself built of a series of component movements – grasping the gavel, raising it, cocking the head, beginning to bring it down, pausing, and so on. The auctioneer’s grasping and raising of the gavel visibly projects the action’s upcoming completion point, and this projectability allows the auctioneer to provide an opportunity for (and sometimes encourage) bidders to defer the gavel’s strike (and the transaction’s close) by placing a further bid. This brief example illustrates the kinds of insights provided by workplace studies into how complex work-specific activities may crucially depend on visible conduct, and the interplay of talk and visible conduct, for their interactional organization and accomplishment.

Goodwin’s studies of a variety of professionals at work (C. Goodwin, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 2000a, 2000b; C. Goodwin & Goodwin, 1998), such as oceanographers, archaeologists, geochemists and airport technicians, are particularly instructive with regard to embodied activity. His investigations have not only produced substantive findings regarding the organization of work activities, but they have also continually
been informed by the effort to develop an empirically-based, systematic framework for analyzing how members bring a variety of multimodal resources together in composing and coordinating their actions. Goodwin (2000a) proposes that participants in interaction assemble their action by juxtaposing different kinds of sign phenomena (the sequential organization of talk, prosody, gaze, bodily displays, material objects, graphic structure in the surround, and so on) in such a way that these phenomena mutually elaborate one another. He argues that at any given moment, participants in a social setting orient to a specific subset of the sign phenomena available in that setting as being currently relevant for their conduct, and terms the locally-relevant array of signs operated on by participants a “contextual configuration”. This concept is analytically useful in that it enables the researcher to bring together diverse phenomena (so diverse, in fact, that they are often examined by different academic disciplines) under a single orienting framework: the analysis of members’ embodied practices for producing and recognizing situated social action.

For CA and workplace studies, then, embodied conduct is a facet of the different phenomena to which participants attend as relevant in the process of building intelligible action in interaction with one another. More substantive insights from Goodwin, and from other CA and workplace studies of embodied action and interaction, will be presented as they become relevant in the data analysis chapters of this thesis. At this point it is sufficient to note that my study of the embodied organization of basketball practice sessions both builds upon resources developed by, and is intended to contribute to, the “highly distinctive sociology and anthropology of the interactional foundations of specialized tasks and activities” (Heath & Luff, 2012, p. 305) that ethnomethodology, CA, and workplace studies has begun to assemble. The findings that such studies have produced with regard to embodied conduct as a reflexive feature of the organization of situated courses of action thus constitute a thematic framework that structures my investigation of basketball practice activities. The next section outlines a second topic of ethnomethodological interest, instruction.
This thesis shares an interest in processes of instruction with a large body of literature in the field of educational research. A major focus of studies in that field is the investigation of issues of learning and knowledge transmission: that is, the achievement (or lack thereof) of the institutionalized goals of instruction (Gardner, 2012). Approaches within educational research predominantly have tended to adopt a “mentalism” perspective on pedagogical topics, assuming that phenomena such as knowing, learning, or understanding consist of psychological representations and processes located in individual minds, and thereby seeking to reveal the workings of these essentially private processes (Kasper, 2008; Macbeth, 2009). Alongside this literature sits a (smaller) corpus of ethnomethodological and CA studies of classroom interaction (e.g. Heap, 1985; Hellerman, 2005; Lee, 2007; Lerner, 1995; Macbeth, 1990, 1991, 2003, 2004; McHoul, 1978; McHoul, 1990; McHoul & Watson, 1984; Mehan, 1979; Nassaji & Wells, 2002; Seedhouse, 2004; Sharrock & Anderson, 1982). Unlike conventional educational research, ethnomethodologically-informed studies of instructional settings refrain from treating “cognitive” phenomena such as knowing and understanding (as well as other activities like seeing, believing, remembering, and planning (Lynch & Bogen, 2005)) as processes or states located “in the mind” (Kasper, 2008). Rather, starting with the premise that “the fundamental or primordial scene of social life is that of direct interaction between members of a social species” (Schegloff, 1991a, p. 154), the ethnomethodological approach to pedagogical practices explores, among other things, how ostensibly “cognitive” phenomena such as knowledge and understanding are oriented to, displayed, coordinated and agreed upon as practical accomplishments in social interaction (Potter & te Molder, 2005). Through the adoption such a stance, “a discourse on the invisibilities of mind yields to action’s public, witnessable surfaces” (Macbeth, 2009, p. 3).

Conventional educational research’s focus on understandings as pedagogical goals and outcomes has meant that the pre-existing understandings on which participants

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20 According to Watson and Coulter (2008), mentalism “is the view that people behave on the basis of various states or processes involved in the ‘workings of the mind’” (p. 1).
in instructional settings rely to organize those settings as coherent activities has been virtually ignored. From the conventional perspective, the “understanding” to be examined is that deriving from instructional activities – the focus is on the “new” understandings that the student has gained by the end of the lesson. However, addressing the topic of understanding in instructional activities from an ethnomethodological standpoint, Macbeth (2009) argues that taking a “turn-at-talk” in an on-going conversation is itself an enacted display of one’s understanding – of the action done by the prior turn, of what that turn called for as a relevant, rational, sensible next move in the interaction, and of where one expected that prior turn to come to completion: “as every turn at talk displays an understanding of its prior, perhaps the first measure of common understanding available in the social world – and thus for its analysis – is the production of a cogent next turn, on time” (p. 3). For Macbeth, the fact that understanding can be considered as something displayed via its enactment in interaction carries with it important implications for the study of instructional activity. As he astutely observes, “One cannot use math to teach math to those who do not know it” (2009, p. 12). This recognition allows the analytic focus to shift to examining the common understandings that experts and novices use to accomplish instructional activities – the shared understandings that those activities’ very progressions turn upon, through which the participants assemble the coherence of actions like questions and answers – and the very possibility of their on-going production.

Building on this suggestion, research into the interactional foundations of instruction has shown that central among the resources used by parties collaboratively to organize their instructional activities in classrooms is the three-turn “initiation-response-evaluation” (IRE) sequence (Heap, 1985; Lee, 2007; Macbeth, 2003, 2004; McHoul, 1978; Mehan, 1979). The prototypical trajectory of an IRE sequence involves an instructor asking a question to which they know the answer (this fact being understood by everyone21 in the room), a learner providing a candidate answer to the question, and the instructor producing an evaluation of the learner’s response in the third position. Mehan (1979) showed that classroom instruction depends upon

21 “As Sacks (1975) explained, ‘everyone’ is an indexical” (Grieffenhagen & Sharrock, 2008, p. 89).
the participants, teacher and student alike, knowing how collaboratively to use these sequences. Even an answer that displays a learner’s incorrect understanding of propositional content relevant to a given question still requires that learner to display their correct understanding of the instructional sequence – including, for instance, their understanding that the instructor knows the answer to their question – and the wider organization of the interaction at hand for the possibility of instruction to exist (Macbeth, 2009). Picture, for instance, a basketball coach asking a player “What just happened here?” following that player’s missed defensive assignment, to be met with the player’s response of “Oh, weren’t you watching?”

Although ethnomethodological studies of instruction have historically focused on classroom interaction, there is a growing body of research investigating instruction in non-classroom settings (C. Goodwin, 1994; Hindmarsh, 2010; Hindmarsh, Reynolds, & Dunne, 2011; Keevallik, 2010; Koschmann, et al., 2011; Lindwall & Ekstrom, 2012; Lindwall & Lymer, 2008; Nishizaka, 2006). In the pedagogical activities forming the subject of such studies, the instructional focus frequently is on the development of learners’ manual or bodily competencies. As Hindmarsh, Reynolds and Dunne (2011) illustrate in their study of dental training, the nature of the activities in which learners are being instructed can have manifold implications for the ways in which instruction is interactionally organized. In particular, a host of interactional complexities arise when instructional activities are conducted with the objective of shaping bodily practices. This is an important observation for my thesis because of the centrality, as noted above, of embodied conduct and embodied competency to the instructional activities occurring in basketball practice sessions.

A rare example of an ethnomethodological study of sport instruction is Girton’s (1986) ethnography of the learning and mastery of Kung Fu. Girton explores how newcomers to Kung Fu learn to “act the forms”; that is, to perform extended patterns of pre-programmed movements. A central mechanism through which “acting” is learned involves the beginner observing the embodied movements of expert practitioners and treating these movements as “followable” instructions. This fact creates a complication in that for the uninitiated observer, an expert’s performance consists of a dance-like flow, largely undifferentiated by discrete movements save
the occasional recognizable action such as a punch or a kick. The ability of a beginner to use the expert’s movements as instructions thus turns out to itself require the development of a skill – the ability to competently see the movements and their qualities. As Girton argues, the beginner’s development of competent observation affords them the ability to imitate, which is the means through which the beginner comes to develop the embodied capacity to “act the forms”. The beginner is shown the sequence, copies it, is corrected, and does it again. However, Girton argues that this description only covers the beginning phase of imitation. The bulk of the process consists of the beginner moving back and forth between practicing their own version of the pattern and watching authoritative versions, over and over, consulting the expert version to resolve questions regarding their own version.

Girton’s analysis is highly insightful, but due to his research method the relevance of his study to mine is restricted. As he acknowledges, because of his inability to make recordings of Kung Fu classes for detailed analysis, his summary observations are merely illustrations of, rather than findings about, how Kung Fu mastery is achieved. His descriptions of demonstration, observation, and imitation, while prescient, remain at the level of generalizations, and do not explicate the situated interactional work and circumstantial details of activities such as demonstrating, observing, imitating, correcting, and so on in the Kung Fu studio. Girton’s observations are useful for my purposes as a source of thematic topics for investigation. In particular, demonstration comprises a central pedagogical tool used in basketball training sessions, both for instruction and correction (which are intertwined activities). Building on Girton’s study, a central objective of my research is to find out what the endogenously organized local work glossed by the term “demonstration” constitutes.

Instructional activities in basketball practice have not yet been explored in research on social interaction. It thus stands that there are important questions to be explored about the kinds of interactional organizations used in producing the sense and coherence of these activities. How are the orderly actions that comprise instructional moves in basketball training activities, such as demonstrations, made locally intelligible, and followable as instructions, by the parties to the occasions themselves? What kinds of shared organizational resources – verbal, bodily, spatial,
material, categorial, and sequential – are involved in producing and finding the sense of these actions, and how are such resources assembled into coherent configurations? Which local problems and contingencies must be recurrently dealt with in accomplishing understandable instructional sequences? These specific questions regarding the organization of instruction in basketball emerge from the ethnomethodological research on instructional activities, and contribute to structuring my empirical chapters.

The discussion of instruction up to this point has considered knowledge and understanding as a matter of participants’ capacities to competently assemble intelligible instructional activities. While ethnomethodological and CA studies on instructional activities have been centrally preoccupied with this issue, this literature also provides resources for approaching the topic of learners’ knowledge of, or competency in, some domain of practice itself. This subject has been addressed within this tradition through investigation of how displays and assessments of such competencies are embedded in and shape the ways in which instructional activities unfold as trajectories of action. Research has demonstrated that the IRE sequence outlined above performs important functions in this regard (Lee, 2007; Macbeth, 2004). The first turn of the sequence, in which the instructor poses a question, instantiates a sequential framework within which a learner’s response in the next turn is able to serve not only as a display of the learner’s understanding of the interactional context, but also as evidence of their relevant knowledge (or “epistemic status” (Heritage, 2012a)) with regard to the domain of expertise in question. As CA studies of epistemics have demonstrated, participants in interaction unavoidably and relentlessly monitor and display “who knows what” relative to others in some relevant domain of knowledge, and assess each other’s access and rights to such knowledge (Drew, 2012; Heritage, 2012a; Heritage & Raymond, 2005; Sidnell, 2012b; Stivers, Mondada, & Steensig, 2011b). Members’ resultant fine-grained grasp of the local social distribution of knowledge22 comprises an essential part of the

22 It is important to point out, as Stivers, Mondada and Steensig (2011a) do, that members’ orientations to the social distribution of knowledge is a deeply moral one. Members hold one another accountable for observing norms related to knowledge distribution. The issue of “knowledge” is thus fundamentally sociological in nature. The moral organization of basketball activities is explored in Chapter 8.
shared background knowledge used to constitute recognizable actions. As a display of a learner’s knowledge of a relevant topic, the utterance in second turn (the learner’s response to the instructor’s question) provides the instructor with valuable resources for analyzing the student’s epistemic status, and the instructor’s subsequent evaluation can, in a wide variety of ways, publicly confirm or disconfirm that status. As Macbeth (2003) argues, “The three-turn ‘IRE’ sequence is a deeply constructive (or constitutive) exercise routinely deployed in the work of making ‘knowledge’ public, witnessable, and observable from any chair in the room” (p. 258).

These insights into learners’ knowledge and competencies as phenomena made publicly manifest and locally relevant in the course of interaction comprise another useful thematic framework upon which my study seeks to build. In particular, the findings discussed above raise a key question about the evaluation of novices’ competencies in basketball settings. Grossly speaking, a central objective of classroom lessons is to achieve mastery over a subject matter comprised of a substantial proportion of propositional and discursive content. A student’s knowledge of this terrain can therefore, at least to some extent, be discursively provided, evaluated and corrected. The IRE sequence, comprised of verbal questions and responses, clearly has utility in such a context as a technology for enabling an instructor to estimate what students do and do not know, and to steer the interaction in directions relevant to pedagogical objectives (Lee, 2007). The knowledge or competencies whose mastery comprises the objective of instruction in basketball practice, by contrast, appear to be treated only occasionally as a matter of a player’s ability to verbally articulate responses to questions. In the case of assessing a player’s possession or acquisition of a relevant basketball competency, evidence tends to be treated as discoverable in that player’s visibly inspectable bodily performances during some activity, rather than in their discursive formulations. As such, the classroom-style practice of asking a player a question in order to elicit verbal evidence of their competency often is not relevant to the instructional activities taking place in this setting.

It may be thought, though, that the IRE sequence could be made applicable to this situation through a simple modification. The coach, rather than asking a question
requiring a verbal answer, could instead request a player to perform a relevant action. The player’s subsequent embodied response would then be available as an evidential display of competency. However, a further feature of basketball practice activities impedes the utility of such a technique for this setting. The bodily performances providing evidence of basketball competencies are rarely available as stand-alone actions accomplished by individual players. Rather, as will be illustrated in Chapters 6 and 7, they regularly occur within complex spatial and sequential contexts formed during specific situated activities. Such contexts often emerge only contingently as multiple players coordinate numerous constituent actions. Especially important here is the fact that many practice activities are “oppositional”, involving offensive and defensive players or teams playing against one another. In such cases, players have competing sets of objectives, and achieving them requires both predicting and responding to the moves of their opposition. This fact means that contingency is built into the very structure of such activities. As a result, assessments of players’ mastery of basketball competencies are made by inspecting them as they occur during such contingent, unfolding courses of action. Such features of activities would seem to demand major modification of the IRE resource, as it appears in classroom instruction, if it is to be made applicable to the basketball practice setting.

A pair of questions, regarding the ways in which players’ knowledge and competency are assessed for pedagogical purposes, arise out of this comparison of classroom and basketball instruction. On which sorts of organizational resources does the coach rely in order to see, in players’ actions, evidence of their competence in some relevant aspect of basketball performance? And how are these observations taken up and utilized in assembling instructional and correction sequences? These questions have informed the analysis and will be returned to in the data chapters of this thesis. The next section considers the third topic structuring this study, visual perception.

2.5 Visual perception

In a fashion analogous to the treatment of knowing and understanding outlined above, ethnomethodological investigations have respecified visual activities such as
“looking (for)” and “seeing” as socially organized practices, performed in the midst of, and as part of, larger courses of action and interaction (C. Goodwin, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000a, 2000b, 2001; C. Goodwin & Goodwin, 1998; Stephen Hester & Francis, 2003; Koschmann, et al., 2011; Lindwall & Lymer, 2008; Nishizaka, 2000; Stevens & Hall, 1998). From such a perspective, visual perception and interaction are understood to be inextricably intertwined: visible phenomena are not treated as being constituted and made meaningful only by isolated, individual minds, but rather are regarded as “constructed, attended to, and used by participants as components of the endogenous activities that make up the lifeworld of a setting” (C. Goodwin, 2001, p. 162).

A central focus of ethnomethodologically-informed studies of visual perception has been the exploration of work settings as sites of interaction in which professionals see, and novices are instructed to see, in professionally-relevant ways. What Goodwin (1994) terms “professional vision” consists of socially organized ways, associated with particular (occupational or other) social groups, of seeing and understanding objects and events. Goodwin summarizes his findings from a number of empirical studies on visual perception in different professional settings, including archaeological field excavation, courtroom argumentation, and an oceanographic research vessel, as follows:

An event being seen, a relevant object of knowledge, emerges through the interplay between a domain of scrutiny … and a set of discursive practices (dividing the domain of scrutiny by highlighting a figure against a ground, applying specific coding schemes for the constitution and interpretation of relevant events, etc.) being deployed within a specific activity (1994, pp. 606-607).

Goodwin further notes that the ability to attend to relevant perceptual environments, locate work-relevant entities in those environments, and shape such entities into the objects of knowledge characterizing a profession, and to do so as embodied methods occurring within temporally-unfolding courses of action in situated activities, is central to a member’s competency in some professional domain. His fieldwork
provides illuminating examples of such practices. In a study of the trial of the Los Angeles policemen charged with assaulting Rodney King, Goodwin (1994) examines the practices used by defence lawyers to structure the perceptual field comprising video of the beating in particular ways. He shows how an expert witness applied a set of police categories for coding aggression to the images on the screen, using linguistic resources to transform the beating into “appropriate” police responses to a suspect’s aggressive behaviour, and instructing the jury how to “competently” see the videotaped events. The witness used practices of “highlighting”, such as gesture and graphic aids, to divide the complex visual field on the screen into a figure and a ground, and to thereby focus the jury’s attention on relevant phenomena. In the testimonies, Goodwin demonstrates, talk, embodied action, visible objects, and the larger activities in which they were embedded, mutually elaborated one another in the process of assembling action. This study reveals how seeing occurs as “a public and normative phenomenon, which is achieved in and through the actual course of a distinct activity” (Nishizaka, 2000, p. 120).

A further important point is that since the practices comprising professional vision are lodged within specific communities, they must be learned (C. Goodwin, 1994). Goodwin’s studies have illustrated that settings in which novices are learning to be competent professionals (or, in the case of the jurors, being instructed to see like professionals) make available (primarily for the inexperienced practitioner, but also for analysts) some of the embodied methods used by the profession to see, define, and distinguish relevant objects. Because settings of teaching and learning are characterized by asymmetries of competence, and involve experts explicitly correcting and instructing novices in how to conduct themselves knowledgeably and in certain activities, they can make competent discipline-specific seeing “a topic for participants and, as a consequence, a matter available for empirical research” (Lindwall & Lymer 2008, p. 186). My data is collected from an instructional setting that includes numerous instruction and correction activities and, as such, constitutes a “perspicuous setting” (Garfinkel, 2002) for investigating competent visual perception basketball, building upon the studies by Goodwin and others. Here I consider some features of basketball activities relevant to issues of visual perception,
and outline some of the issues regarding vision that the empirical chapters of this thesis explore.

An important aspect of competent basketball performance involves adequately seeing, recognizing, and responding to contextually relevant structures of bodies, movements, and features of the material environment (e.g., court markings) on the court in the course of carrying out particular activities. It takes work to see relevant objects (such as “a gap to move into”) in the messy configurations of moving bodies on the basketball court. Part of the work of instruction involves the disciplining of such competencies in and as interaction. Relevant seeing becomes, at times, a problematic topic for the participants in basketball trainings, with athletes’ actions on such occasions being treated as documents of their failure to adequately see and/or interpret relevant objects of knowledge on the court. These instances then provide occasions for the coach to make these features visible (to athletes as well as researchers), through intervening and transforming the relevant basketball structures and actions into objects of instruction and correction.

As a second aspect of vision relevant to these settings, the accomplishment of practice sessions, and the corrections that they regularly entail, depends upon the coach visually locating relevant “correctable” aspects of players’ performances. Identifying such features rests, in turn, on the coach’s proficient use of specific practices of looking and seeing. Seeing correctables is a critical aspect of a coach’s job. The process of determining in which skills the players require further instruction is partially based on what skill deficits the coach can see when watching them perform, and the coach’s evaluation of a player’s existing knowledge and competency is largely based upon observation of embodied performances. The coach’s explanation of these errors to the players during correction activities sheds some light upon the visual practices used to see them in the first place, and, as such, investigation of these interactions can provide some insight into the specific work of basketball coaching and the visual competencies that it entails.

Following these insights, the analysis into visual perception in this thesis focuses on three interrelated processes. First, there are the coach’s practices of seeing and
identifying correctables, as such practices become manifest in correction activities. The inspection of this aspect of seeing is intended to analyze vision as a facet of the work of coaching. The second aspect involves the ways in which visual phenomena are managed and oriented to in the accomplishment of instruction and correction sequences. As noted in the section on “instruction” above, features of basketball play raise certain implications for how instruction gets organized. For instance, in contrast to many instructional settings, the relevant environmental phenomena towards which players’ visual attention is directed are comprised, in part, of the moving bodies of the players themselves. The objects that comprise features of attention during play, such as “a gap to move into”, are embedded in temporally-unfolding configurations of bodies, and such objects are frequently fleeting, perishing very soon after they appear. As such, constructing material environments within which relevant objects can become visible and available for instruction work comprises a central feature of the organization of instructional activities. Explicating the interactive work involved in resolving problems of visibility in instructional activities thus comprises an important task for this thesis. Third, I investigate the coach’s explicit treatment, during correction activities, of players’ visual perception as “less than adequate”. The coach’s topicalization of players’ visual practices during these corrections makes “proper seeing” in basketball available for analytic discovery. The purpose of this part of the analysis is to gain insight into competent seeing as a constituent feature of the work of playing basketball. These three aspects of vision are dealt with in depth in Chapter 6 and 7. By interrogating these features, this thesis builds upon ethnomethodological studies of professional vision, expanding the interests of this strand of research into an area previously unexplored, the visual competencies implicated in sporting activities.

The previous three sections of this chapter have summarized ethnomethodological studies of three topics relevant to my study – embodiment, instruction, and visual perception. They have outlined the observations that have emerged from these studies, and highlighted the ways in which my research builds upon and seeks to extend these existing bodies of knowledge. The following section concludes and summarizes this chapter.
2.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has aimed to provide a contextual background for the empirical analysis presented in this thesis. Ethnomethodological studies have explored a vast range of social activities, from the “serious” to the “trivial”, but a gap exists with regard to the study of sport training and coaching in general, and team sport practice sessions in particular. However, studies regarding cognate topics do exist, and from this existing research a range of issues and questions structuring the empirical analysis of basketball activities in this thesis have emerged. Research on the topics of embodied conduct, instruction, and visual perception comprise substantial ethnomethodological literatures, and, as has been illustrated above, are all highly relevant to the activities that take place during basketball training sessions. The data chapters of this thesis delve into these issues empirically. The intention of the empirical analysis is both to explicate the unique organizational characteristics of basketball training activities and to add substantive content to the corpus of knowledge on these thematic topics.

The second objective of this chapter has been to provide a general picture of what ethnomethodologically-informed research has to say about social activities. In stark contrast to the body of sociology of sport literature surveyed in the previous chapter, the ethnomethodological literature abounds with detailed empirical explications of just how people go about concertedly organizing their mundane activities. Such depictions of activities may disappoint those who seek some kind of generalized account of the social totality, or who want sociological studies to uncover the “hidden” (and probably sinister) orderliness that lies beneath our everyday perceptions and actions. However, for those interested in exploring how “us ordinary folk” put together those “surface appearances” of the world in the first place, and do so in ways that enable us to see exactly what it is that we are doing and thereby accomplish our everyday tasks, the ethnomethodological literature offers a wealth of insight. This thesis constitutes an attempt to add to the ethnomethodological corpus of studies of the situated accomplishment of mundane activities, and does so by explicating some of the “missing interactional whatness” of sporting activity. The next chapter expands upon this aim by detailing the philosophical foundations of the ethnomethodological project and outlining Garfinkel’s central theoretical concepts.
Chapter 3: “An Awesome Mystery” – Social Theory, Ethnomethodology, and the Accountable Orderliness of Everyday Life

3.1 INTRODUCTION

There is, as Chapter 1 argued, little research in the sociology of sport that takes as its object the situated interaction through which sporting activities are accomplished as recognizable phenomena. The lack of such research constitutes the “missing whatness” of sport studies. This chapter outlines a broad theoretical programme, ethnomethodology, which offers a set of analytic resources for reconceptualizing sport as situated interaction, and, as such, for supplying this missing detail. While ethnomethodology “does not imply a unifying theory or method” (Lynch, 1999, p. 220) it can be argued that there exists a set of “field propositions” (McHoul, 2009), or perhaps a “characteristic attitude” (Lynch, 1999), informing the practice of ethnomethodological work. According to Lynch (1993), ethnomethodology is “a way to investigate the genealogical relationship between social practices and accounts of those practices” (p. 1, emphasis in original). This condensed definition provides a useful starting point for a discussion of ethnomethodology’s “characteristic attitude”. In this chapter I will attempt to describe what the ethnomethodological attitude might consist of, by making explicit some of the theoretical lineages and conceptual foundations implicit in Lynch’s characterization.

In particular, this chapter is intended to emphasize ethnomethodology’s distinctiveness as a sociological project. It seeks to demonstrate that the aspects of social life with which ethnomethodological research is interested are very different from those that conventional sociological studies seek to investigate. As Sharrock and Anderson (1986) put it:
Ethnomethodology is not bidding to do, as well or even better, the things that constructivist sociologists are aiming to do; its problems and those that sociologists usually address are... at a tangent. (p. 102)

The chapter seeks to illustrate this point by outlining the emergence of ethnomethodology as a distinctive research programme. In particular, it recounts Garfinkel’s critical assessment of Parsons’ action theory in order to show that ethnomethodology involves major divergences from conventional social theory at the level of fundamental philosophical presuppositions. It then turns to the social philosophy of Schutz, outlining key Schutzian ideas and showing how Garfinkel took them up in developing a methodology for studying social life. The chapter concludes by specifying some implications of taking up Garfinkel’s methodological recommendations in studying sporting activity. The central argument here is that the ethnomethodologically-informed research on sport that comprises the empirical contribution of this thesis is neither complimentary to, nor corrective of, conventional sociological studies of sporting activity. Rather, it constitutes a radically alternate take on sport. The grounds upon which this claim rests will be developed over the course of this chapter.

3.2 THE EMERGENCE OF ETHNOMETHODOLOGY

Ethnomethodology emerged out of Garfinkel’s engagement, between the 1940s and 1960s, with social theory and the basic problems of social order, social action, intersubjectivity and knowledge (Heritage, 1987). Garfinkel’s conceptual terms were developed, in part, in relation to what can be termed the “conventional” social scientific conception of social order and social action (Rawls, 2008). His arguments were directed specifically toward the idea of social order as it was manifested in Parsons’ structural-functionalist theory of action. Maynard and Clayman (1991)

23 Garfinkel later asserted that the central theoretical and methodological tendencies he found in Parsons’ work remained “omnipresent in professional sociology and the social sciences” (1988, p. 104). In his more recent (2002, 2007) restatements of his position, Garfinkel’s critique is directed toward what he characterizes as the “formal analytic” products of the “contemporary worldwide social science movement” (2007, p. 14), with the central thrust behind his criticism of these products remaining analogous to that underpinning his original insights regarding Parsons’ analysis. Whether
speak of Garfinkel’s early work as the development of an “incommensurate” alternative to the Parsons’ theory of action. The primary focus of Garfinkel’s critique in this regard was the means by which Parsons’ theorizing went about investigating the orderliness of mundane social phenomena, or what Garfinkel (2007) calls “the social facts of immortal, ordinary society” (pp. 14-15). According to Garfinkel (1988), Parsons’ approach was dominated by a fundamental distinction between, on the one hand, activities in their “concreteness” and, on the other, activities rendered analytically, with the concomitant assumption that “the real and actual society … is not to be found in the concreteness of things” (p. 106, emphasis in original).

Parsons’ distinction between concrete and analytic versions of social action was built upon the view that actions in their “raw” concrete form, that is, as they present themselves to people’s experience, are “disorderly” until the analyst employs his or her theorized structures and a priori representational methods, such as Parsons’ “unit act”, to order them. Through this professional process, “disorderly” concrete actions are rendered orderly and amenable to sociological explanation, and the “real” orderliness of society is thereby revealed:

With formal analytic methods, order in, about, as, inside with, as of, and within ordinary society is respecified from original ignorant provisions in prosaic everyday accounts of orderlinesses of daily life, lived in their concreteness, tangled in circumstantiality, and empty of order. In their place, orderlinesses of ordinary social facts, things, are specified with social science methods. (Garfinkel, 2007, p. 14)

Garfinkel took issue with the practices of “formal analysis”, through which analysts transform concrete actions into “the categorical phenomena legislated by the terms and protocols of their respective disciplines” (Hilbert, 2009, p. 160). Such practices
treat situated, concrete practical actions as mere epiphenomena of analytically specifiable general structures. Via the sociologist’s analytic apparatus, the “real and actual society” in the form of a theoretically specified and conceptualized phenomenon is “substituted” for the concrete, everyday “orderlinesses of ordinary social facts” (Garfinkel, 1988, p. 106). As an effect of this substitution, he argued, any sociological attempt to grasp how people go about producing and recognizing “the phenomena of the witnessable society” (Livingston, 2008a, p. 843) in their immediate settings is forestalled.

In contrast with the formal analytic approach, ethnomethodology’s central proposal is that the contingent details of individual cases of situated action, rather than being chaotic or disorderly prior to their sociological apprehension, exhibit an order in their own right. This is an order “whose scientific appreciation depends upon neither prior description, nor empirical generalization, nor formal specification of variable elements and their analytic relations” (Garfinkel, 1988, p. 387). For Garfinkel, the fact that concrete actions display a publicly available, “witnessable” order is a necessary feature of social action. The ability of multiple parties to coordinate their actions with one another depends upon each party having access to the visible/hearable order of their co-interactants’ actions. Rawls (2008) summarizes this point as follows:

The situated need to make sense, to mutually orient objects and actions, imposes order requirements on participants. Objects and actions are recognizable, and hence meaningful, only when they can be seen as orderly within a particular context of situated action. As Garfinkel says, “order = meaning”. That order, and its properties of sequential and contingent detail, is the sociological object. (p. 709)

According to Heritage (1987), Garfinkel’s thematization of the recognizability that social objects and actions have for the members involved in their local production effectively established a new topic for sociological analysis, “the properties of practical common-sense reasoning in mundane situations of action” (p. 231). In locating this domain as a legitimate object of analysis, Garfinkel was, as a number of
his expositors have noted, deeply indebted to his reading of the phenomenological life-world analysis of Schutz (Anderson, Hughes, & Sharrock, 1985; Eberle, 2012; Heap & Roth, 1973; Heritage, 1984, 1987; Psathas, 1980; Sharrock, 2004; Sharrock & Anderson, 1986; Zimmerman, 1978). Schutz’s social philosophy, and how Garfinkel used it in grounding his alternative sociological approach, will be outlined later in this chapter. In what immediately follows, however, I discuss Garfinkel’s general attitude toward “theorizing” and how this perspective enabled him to eschew many conventional sociological assumptions and replace them with ideas derived from Schutz.

3.3 Garfinkel’s Meta-theoretical Perspective

Garfinkel began his doctoral studies in 1946 in the Social Relations Department at Harvard under Parsons, who was at that point well on the way to becoming the most important sociologist in America (Koschmann, 2012). Garfinkel’s doctoral dissertation (1952) was centrally concerned with developing an approach to studying social order and action that was divergent from Parsons’ action theory. He laid out the distinction between Parsons’ achievements and his own interests in the opening paragraph:

At least two theoretical developments stem from the researches of Max Weber. One development, already well worked, seeks to arrive at a generalized social system by uniting a theory that treats the structuring of experience with another theory designed to answer the question, “What is man?” Speaking loosely, a synthesis is attempted between the facts of social structure and the facts of personality. The other development, not yet adequately exploited, seeks a generalized social system solely built from the analysis of experience structures. (p. 1)
In attempting to “adequately exploit” the second theoretical development of Weber’s research, Garfinkel drew on Schutzian notions\(^ {24}\) to problematize Parsons’ theory of social order and social action\(^ {25}\). However, Schutz’s endeavour, as will be outlined below, had been the epistemological one of establishing a firm philosophical grounding for sociology. Garfinkel’s problem was neither the resolution of epistemological problems nor the development of a theoretical system. Instead, his interests were purely methodological. He was principally concerned with the problem of how to go about making studies of social life, studies “which do not lead to the disappearance of the phenomenon” (Sharrock & Anderson, 1986, p. 16). This section outlines Garfinkel’s “procedural” attitude toward philosophical and theoretical issues and specifies how this stance enabled him to develop a highly distinctive sociological approach.

For Garfinkel, it was clear that for the sociologist setting out to make studies, alternative philosophical and theoretical schemas from which to choose were available. These perspectives were often in profound disagreement over the most foundational issues. A major line of dispute, for instance, consisted of that between philosophers in the Kantian tradition and those practising phenomenology over the very nature of knowledge. In the Kantian and neo-Kantian traditions, a fundamental “correspondence theory” distinguishes between objects as they are perceived and objects as they are in reality. In Garfinkel’s (1952) words, “there are on the one hand the concrete objects in all their fullness and on the other hand the conceptual representations of these objects” (p. 95). Since any perceived object is necessarily a conceptual representation of the real thing being perceived, the object-as-perceived may correspond more or less accurately to the concrete object. The fact, under the

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\(^{24}\) As well as concepts from other phenomenological thinkers, including Husserl and Gurwitsch (Psathas, 2004).

\(^{25}\) It is important to note that, though Garfinkel’s approach was openly oppositional to Parsons’ sociological project, Garfinkel accorded Parsons’ scholarship the utmost respect. As he noted in *Studies in Ethnomethodology*, “Parsons’ work, particularly, remains awesome for the penetrating depth and unfailing precision of its practical sociological reasoning and on the constituent tasks of the problem of social order and its solutions” (Garfinkel, 1967, p. ix). And later, in reference to Parsons’ *The Structure of Social Action*, Garfinkel (1988) declared that “Ethnomethodology has its origins in this wonderful book” (p. 104). For a detailed account of Garfinkel’s relationship with Parsons, see Koschmann (2012).
correspondence theory, that objects may be perceived with differing degrees of accuracy establishes a crucial role for science. It is the systematic application of scientific methods that ensures that descriptions of the world will be in accordance with things as they really are. The scientist, from this perspective, occupies a privileged vantage point, being able to capture things in their objectivity.

The phenomenological tradition, by contrast, rejected the correspondence theory in favour of the theory of intentionality, or what Garfinkel (1952) termed the “congruence theory”:

The leading premise of the “congruence” theory of reality is that the perceived object of the “outer world” is the concrete object, and that the two terms, “perceived object” and ‘concrete object’ are synonymous and interchangeable terms. Rather than there being a world of concrete objects which a theory cuts this way and that, the view holds that the cake is constituted in the very act of cutting. No cutting, no cake, there being no reality out there that is approximated since in this view the world is just as it appears. (Garfinkel, 1952, pp. 95-96)

For the phenomenologist, the distinction between “reality” and “perception” (or “object” and “subject”) is dismantled, replaced by the object-as-perceived (or the “intended object”) (Heap & Roth, 1973). For the purposes of phenomenological research, the phenomenologist puts “the world in brackets” (Schutz, 1962, p. 104) in the interests of directing analytic attention toward the intended object itself:

The phenomenologist does not deny the existence of the outer world, but for his analytical purpose he makes up his mind to suspend belief in its existence – that is, to refrain systematically from all judgments related directly or indirectly to the existence of the outer world. …What remains after the performance of the transcendental reduction is nothing less than the universe of our conscious life, the stream of thought in its integrity… (Schutz, 1962, pp. 104-105)
Choices between sets of philosophical presuppositions such as these are frequently made by sociologists on epistemological grounds, by considering which perspective can provide better access to reality. Garfinkel’s methodological interest led him to a different take on how such problems might be resolved. His conviction was that disagreements at the level of profound philosophical problems were not resolvable by sociologists (Sharrock & Anderson, 1986). Instead, he proposed, the decision among philosophical frameworks might be made on pragmatic investigative grounds, by asking what consequences the operationalization of different theoretical schemas would have for the studies of social life that sociologists are interested in making (Anderson, et al., 1985).

Garfinkel’s “procedural turn” (Sharrock & Watson, 1988) was crucial in his development of ethnomethodology as a radical alternate to sociological theorizing. It allowed Garfinkel to sidestep the longstanding problems and interests of the field, such as that of reconciling the structure/agency dualism, by showing that dualisms such as this were a product of certain decisions and assumptions made by sociological theorists at the pre-sociological level. This observation meant that, though such problems as the relationship between structure and agency stand at the heart of sociology as traditionally conceived, recognizing such problems as genuine ones is not an essential component required of all sociological approaches. A sociologist setting out to develop a methodology for making studies could, given their election of a particular set of pre-sociological assumptions, choose to disregard certain issues, even those as foundational to the field as the structure/agency dichotomy, as irrelevant:

Ethnomethodology approaches these matters in this way. It does not stand within the same conception of theorizing, does not affiliate itself to the received tradition of theorizing, but steps outside of that and thus outside the collection of dualisms (including structure-and-agency) which comprise sociology’s institutionalized dilemmas. (Sharrock & Watson, 1988, p. 58)

Adopting this pragmatic perspective toward philosophical foundations enabled Garfinkel to assess what the implications of making particular theoretical choices
would be for the types of studies the sociologist was able to carry out. In particular, he was able to demonstrate that Parsons’ pre-theoretical elections led to “the disappearance of the phenomenon” for the sociologist attempting to make studies of social life. This recognition provoked Garfinkel to attempt to locate alternative philosophical resources, a search which ultimately led him to Schutz’s work. The following section briefly outlines Parsons’ general sociological theory and summarizes the grounds upon which Garfinkel’s critique of Parsons’ approach were based.

3.4 Garfinkel’s Radicalization of Parsons

In developing his sociological theory of action, Parsons had explicitly set out to resolve the Hobbesian “problem of order” (Heritage, 1984). The Hobbesian problem arises from an assumption that “in the absence of external constraint, the pursuit of private interests and desires leads inevitably to both social and individual disintegration” (Dawe, 1970, p. 207). Given this competitive ‘state of nature’, the sociologist’s task, as Parsons saw it, was to account for the existence of social order by specifying theoretically the structure and mechanisms of external constraint. Parsons’ (1937/1968) solution to this problem was essentially derived from the work of Durkheim (Heritage, 1984). Through a process of socialization, Parsons argued, social actors internalize normative value standards. These norms then function to constrain both the ends to which actors may aspire and the means they may choose to accomplish those ends. To the extent that such norms become institutionalized (e.g., as shared orientations to a system of roles), stable patterns of coordinated social activity will result. As Heritage (1984) notes, norms and values thus function in Parsons’ theory as causal dispositions to action. Given that norms serve to explain conduct, for Parsons, it is the social system as an organized whole, which forms a centralized structure of norms, roles, and values, that guarantees social order. As such, it is to the organization of this systemic level that the attention of the sociological analyst must be directed. Social action, the mundane orderly activities that comprise the object of sociological explanation, do not themselves function as explanantia in Parsons’ theoretical system (Sharrock & Anderson, 1986).
This conception of action as the effect of forces operating at the level of the social system was entirely consistent with Parsons’ view of social science. As a follower of the Kantian tradition outlined above, Parsons sought to move beyond the appearances of social actions and capture their underlying reality (Anderson, et al., 1985). The problem that arises for the sociologist making the distinction between appearances and reality is that of ensuring an isomorphism between a) the sociologist’s representation of the phenomenon in question, and b) external reality. For Parsons, this problem would be resolved by the rigorous application of scientific methods. More specifically, he believed that any legitimate science must generate abstract analytic laws that could tie together discrete empirical observations. So, even though he regarded the social sciences’ primary object of analytic interest to consist of “subjective” phenomena, such disciplines must develop abstract theoretical concepts that could form the components of universal explanatory laws.

Consistent with this view, Parsons (1937/1968) distinguished between two distinct levels of analysis. “Unit analysis” concerns the concrete actor and their concrete acts, and is concerned with the questions “what end does the actor wish to realize; by which means; and what is his subjective knowledge about the elements of his act?” (Schutz, 2011, p. 18). However, if observations made at this concrete level of action are to be integrated into an explanatory scientific theory, the investigation must move to another level of abstraction. Parsons’ second level, “element analysis”, involves deconstructing concretely observed phenomena into their underlying “elements”, or “universals” (which for Parsons are comprised of the internalized value orientations that do most of the analytic work in his theory). Concrete “units” were ultimately interesting only insofar as they provided grist for the sociological mill. The real work consisted of the procedures of building a metric of value elements and of theorising the laws governing their combinatory possibilities.

The end result of Parsons’ theoretical and methodological conceptions is, as Sharrock and Anderson (1986) observe:

a view which defines social order as an internal property of the system of social action. But this internal property can only be viewed from a vantage
point outside the system. The procedures of scientific method appropriately adapted will make such observations possible. (p. 26)

Garfinkel’s critical analysis of Parsons’ theoretical approach, in line with his procedural turn outlined above, centred on evaluating its utility for making sociological studies. The critical question for Garfinkel in assessing a theoretical perspective was what assistance it would offer him in “following the animal” (Garfinkel, 1977, as cited in Anderson, et al., 1985, p. 221). As he saw it, sociology’s “animal”, its fundamental phenomenon, is the social organization of activities. At base, a sociological approach ought to be able to illuminate how singular occurrences of social action – courses of action involving the coordinated activities of more than one person – get put together. As Garfinkel (1952) had demonstrated, Parsons’ solution to this problem is wholly dependent upon the presumption of the existence of a common culture. Parsons assumes from the outset that actors share some definition of both their circumstances of action and of what individual actions mean. According to his “internalization theorem”, actors come to possess roughly identical cognitive schemes through the socialization process. As a result, in any specific situation of action, they share mutual understandings of what is going on.

Garfinkel, following his proceduralizing inclinations, supposed that if members shared common understandings of the meaning of substantive matters, then such shared cultural understandings ought to be discoverable. He devised a range of experiments (reported in Garfinkel (1967)) designed to explicate the “shared agreement among persons on certain topics” (Garfinkel, 1967, p. 39) that Parsons’ theory presupposed. One involved having students specify the meanings embedded in a brief stretch of conversation. Students were asked to record what was actually said in a conversation between themselves and another party, and then to identify the meanings implicit in the utterances until all of the unspoken meanings had been identified. For every elaboration the student produced, Garfinkel was able to show that they had only succeeded in multiplying the ambiguities. Eventually, the students gave up, recognizing that accomplishing the task of allowing Garfinkel to understand “what they had actually talked about only from reading literally what they wrote literally” (Garfinkel, 1967, p. 26) was an impossible one. For Garfinkel, in
discovering the impossibility of exhaustively specifying the meanings of even a small fragment of interaction, the students had “stumbled upon” the inherent inadequacy of Parsons’ assumption that shared substantive understandings explains members’ ability to coordinate their activities.

Garfinkel’s attempts, via this experiment and others, to operationalize Parsons’ theory as a means of making visible the ways in which social activities are coordinated, were failures (Sharrock & Anderson, 1986). Garfinkel discovered that rather than helping the sociologist illuminate the ways in which such activities are accomplished, the presumption of a shared culture effectively obscures the problem (Heritage, 1984). His response to this was to drop the assumption of a common culture. Any shared meaning that actions and circumstances come to have would then have to be treated as the accomplishment of the actors involved in producing the activities themselves (Sharrock & Anderson, 1986). Parsons’ theoretical framework could provide no assistance in developing methodological resources for investigating the process of establishing shared meaning. To tackle this problem, Garfinkel turned to Schutz, whose sociology was based upon an entirely different philosophical framework, one that did not begin with the presupposition of a common culture. The next section outlines Schutz’s perspective and contrasts his pre-theoretical elections to those made by Parsons. This will lead in to a discussion of how Garfinkel operationalized Schutzian perspectives to develop ethnomethodology as a distinctive approach to studying social life.

3.5 **Schutz, Weber, and the Problem of the Actor’s Knowledge**

Schutz’s central theoretical interest lay in establishing a reliable foundation for the social sciences, a project which persistently guided his work over the course of his career (Sharrock, 2004). Schutz was deeply influenced, in particular, by Weber’s vision of sociology as an interpretive science (Wilson, 2005). Weber (1922/1978) fundamentally understood sociology to be “a science concerning itself with the interpretive understanding of social action and thereby with a causal explanation of its course and consequences” (p. 4). Action, for Weber, was distinct from “merely reactive behaviour” in that it possesses subjective meaning for the actor in the form
of the motive that the actor has for performing the action. Since the occurrence of actual, concrete courses of action depends upon actors’ intended meanings, the sociologist’s causal explanation of action must, Weber stressed, be based on “interpreting its subjective meaning as found in the intentions of individuals” (Schutz, 1967, p. 6). In elevating actors’ understandings of their action as the central phenomenon for sociological analysis, Weber’s approach fundamentally differed from structuralist/deterministic sociologies, such as the approaches developed by Durkheim and Marx.

Schutz (1967) agreed with Weber that the essential aim of a social science was to understand the subjective meaning of social action, but found Weber’s concept of “interpretive sociology” problematic, arguing that it was based on a series of unexplicated, tacit presuppositions Schutz’s deep understanding of philosophy, particularly Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology, provided him with both the resources and the motivation systematically to work through the epistemological and methodological issues surrounding Weber’s concept of interpretive sociology, and of other concepts central to Weber’s apparatus, such as “understanding”, “meaning”, and “action” (Psathas, 2005). This philosophical endeavour had been largely eschewed by Weber, who, according to Schutz, was generally uninterested in engaging with foundational philosophical questions. Schutz thus sought to subject Weber’s central theoretical concepts to a close examination and a systematic phenomenological clarification (Psathas, 2005).

A central focus of Schutz’s scrutiny was Weber’s concept of the “ideal type”. For Weber, social reality consists of an endless, cascading flow of fragmentary empirical events, and the objective of sociology must be to understand some significant feature(s) of this empirical reality (Kalberg, 2011). In order to achieve this

26 For example, Schutz (1967) notes that:

As significant as were Weber’s contributions to methodology, as incorruptible as was his vision of the task of concept formation in the social sciences, as admirable as was his philosophical instinct for the correct critical position on epistemological questions – just as little did the thorough undergirding of his results by a secure over-all philosophical point of view concern him. In fact, he had little interest at all in the clarification of the philosophical presuppositions of even his own primary concepts. (p. 7)
understanding, the sociologist must first select out some set of individual historical events for their “cultural significance”, and then seek to discover their “causes” (Psathas, 2005). In developing a method for selecting and explaining significant concrete historical events, Weber, as Psathas (2005) notes, rejected both the descriptive, ideographic mode of analysis typical in historical narrative, and the nomothetic method of positivist social science. The former approach seeks to understand events in terms of “the actually existing meaning in the given concrete case of a particular actor” (Weber, 1922, cited in Schutz, 1967, p. 225). Weber (1922/1978) argued that while this approach may provide causal explanation of individual actions and events, it does not satisfy sociology’s distinctive concern with generating “generalized uniformities of empirical process” (Weber, 1922/1978, p. 19).

The nomothetic approach to understanding social phenomena, on the other hand, attempts to generate abstract, general, and universal “laws” or theories of social action. However, Weber rejected the position that laws or “general invariate principles” (Psathas, 2005, p. 145) could function as adequate causal explanations for concrete social-historical actions. This was because universal concepts are insensitive to context and to the subjective meanings, in the form of motives for action, that the actions in question have for the actors producing them (Ekstrom, 1992).

For Weber, ideal types comprised a methodological tool for producing causal analyses that would circumvent the problems of these two approaches. Ideal types demarcate Weber’s distinctive level of analysis: neither empirical reality (“historical narrative”), nor reified social structure (“laws”), but rather “patterned orientations of meaningful action” (Kalberg, 2008, p. 11). In his own words:

There can be observed, within the realm of social action, actual empirical regularities; that is, courses of action that are repeated by the actor or (possibly also simultaneously) occur among numerous actors because the subjective meaning is typically meant to be the same. Sociological
investigation is concerned with these *typical* modes of action. (Weber, 1968, as cited in Kalberg, 2011, pp. 111-112, emphasis in original)

Ideal types are thus sociologists’ idealizations that aim to capture patterns of intentional courses of action. By the use of this conceptualization, interpretive sociology would attempt to understand action not in terms of what it meant to a concrete historical actor, nor as an epiphenomenal feature of a structural system. Rather, the ideal type represents a group category (e.g., “Puritan”) and depicts arrays of patterned action-orientations meaningful to, and prevalent among, members of that group (e.g., for the Puritan, “intense work”) (Kalberg, 2008). As methodological devices, ideal types are both general enough to allow the analyst to achieve a coherent ordering of a chaotic reality, and specific enough to capture and explain the uniqueness of specific concrete occurrences. The result, for Weber, is a sociology that attempts neither to describe social reality exhaustively, nor to produce general theories of social life. Rather, such an approach aims to describe and explain causally the significant action-orientations of members of specific historical groups (Kalberg, 2008).

Schutz agreed that the ideal type was the fundamental methodological tool of the social sciences, but he regarded Weber’s formulation of the concept as unsatisfactory (Schutz, 1967). He grounded his sociological investigations in Husserl’s phenomenological insights into the pre-scientific experience of the life-world. Schutz’s central concern was to link Husserl’s phenomenological life-world analysis with the methodology of the social sciences, and he found this link in the subjective meaning of social action (Eberle, 2010, 2012). As such, his principal interest was in elaborating on the subjective experience of social action and of the “intersubjective” reality of the social world, as found within the “natural attitude” of everyday life.

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27 Schutz’s assertion that actors experience the social world, from the outset, as an in-principle intersubjective one will be elaborated on below.

28 The orientation toward the world taken by someone concerned with acting pragmatically within the it, rather than with observing it disinterestedly and theorizing it in the manner of a philosopher or social scientist (Natanson, 1968).
For Schutz, Husserl had demonstrated that the objects and events comprising the world, as it is experienced in the ongoing flow of everyday life, are recognized through peoples’ use of a “stock of knowledge at hand”. This stock of mundane knowledge, which ceaselessly functions as a scheme of interpretation, is fundamentally comprised of “typified” objects and events: “the outer world is not experienced as an arrangement of individual unique objects, dispersed in space and time, but as ‘mountains’, ‘trees’, ‘animals’, ‘fellowmen’” (Schutz, 1953, p. 5). Any perceived phenomenon, even the unfamiliar, is grasped against this largely unquestioned (but not unquestionable) pre-established background (Heritage, 1984).

With specific reference to the social world, Schutz argued that the other and their actions are apprehended via the use of constructs of typical behaviour or course-of-action patterns, and typical personalities (i.e., typical attitudes, motives, and beliefs). These type constructs may range in specificity from those employed in interactions of deep intimacy with the other, to those used in circumstances where the other is virtually anonymous. Schutz’s phenomenological investigations into mundane knowledge were concerned to argue that members of society are actively engaged in using and constructing ideal types in ordering their common-sense experience. This means that ideal types are not, in the first instance, constructs brought into existence by Weber’s sociology, nor by the methodology of the social sciences in general; rather, the origin of ideal types of social action lies in the common-sense thinking of everyday life (Schutz, 1953).

The common-sense foundations of ideal types seems to have been missed by Weber (Psathas, 2005). In exposing these foundations, Schutz produced important methodological consequences for interpretive sociology. Since social reality is constituted through actors’ subjective interpretations of actions and their circumstances, and since actors’ subjective interpretations are performed via the construction of typified patterns in common-sense experience, Schutz held that it is with the properties of these typifying constructs that sociological investigation should be principally concerned (Heritage, 1984). From this perspective, the social scientist’s role is to produce “second-order constructs” of social actors’ “first-order constructs”. In other words, in order adequately to grasp social reality, the
sociological observer must generate “constructs of the constructs made by actors on the social scene” (Schutz, 1954, p. 267). Schutz’s phenomenological grounding of Weber’s ideas thus lead to a substantial shift of focus: from Weber’s employment of ideal types as sociologists’ methodological constructs, to the direct study of the common-sense typifying practices by which “man in daily life organises his experiences, and especially those of the social world” (Schutz, 1954, p. 267).

In a series of publications, Schutz fleshed out some of the constructs used by the “wide-awake”, “grown-up” person in organising their experience of the world of daily life under the auspices of the natural attitude (Schutz, 1945). As there is not space here to consider his descriptions of this world in detail, I will concentrate on two central, interlocking properties of the mundane world, as grasped within the natural attitude, set out by Schutz: its objective reality and its intersubjectivity. These assumptions might be characterized as the “fundamental and axiomatic experiential constructs” (Heritage, 1984, p. 52) that unquestionably undergird all mundane experiences of the “real” world. Both assumptions are contained in the following description, from Natanson’s introduction to his edited collection of Schutz’s papers, of the “epoché of the natural attitude”:

Our natural believing in the world, in its reality, its being there, its having a past and the likelihood of a future, and of its being given to us all in much the same way is the philosophical foundation of the common-sense world. (Natanson, 1962, p. xliii)

To deal with the first assumption: according to Schutz, for the member of society operating under the natural attitude the objectivity and reality of the outer world and its objects are taken for granted from the outset. While the objectivity of any particular phenomenon may be doubted, the exercise of any global doubt in the objectivity of the world of appearances, such as that practised in philosophical reflection, is suspended29 (Pollner, 1974). Thus, “for the member operating under the

29 On this point, Natanson (1968) writes:
attitude of everyday life, the world offers itself as an a priori resistive, recalcitrant, and massively organised structure into which he must gear himself” (Zimmerman & Pollner, 1971, pp. 85-86).

The second crucial assumption underpinning members’ experience of the external world is that it is known in common with others, that is, it exists as an intersubjective reality. Schutz argues that the world is not apprehended as the private experiential domain of an individual but as one which we assume is experienced more or less identically by all of us. For Schutz, the reason for this assumption is that the natural attitude is characterized by a fundamental “thou-orientation” (Schutz, 1967). That is, we take for granted from the outset the existence of other conscious and intelligent members like ourselves. Such a recognition implies that the objects and events that I experience as “real” in my daily life are, as a matter of principle, also available to others (Schutz, 1954). The world is, in the first instance, not real only for me but for “us”30. This mundane assumption of a world shared with others is absolutely essential to the possibility of social interaction, and, as Pollner (1974) argues, abandoning it would yield “unrelievable” uncertainty about what others perceive, leading one into “an autistic domain void of a sense of world, others and self” (p. 39).

Building upon the notion of a world experienced as fundamentally intersubjective in nature, Schutz (Schutz, 1953) further specified some of the common-sense typifying constructs routinely utilized by actors in constituting this shared external world. Chief among these is the pair of presuppositions that he termed “the general thesis of reciprocal perspectives”. Although members orient to an intersubjectively real world “out there”, Schutz asserted that they also know that the “same” objects appear

Philosophy is, in fact, a reversal of the underlying attitude of everyday life, a primordial glance at what the mundane eye has simply accepted without even the intimation of serious question. Within the “natural attitude” of daily life epistemology and metaphysics have no status, their fundamental problems are unadmitted because they are unrecognized, and their implications for a philosophy of human existence are simply and ingeniously excluded. (p. 219)

30 “Us” referring here to “‘everyone who belongs to us’, namely everyone whose system of relevances is substantially (sufficiently) in conformity with yours and mine” (Schutz, 1954, pp. 8-9).
differently to each of them. There are two reasons for this perceptual disparity. Firstly, any two actors occupy different spatial positions and thus their perception of objects can never be perfectly identical. Secondly, each actor exists within a different biographically determined situation, and thus experiences the object by reference to different sets of practical purposes and interests. Common-sense thinking resolves these problems of perspectival appearance by performing two basic idealizations. The first of these Schutz (1954) calls “the idealization of the interchangeability of the standpoints”. According to this principle, the actor assumes (and assumes that their counterpart likewise assumes) that if they were to exchange places with the other, the second actor would see things in the same way as the first does, and vice versa. The second is “the idealization of the congruency of the system of relevances”. Here, both actors assume that any perspectival differences generated by the actors’ different biographical situations are irrelevant for the purposes at hand. Further, both actors assume that each one has selected and interpreted the common objects and their features in a manner sufficiently identical for all practical purposes31.

Objects and events are thus apprehended via the use of two partially conflicting presuppositions: firstly, that a shared, real world exists, and secondly that this world appears in different forms to differently (spatially and biographically) positioned individuals. The general thesis of reciprocal perspectives functions to accommodate both assumptions by facilitating the selection of the commonly shared features of individually experienced phenomena. It is these presumed to be known-in-common features of an object or event that are treated as constituting its intersubjective reality 32. Further, these presumed to be commonly perceived features of a phenomenon are understood by actors to supersede those features that are understood

31 To claim that people presuppose a commonly shared real world is not to assert that they must always experience concrete phenomena in the same way. Several studies compatible with Schutz’s position have illustrated how “reality disjunctures” or “interpretive asymmetries” regarding conflicting perceptual experience can both arise, and be resolved (or not), by use of the presupposition of a world in common as a background expectancy (see, for example, Coulter (1975), Eglin (1979), and Pollner (1974, 1975, 1987).

32 “Thus, the general thesis of reciprocal perspectives leads to the apprehension of objects and their aspects actually known by me and potentially known by you as everyone’s knowledge. Such knowledge is conceived to be objective and anonymous, namely detached from and independent of my and my fellowman’s definition of the situation, my and his unique biographical circumstances and the actual and potential purposes at hand therein involved.” (Schutz, 1953, p. 9).
to be personal and “private”. As Garfinkel (1967) puts it, “there is a characteristic
disparity between the publicly acknowledged determinations and the personal,
withheld determinations of events, and this private knowledge is held in reserve”
(1967, p. 56).

Crucially, Schutz (1946) supplements his argument that actors orient to and use a
shared stock of knowledge to recognize events with the assertion that knowledge is
socially distributed. Common-sense thinking includes the recognition that
individuals have differential access to specific “provinces” of knowledge, that what
one knows and how one knows it both overlaps with and differs from what one’s
partner, neighbour, doctor, and someone who grew up in a different country to one
know, in complex and textured ways. Accordingly, in any interaction, parties orient
to signs (e.g., speech accent or markings of subcultural membership) that might
index elements of shared background knowledge or “common ground” (Enfield,
2006) that may be utilized in constructing intersubjective understanding33.

An important consequence of the points made above regarding the thesis of
reciprocal perspectives is that the features of perceptual phenomena that are oriented
to as intersubjective by an actor attain this status only insofar as the actor:

(a) expects that (insert the relevant feature); (b) expects that as it (the feature
in question) holds for him it holds for the other person as well; and (c)
expects that as he expects it to hold for the other person, the other person
expects it to hold for him. (Garfinkel, 1963, p. 209)

Any feature of the situation that satisfies these conditions can be said to possess the
“accent of reality” (Garfinkel, 1963). Social reality is thus, from this

33 The issue of how members display sensitivity to their own identities and to those of their co-
participants by particularizing their interactional contributions for what they take each other to know
has been dealt with in ethnomethodology and conversation analysis under the headings of “recipient
design” (Enfield, 2006; Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974) and “membership categorization
analysis” (Housley & Fitzgerald, 2002; Sacks, 1995). The issue of members’ interactive orientations
to the social distribution of knowledge and information has recently emerged as the basis of an
extensive research programme focusing on “epistemics in interaction” (Heritage, 2012b). I elaborate
on both of these themes in the next chapter.
phenomenological perspective, a practical achievement constituted entirely by the activity of the actors. There is no place in this theoretical system for any “external” (e.g., structural or metaphysical) guarantee of a world-known-in-common (Heritage, 1984). Further, on any given occasion, the actors’ assumptions of shared understanding may be revoked or abandoned at any time – such assumptions are taken for granted only in the absence of counter-evidence. As such, mutual understanding is an inherently contingent, and potentially problematic, practical accomplishment.

At this point, the findings of Schutz’s phenomenological inquiries into the life-world can be summarized, and the contrast that Garfinkel made between Schutz and Parsons can be drawn out. Schutz demonstrated that the existence of an objective, intersubjectively known world is a mundane phenomenon, a property of members’ common-sense reasoning within the natural attitude. He thus respecified the “problem of intersubjectivity” – that is, the problem of how a common, “real” world, one transcending actors’ private experiences, can be established – as a members’ concern. Along with redefining intersubjective reality as an emic phenomenon, Schutz further showed that its accomplishment was a completely contingent event, wholly dependent upon interactants’ reciprocal ascription to one another of common interpretive schemes and parties’ mutual validation of each other’s ascriptions in turn-by-turn interaction. The achievement of a shared reality amongst social actors “is what practical reasoning accomplishes” (Sharrock & Anderson, 1986, p. 38).

The discussion of Parsons’ action theory above showed that Parsons’ primary interest lay in providing an account of actors’ underlying normative motivations for action. The analytic focus on actors’ motivated compliance with norms of conduct wholly presupposed the ability of those actors to establish shared understandings of

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34 It is this assertion that provided the impetus for Garfinkel’s well-known “breaching experiments”. Garfinkel (1967) proposed that since the typifications outlined above function as background expectancies employed by actors in constituting the “real” objects of their intersubjective environments, it should be possible to “breach” these expectancies “by deliberately modifying scenic events to disappoint these attributions” (p. 57). He hypothesized that the ‘nastiness’ of the surprise experienced by a party exposed to a breach of background expectancies “should vary directly with the extent to which the person as a matter of moral necessity complies with their use as a scheme for assigning witnessed appearances their status as events in a perceivedly normal environment” (p. 57).
their actions and the situations of conduct in which they found themselves. The use of the notion of a common culture to explain actors’ shared understanding effectively deletes the reasoning procedures used to recognize actions and circumstances. The outcome of such a procedure is the construction of a model of the social actor as, in Garfinkel’s memorable phrase, a “cultural dope”:

By “cultural dope” I refer to the man-in-the-sociologist’s society who produces the stable features of the society by acting in compliance with preestablished and legitimate alternatives of action that the common culture provides. The “psychological dope” is the man-in-the-psychologist’s-society who produces the stable features of the society by choices among alternative courses of action that are compelled on the grounds of psychiatric biography, conditioning history, and the variables of mental functioning. The common feature in the use of these “models of man” is the fact that courses of common sense rationalities of judgement which involve the person’s use of common sense knowledge of social structures over the temporal “succession” of here and now situations are treated as epiphenomenal. (Garfinkel, 1967, p. 68)

While Parsons’ assumptions lead the investigator to an analysis of the normative systems governing action, Schutz’s framework leads in a different direction. Since shared meaning depends not on a common culture but on shared experience, the investigator is led to an exploration of the ways in which the parties to social activities make their actions and circumstances observable and recognizable from within the activities themselves. For the sociologist adopting a Schutzian approach, “what any action is, what it means, is treated as a matter for investigation and display by social actors. The accountability of social action, its place in the social structure, must be made visible” (Sharrock & Anderson, 1986, p. 38, emphasis in original). Recall that for Garfinkel, sociology’s “animal”, its fundamental phenomenon, is the social organization of activities. The sociologist’s job is to make studies that provide better insight into how actual, concrete courses of social action are put together. From this perspective, the validity of any theoretical schema is to be assessed in terms of its ability to assist the sociologist in “following the animal”. Garfinkel found
that Parsons’ assumptions had obscured the procedures that actors use to accomplish the recognizability of their actions. In Schutz, he located the resources he needed to make this level of phenomena visible. The next section outlines how Garfinkel developed Schutzian ideas into a distinctive research programme, discussing the central concepts of indexicality, reflexivity and accountability that underpin ethnomethodology’s investigations into social order.

3.6 GARFINKEL’S CLASSICAL ETHNOMETODOLOGICAL STUDIES

*Studies in Ethnomethodology* (1967), a collection of Garfinkel’s investigations, is “universally taken to be ethnomethodology’s foundational text” (Hilbert, 2009, p. 159). In the opening chapter of *Studies*, Garfinkel introduces ethnomethodology’s “central recommendation”: “that the activities whereby members produce and manage settings of ordinary everyday affairs are identical with members’ procedures for making those settings ‘account-able’” (p. 1). By describing activities and settings as “accountable”, Garfinkel meant that they were observable and reportable by members. Further, members’ practices of observing and describing activities, that is, their accounting practices, are themselves features of the settings they describe: “Members’ accounts are reflexively and essentially tied for their rational features to the socially organized occasions of their use for they are features of the socially organized occasions of their use” (Garfinkel, 1967, p. 4). This idea of a reflexive tie between actions and their rational accountability comprises the central principle underpinning ethnomethodological studies. The proposal that the regularities of social order can be studied empirically through detailed investigations of how social actors provide for the accountability of their actions is the ethnomethodological development of the Schutzian points outlined above.

In the introductory chapter to *Studies*, Garfinkel (1967) specifies three constituent aspects of the rational accountability of practical actions. These are: “(1) the unsatisfied programmatic distinction between and substitutability of objective (context free) for indexical expressions; (2) the ‘uninteresting’ essential reflexivity of accounts and (3) the analyzability of actions-in-context as a practical accomplishment” (p. 4). He observes that these features are “problematic” and
therefore comprise appropriate topics for study. In line with Koschmann (2012), I will treat these three aspects of accountability (in short, indexicality, reflexivity, and the analyzability of actions-in-context) as the core presuppositions underpinning ethnomethodologically-informed research. I outline each of them below.

**INDEXICALITY AND REFLEXIVITY**

Lynch (1993) suggests that indexicality is not a distinct concept as such, but rather a term describing the entire ethnomethodological stance on social order. Garfinkel borrowed the term “indexical expression” from the logician Bar-Hillel (1954), who used it to refer to “dependence of the reference of linguistic expressions on the pragmatic context of their production” (p. 359). Bar-Hillel observed that what the expression to which “I am hungry” is intended to refer will only be fully grasped by someone who knows something about its producer and the time of its production. By contrast, the “objective” expression “ice floats on water” “will be understood by almost every grown-up normal English-speaking person to refer to the same state of affairs” (Bar-Hillel, 1954, p. 359).

Deictic expressions such as demonstratives, first and second person pronouns, and time and place adverbs such as “now” and “here”, are a class of terms long recognized in linguistics and logic as being dependent for their sense on the circumstances in which they are uttered. Thus, “the pronoun this does not name or refer to any particular entity on all occasions of use; rather it is a variable or placeholder for some particular entity given by the context” (Levinson, 1983, p. 54). Garfinkel, however, saw that the issue of indexicality as Bar-Hillel had described it extended far beyond merely deictic terms and the sense of their referents. For Garfinkel, it is not only the referent of deictic terms that is context-dependent, but the sense of any “particular”: “anything in a concrete situation that enters into the constitution of meaning or sense” (Wilson, 1986, p. 31), such as words, gestures, actions, and objects. To elaborate on this sense of the context-embeddedness of all meaning, Garfinkel drew on Gurwitsch’s phenomenological demonstrations of the interdependence of parts of gestalt contexts. Gurwitsch (2010) wrote:
Since each part of a Gestalt-contexture is defined and qualified by its functional significance, and since the functional significance of each part essentially refers to those of other parts, there is a thoroughgoing interdependence among all parts or constituents of a Gestalt-contexture. …Between the parts or constituents of a Gestalt-contexture, there prevails the particular relationship of Gestalt-coherence defined as the determining and conditioning of the constituents upon each other. In thoroughgoing reciprocity, the constituents assign to, and derive from, one another the functional significance. (pp. 130-131, emphasis in original)

In his classic ethnomethodological study of a halfway house for parolees in Los Angeles, Wieder (1974) provides an explicit demonstration of the relation between indexicality and gestalt coherence. In discussing the sense he made of actions and utterances that he heard within the halfway house, Wieder asserts that the meaning of any utterance was dependent upon a swarm of contextual matters. Any utterance was necessarily contextualized by factors such as who said it (e.g., a resident of the house), to whom it was being said (e.g., to a staff member), where it was being said, on what kind of occasion, and so on. As such, “the utterances as ‘pieces’ have a sense as constituent parts of the setting in the manner that a constituent part of a gestalt-contexture has functional significance” (Weider, 1974, p. 188).

Invoking the concept of gestalt contexture to depict the relationship between an indexical particular and its context has the effect of significantly complicating the notion of the context-dependence of meaning. It might be expected that the way to repair the indexicality of particulars is simply to assume that the sense of particulars varies according to the context, and therefore to invoke the context as a stable background that determines the particular’s meaning (Stephen Hester & Eglin, 1997b). However, as Gurwitsch’s description above makes clear, the context that disambiguates the sense of the indexical particular is itself nothing but a collection of indexical particulars, not an a priori structure. This fact blocks any proposal for settling indexicality by appealing to a reified idea of context.
The matter is, however, even more complex than this, in that there is a reflexive relationship between context and particular. Wilson (1986) introduces the idea of reflexivity as follows:

If a particular is to be given a determinate meaning in relation to some context of other particulars, how are those particulars-as-context selected? The very item one is attempting to interpret provides the key to the assembly of a context, but at the same time, it is that context which gives the particular its specific identity in terms of which a relevant context can be constructed. In short, the relation between a given particular to be interpreted and any particular in its context is reflexive: the given particular is part of the context needed to identify and settle the meanings of the particulars in the context. (p. 32)

Particular and context, then, are not separate and independent phenomena (as they are treated in what Drew and Heritage (1992) call the “bucket” theory of context, in which an a priori social framework is seen to “contain” some particular). Rather, a particular is an aspect of the context; particular and context sit in a mutually elaborative relationship in which each simultaneously constitutes the other. Rubin’s gestalt figure, which can be seen as a pair of faces or a vase, clearly illustrates this relationship. Any part of the contour lines separating the white and black areas of the image gains a specific identity only in relation to the other parts and the overall whole. A part visible as a nose is only visible as such in relation to another part visible as a chin, and vice versa; and each of these parts is constituted as such in the context of a face as an overall context. However, the face is itself constituted by the nose and chin as particulars (amongst others). Further, if the image is seen as a vase, the nose and chin cease to be what they were. As Gurwitsch (2010) writes:

From the interdependence and interdetermination of the parts of a Gestalt-contexture, it follows that if a part is extracted from its contexture and transformed into an element... the part may undergo most radical modifications. Since its functional significance is no longer determined by
references to other constituents, the extracted part may cease to be what it phenomenally was. (p. 131)

Thus, the concepts of indexicality, reflexivity, and gestalt contextures lead to the recognition that, while a context cannot be understood as being comprised of pre-existing parts, neither can particular phenomena be understood as being determined by some pre-existing context. Rather, they are mutually constitutive. The next section links the concepts of indexicality and reflexivity to the central issue of the accountability of conduct by introducing Garfinkel’s notion of the “documentary method of interpretation”.

**THE ANALYZABILITY OF ACTIONS-IN-CONTEXT**

As implied above, an essential aspect of Garfinkel’s work is his extension of the domain to which indexicality (in Bar Hillel) and gestalt contextures (in Gurwitsch) are taken to apply – from the more narrow domains of reference and perception, respectively, to the entire domain of understanding talk and action in interaction. He specifies this extension as follows:

What holds for sign-referent relationships holds for the relationships of term and word, term and concept, phoneme and lexeme, word and meaning, behaviour and action, sentence and proposition, appearance and object. All of these pairs are formally equivalent. A behaviour signifies an action in terms of an assumed normative order. (Garfinkel, 1963, p. 195)

Garfinkel termed the reflexive procedure, whereby members bring behaviour and context into a mutual relation in the production of mutually intelligible situated action, the documentary method of interpretation (a term he borrowed from Mannheim). As Garfinkel describes this procedure:

35 It is essential to emphasize here, as Wilson (1986) does, that the conclusion that all action is irremediably indexical is an empirical one, a result of studies, rather than a mere theoretical speculation.
The method consists of treating an actual appearance as “the document of”, as “pointing to”, as “standing on behalf of” a presupposed underlying pattern. Not only is the underlying pattern derived from its individual documentary evidences, but the individual documentary evidences, in their turn, are interpreted on the basis of “what is known” about the underlying pattern. Each is used to elaborate the other. (Garfinkel, 1967, p. 78)

The documentary method thus describes the same reflexive structure of mutual determination of meaning between “documentary evidence” and “underlying pattern” that was held to exist between “part” and “whole” in a gestalt contexture (Wieder, 1974). Social interaction can be understood in these terms as a process in which actors treat each other’s actions as indexical particulars, which they understand by engaging in documentary interpretation, determining the meaning of the action by reference to the context of the interaction, and vice versa. Wilson (1970) elaborates this process as follows:

on any particular occasion in the course of the interaction, the actions that the participants see each other performing are seen as such in terms of the meaning of the context, and the context in turn is understood to be what it is through these same actions. Further, what the situation on any particular occasion is understood to have been may be revised subsequently in the light of later events. Consequently, what the situation “really was” and what the actors “really did” on a particular occasion are continually open to redefinition. (p. 701)

The clear implication of this argument is that the accountability of action is a reflexive phenomenon. In any concrete setting, any action (or alternatively, a failure to act when some action is expectable) will be understood by parties to the setting, via use of the documentary method, to be an accountable feature of some contextual order. It is the reflexive workings of the documentary method, then, that provide for the inherent accountability of actions-in-context and the inherent orderliness of social settings. The mutual interdependence of actions and contexts means that the reflexive accountability of action is essential to the existence of an orderly and organized
world: the Hobbesian problem of order, as such, is not resolved by the macro-level distribution of shared norms or values, but by interactional participants’ ongoing use of the documentary method to produce actions that, in those actions’ very intelligibility, display to interactional co-participants the details of context that are relevant for that moment. There is, as Garfinkel (1967) puts it, “no time-out” from the ongoing requirement to use the method to produce and recognize intelligible phenomena in here-and-now situations of action (Stephen Hester & Eglin, 1997a; Rawls, 2008).

The observation that actions are reflexively accountable returns us to the question of intersubjectivity. Recall that Parsons’ theory, in arguing that coordinated patterns of activity were the result of internalized normative values, relied on individual actors understanding their common circumstances of action in essentially the same way. This shared understanding was, it was argued, provided by a shared cultural system of symbols and meanings. Garfinkel’s discussions of indexicality, building on Schutz’s ideas, effectively dismantle the argument that intersubjective understanding could be founded on a presumably shared common culture. If the meaning of some action is dependent upon the circumstances in which it occurs, and what the circumstances are is in turn dependent upon the displays of meaning produced by participants in those circumstances (i.e., meaning and context are in a reflexive relationship), then the stable meanings that a common culture argument requires for its credibility collapses. In its place, Garfinkel offered a procedural version of intersubjectivity. Rather than sharing pre-existing substantive meanings, members rely on, and rely on one another, to implement the documentary method36. Through its use, actions/utterances and their relevant contexts are brought to bear on one another:

For the conduct of their everyday affairs, persons take for granted that what is said will be made out according to methods… i.e., as subject to some rule’s jurisdiction… To see the “sense” of what is said is to accord what is said its

36 The proposal that members require one another to implement shared methods in order to make sense-in-context as a moral necessity is considered further in Chapter 8.
character “as a rule”. “Shared agreement” refers to various social methods for accomplishing the member’s recognition that something was said-according-to-a-rule and not the demonstrable matching of substantive matters. The appropriate image of a common understanding is therefore an operation rather than a common intersection of overlapping sets. (Garfinkel, 1967, p. 30, emphasis in original)

This section has elaborated the central ethnomethodological concepts of indexicality, reflexivity, and accountability, and has shown that together they comprise a picture of meaning as a methodical accomplishment. The most generic form that this methodical achievement of meaning takes is the documentary method of interpretation. These insights into a) the reflexive accountability of phenomena of order, and b) members’ situated implementation of shared methods for producing and recognizing intelligible action, form the core of ethnomethodology and the foundation of its research program. The following section concludes this chapter by returning to the distinction between ethnomethodology and conventional sociology.

3.7 Conclusion: Ethnomethodology as an Autonomous Sociology

The central purposes of this chapter have been twofold. Firstly, it has sought to demonstrate that ethnomethodology diverges from conventional sociological approaches at the level of fundamental philosophical presuppositions. Secondly, it has attempted to illustrate some of the study implications arising from Garfinkel’s operationalization of pre-sociological assumptions derived principally from Schutz, but also from others such as Gurwitsch. A central point has been that though ethnomethodology involves the decision to investigate social life as a practical production, this is not an ontological or epistemological claim about the nature of social life. Rather, it is an outcome of Garfinkel exercising a “theorist’s preference” (1963, p. 190) to adopt certain philosophical elections. Ethnomethodology therefore stands as “a demonstration of the methodological implications of adopting the social philosophy of Schutz as a set of theoretical elections” (Anderson, 1981, as cited in Benson & Hughes, 1983, p. 57). The outcome of Garfinkel’s methodological developments is a sociology that is neither compatible with, nor necessarily critical
of, conventional sociological research. In adopting the phenomenological viewpoint, ethnomethodology diverges from other sociologies at the most foundational level. Rather than constituting a rival to such sociologies, ethnomethodology can be seen as an autonomous form of sociology (Sharrock & Watson, 1988).

The phenomenon made available by Garfinkel’s methodological elections is the ways in which members accomplish the intelligibility and recognizability of their activities from within those very activities themselves. Rather than being treated as the epiphenomenal effect of systemic forces, social actions are seen as the coordinated productions of the actors. As such, they depend for their mutual recognizability upon the actors’ methods of displaying the orderliness of their actions. Thus, “by adopting Schutz’s social philosophy as a theoretical election we are in a position to ask how is it that actors accomplish the rational, factual, obvious character of their activities in the course of doing them” (Benson & Hughes, 1983, p. 60).

The methodical procedures used by members to accomplish their activities as mutually recognizable, orderly phenomena constitute the “missing whatness” that I identified in Chapter 1 as characterizing the sociology of sport literature. Because of the philosophical assumptions underpinning conventional sociological studies of sport, the methods by which sporting activities are accomplished as mutually intelligible phenomena have been overlooked. It is for this reason that my study is neither a critique of, nor a supplement to, existing sociological studies of sport. Its interests are tangential to those of mainstream sociology; it is concerned with matters foundational to those studies, the very recognizability of sporting activity as a field of practical activity. It is this mundane recognizability that sociological studies, in producing their theorized accounts of the social significance or structural determinants of sporting activities, depend upon.

As has been emphasized in this chapter, ethnomethodology provides a set of analytic resources for producing procedural accounts of human conduct. The conclusion of this theoretical ground-clearing is that sport can be understood, and empirically investigated, as situated interaction. A methodological program for studying sport as
situated interaction, based on ethnomethodological insights, will be developed in the next chapter.
Chapter 4: **A Methodological Approach for Studying Basketball**

4.1 **INTRODUCTION**

Ethnomethodology’s fundamental analytic problem, as described in the previous chapter, is to explicate how people, in concert with one another and in situated contexts, go about producing and recognizing accountable actions and activities. Given this research focus, ethnomethodological investigations require a methodological apparatus that will allow the researcher to locate and describe members’ methods of producing accountable order “as they happen in real time” (Liberman, 2008, p. 254). However, since the topic of ethnomethodological research is the endogenous interactional methods that people use in analyzing and constituting their own accountable orderlinesses, that is, methods internal to interaction, ethnomethodology does not provide an “external” method or set of procedural resources for analyzing social phenomena (Heath, 2004; Lynch, 2007a). Social actors are themselves treated as practical methodologists who find and produce order in concrete situations of action. Rather than a formal analytic methodology, then, what is required in order to analytically locate and describe members’ methods is a principled way of preserving “the ‘incourseness’ of social phenomena” (Rawls, 2002, p. 6).

This chapter takes up the task of explicating a methodology for studying sporting activity as situated practical action. In order to build a suitable methodological apparatus for dealing with such a phenomenon, the chapter brings together analytic resources from different branches of ethnomethodologically-informed research. In the process, it engages with some of the serious debates and controversies internal to ethnomethodology and its subfields, conversation analysis (CA) and membership categorization analysis (MCA). It seeks to argue that, although differences exist between these two ethnomethodological approaches, they are not fundamentally incompatible, but are both based on common fundamental interests. Whilst the previous chapter’s concern lay in distinguishing ethnomethodology’s research program from that of conventional sociological perspectives, this chapter is thus concerned with tracing out some of the distinctions and debates that have emerged.
within the broad field of ethnomethodology, and reflecting on their methodological implications for my study.

The first two sections summarize two different strands of ethnomethodological research – CA and MCA – each of which offers distinct analytic and thematic resources crucial to grasping my object of analysis. These two approaches, I argue, are fundamentally compatible and can be combined into a coherent research approach that is sensitive to the relevancies, competencies, and orientations of the parties to basketball coaching activities. However, doing so requires navigating some important disagreements between them. The third section thus details some of the sources of these controversies, and seeks to show that they are not founded on an underlying conceptual incommensurability. After illustrating that these approaches can be combined, the task remains to show how this can be done. The fourth section is thus concerned with outlining a methodological framework that can attend both to sequential and categorial phenomena.

The nature of the object of analysis (basketball activities), however, means that an adequate analytic account must attend not only to members’ practices of organizing talk-in-interaction but also to their orientation to visual and embodied phenomena as constitutive features of their activities. In the final section I present a third methodological approach, workplace studies, that provides a rich set of analytic resources for incorporating embodied phenomena into the analysis. The final result is an analytic framework that is, I argue, able to capture the “incourseness” of the basketball coaching activities in my recorded materials.

4.2 CONVERSATION ANALYSIS

Conversation analytic methods comprise a crucial part of the analytic methodology for studying basketball activities reported later in this chapter, so a brief overview of some central aspects of the approach is in order here. There have been a number of overviews documenting the historical, intellectual, and biographical contexts within which CA emerged (Cmejrkova & Prevignano, 2003; Maynard, 2012; Schegloff, 1992a; Silverman, 1998), and there is no need to repeat those discussions here. For
my purposes it is adequate to note that CA (a) arose as an intellectual approach through privately-circulated transcripts of Sacks’ lectures (1995); (b) developed into a research program through a series of publications by Sacks and his colleagues Schegloff and Jefferson (Sacks, et al., 1974; Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973); and (c) is rooted in a synthesis of elements of Garfinkel’s ethnomethodology with elements of Goffman’s sociology/social psychology\(^{37}\).

The Garfinkelian notions of accountability, reflexivity and indexicality are evident in CA’s contention that the finest details of social interaction are orderly (in Sacks’ words, there is “order at all points” in interaction (1995, p. 484)), and in CA’s treatment of that orderliness as primarily a members’ orderliness. Schegloff and Sacks describe this approach to order as follows:

> We have proceeded under the assumption (an assumption borne out by our research) that in so far as our materials exhibited orderliness, they did so not only to us, indeed not in the first place for us, but for the co-participants who had produced them. If the materials (records of natural conversations) were orderly, they were so because they had been methodically produced by members of the society for one another, and it was a feature of the conversations that we treated as data that they were produced so as to allow the display by co-participants to each other of their orderliness, and to allow the participants to display to each other their analysis, appreciation and use of that orderliness. Accordingly, our analysis has sought to explicate the ways in which the materials are produced by members in ways that exhibit their orderliness and have their orderliness appreciated and used, and have that appreciation displayed and treated as the basis for subsequent action. (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973, p. 234)

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\(^{37}\) This is necessarily an oversimplification of CA’s intellectual roots. Many other influences on Sacks have been traced, including scholarship in the traditions of linguistics (particularly Chomsky’s transformational grammar), anthropology (Evans-Pritchard and Albert), sociolinguistics (Gumperz and Hymes’ ethnography of speaking), and the psychoanalysis of Freud (Maynard, 2012; Sidnell, 2010). It appears widely accepted, however, that Garfinkel and Goffman provided the most significant intellectual resources for CA’s development (Cmejrkova & Prevignano, 2003; Heritage & Clayman, 2010).
CA thus shares with ethnomethodology a deep analytic and theoretical commitment to investigating and describing the reflexive procedures used by members in real-time interaction to make indexical phenomena orderly and accountable for one another.

From Goffman, CA adopted the conception of the “interaction order” as an institution in its own right. Goffman had rejected the prevailing sociological assumption that interaction was “a colourless, odourless, frictionless substrate” (Heritage, 2001, p. 49) through which other, macrosociological or psychological processes operate. Rather, for CA, as it did for Goffman, interaction possesses its own normative structural organization independent of the workings of other, macro social institutions such as the political, legal, economic, and educational systems (Heritage, 2008). Not only is the interaction order regarded as independent of such institutions, but interaction is regarded as the infrastructural foundation through which more macro forms of social order are instantiated, reproduced and transformed (Schegloff, 2006).

The synthesis of these Goffmanian and Garfinkelian ideas by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson resulted in CA’s emergence as “a study of the institution of conversation that focuses on the procedural basis of its production” (Heritage, 2008, p. 303). CA, however, developed its own distinctive research program not fully anticipated by either of these influences (Sidnell, 2010; Wilson, 2012). In particular, CA research is based on the central theoretical assumption that all social interaction is built via the use of institutionalized structural organizations of practices to which participants are normatively oriented (Heritage & Clayman, 2010). What makes CA’s perspective so unique is its distinctive understanding of “structure”: it investigates sequential structures of action as the primary form of social context oriented to by members in their production and recognition of social conduct. The basic observation is that, in interaction, utterances are never treated as isolated, free-standing units. Rather, utterances are designed for, and understood in relation to, specific sequential environments – most commonly, the utterance’s immediately preceding and succeeding action(s) (C. Goodwin & Heritage, 1990). The argument that conversation is sequentially organized is both the central premise of CA and what
makes it distinct from other approaches to language and social interaction (Stivers, 2012).

Heritage and Clayman (2010) elaborate the idea of sequentiality by describing social actions as both “context-shaped” and “context-renewing”. Actions are context-shaped in the sense that speakers design their talk to exploit the disambiguating capacity of the sequential “slot” that their utterance will fill, and they are context-renewing in that they are built to project a relevant next sequential action (or delimited range of actions). This quality of “nextness” – “the reciprocal influence of a just prior turn and a subsequent turn” (Stivers, 2012) – that actions-in-interaction possess, is at the heart of members’ organization of action.

CA’s cumulative research program has identified a number of structural organizations of practices through which the orderlinesses of social interaction are accomplished. It is important to note that these discoveries have been derived empirically from detailed investigation of recorded materials, rather than from a priori theoretical interests. Specific domains of interactional organization include turn-taking organization, sequence organization, the organization of repair, preference organization, turn design, and overall structural organization. Multiple organizations can be simultaneously operative at any point in interaction, and the operation of each organization can affect the others in complex ways – such that the production and recognizability of any conversational “object” can be understood as the product of multiple “intersecting machineries” (Sidnell, 2010). Rather than summarizing all of these domains, I will limit discussion to two here, turn-taking and sequence organization. Further relevant concepts regarding turn-taking and sequence organization, and concepts related to other domains of sequential organization, will be considered later in this thesis, at points in the data analysis where they become central to explicating the organization of particular stretches of interaction.

**TURN-TAKING ORGANIZATION: MOLECULAR STRUCTURES OF SOCIAL INTERACTION**

In one of the earliest published CA papers, Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (SSJ) (1974) noted fourteen “grossly apparent facts” of any conversational interaction. For my purposes here, the first two are sufficient: (1) speaker change recurs, or at least
occurs; and (2) overwhelmingly, one party talks at a time (p. 700). While these observations may seem obvious and trivial, SSJ’s attempt to develop an analytic model that could account for these facts revealed a complex domain of members’ practices dedicated to managing turn-taking in conversation.

SSJ’s turn-taking system for conversation specifies two components that constitute each turn, and a set of rules governing turn construction, turn allocation, and speaker transfer. Firstly, the “turn-constructional component” of a turn consists of one or more “turn-constructional units” (TCUs), out of which any turn-at-talk is constructed. A TCU is a sentence, clause, phrase, or individual word that is hearable in context as “possibly complete”. At the point of each TCU’s completion, a “transition-relevance place” (TRP) is established. A TRP is a sequential location where speaker transition becomes a possibility (although speaker change is not necessarily effected at any given TRP). Most importantly, TCUs possess the feature of “projectability”: a TCU under way is designed to allow a hearer to anticipate in advance where it is likely to end, and, therefore, where the next transition point will occur. Secondly, the “turn-allocation component” of a turn relates to the selection of a next speaker: a next turn can either be allocated by the current speaker, or by self-selection.

The turn-taking rules specified by SSJ are as follows: (1) at the initial TRP of a speaker’s initial TCU, (a) if the current speaker has selected a next speaker, then (only) that party has the right and obligation to speak at that TRP; (b) if the current speaker has not selected a next speaker, then another speaker may self-select, and the first to start acquires the rights to a turn at that TRP; (c) if neither (1a) nor (1b) occurs, then the current speaker may continue speaking, producing another TCU; and (2) if the current speaker continues, then the rule-set recurs at the next TRP and at each further TRP until transfer occurs. This system accounts for the two facts listed above as follows. The first, speaker change recurs, occurs because any TCU used to construct a turn will eventually reach a TRP, at which point the rules prioritize speaker change rather than continuation. The second, one party talks at a time, occurs because the system allocates single turns to single speakers, and speaker transfer is systematically organized to occur at discrete locations (TRPs).
SSJ specify two further, crucial features of this system. Firstly, the system is a locally managed one in that at any one time, it only deals with the relationship between the two turns linked by a single transition point, that is, the current turn and the next turn. It organizes these two turns in terms of their sequential positioning relative to one another. The TRP is the organizational crux of the turn-taking system. Any current turn, in that it projects its upcoming completion, is built with an orientation to the next TRP. At the same time, any next turn is built to occur precisely at the TRP projected by the current turn. In this way, each turn is organized through an orientation to the basic molecular structure of interaction, which could be represented as: current turn $\rightarrow$ transition space $\rightarrow$ next turn. While the molecular structure shapes the production of each turn, each turn in itself contributes to building the structure. The structure thus constitutes a reflexive sequential context within which particulars gain their identities, or at least that aspect of their identities relevant to turn organization. The system functions as a context in that it: allows stretches of talk to be hearable as the recognizable social action of “talking in a turn”; allows such a turn to be analyzed for its possible upcoming completion; provides for the space of completion to be projected and recognized as a relevant transition point; and, in constituting the “right” places for parties to speak and to withhold talk, constitutes sequential locations within which such recognizable objects such as in-turn pauses, between-turn silences, and silences accountable as “belonging to someone” can be heard.

Secondly, along with being locally managed, the system is “party-administered”. By this term it is meant that the mechanism for determining turn-order and turn-size, that is, the turn-taking rules outlined above which are cycled through at any transition space, is controlled by the parties to the conversation themselves. This feature allows this generic, context-free turn-taking system to be adapted to the actual conversational situation at hand. The system is built to afford the subjection of turn-organization to the principle of “recipient design”. That is, it allows parties to display

38 See the discussion of gestalt contextures in Chapter 3.
their orientation to matters of “who-we-are-and-what-we-are-doing”. As SSJ (1974) observe:

In referring to the particularizing operation of recipient design on turn-size and turn-order, we are noting that the parties have ways of individualizing some “this conversation”; their collaboration in turn-allocation and turn-construction achieves a particular ordering of particular-sized turns and turn-transition characteristics of the particular conversation at a particular point in it. (p. 727)

In any particular conversation, then, who speaks next, when they speak, and how long they speak for are contingent and contextually-sensitive matters determined collaboratively by participants through their situated deployment of the conversational turn-taking system. This concludes my brief overview of turn taking organization. The next section outlines a second major domain of CA research, sequence organization.

SEQUENCE ORGANIZATION: AN “ARCHITECTURE OF INTERSUBJECTIVITY”

It was noted above that contributions to interaction are both context-shaped and context-renewing, and that each utterance consequently possesses the quality of nextness – it responds to the just-prior action while projecting a relevant next action. This property of utterances takes its strongest form in “adjacency pairs”: conventionally recognizable two-turn units of linked actions which provide the framework for a large number of conversational actions (Heritage, 1984; Schegloff, 2007a, p. 27). Accordingly, a substantial body of CA

39 I have restricted this discussion to the turn-taking system for conversational interaction. Clearly, however, many activities – meetings, debates, trials, press conferences, interviews, and so on – are organized via the use of alternative “speech-exchange systems” which involve various modifications of the conversational system. The examination of various speech-exchange systems and their properties constitutes a central topic of CA research. CA is centrally concerned with verbal interaction; when we move to the study of the organization of embodied activities, the complexities ramify. Chapter 6 outlines some features of the turn-taking organization of basketball practice activities.

40 While the minimal, two-turn adjacency pair sequence, or “base sequence”, sometimes constitutes a complete sequence in interaction, a good deal of sequences involve expansion of the base unit. As Schegloff notes, “very long stretches of interaction can be understood as elaborate structures built around a single underlying adjacency pair” (2007a, p. 27). Accordingly, a substantial body of CA
2007a; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973). Adjacency pairs constitute the basic resource for sequence construction, that is, for organizing the successive contributions of interactional participants into coherent or orderly trajectories of action (Schegloff, 1990). Paired actions such as “summons” – “answer”, “invitation” – “acceptance”, “request for information” – “informative answer”, and “accusation” – “denial” are examples of typical adjacency pairs (Stivers, 2012).

According to Schegloff and Sacks (1973), adjacency pairs are: (1) two utterances in length; (2) adjacently positioned (one sequentially following the other); (3) produced by different speakers; (4) relatively ordered into “first pair parts” (FPPs) and “second pair parts” (SPPs); and (5) type-related so that certain FPPs require certain SPPs (e.g., a greeting followed by a denial would be curious). The basic rule of adjacency pair operation is “given the recognizable production of a first pair part, on its first possible completion its speaker should stop and a next speaker should start and produce a second pair part from the pair type of which the first is recognizably a member” (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973, p. 296). The first part of the adjacency pair thus initiates some trajectory of action, and the second responds to that action in some relevant way (Schegloff, 2007a).

A good deal of CA literature has been devoted to explicating sequences as a generic order of interactional organization (for a book-length “primer”, see Schegloff (2007a)). As this discussion is limited to outlining some resources that will be used in building a methodology, in this section I merely observe several basic and crucial features of adjacency pairs. Firstly, it is not being claimed that adjacency pair structures are invariably produced by interactants (for instance that greetings, once made, are always returned in the adjacent turn), a claim that would clearly be spurious. Rather, adjacency pairs are understood to be normative structures whose implementation is oriented to as an accountable matter by participants (Heritage, 1984). When a speaker produces an utterance hearable as an FPP, this action generates a normative expectation that a selected next speaker should produce an

work has involved detailing the complex ways in which sequences can be expanded. For my purposes, it is sufficient to recognize this feature of sequence organization, while limiting my discussion to adjacency pairs.
utterance hearable as an SPP to that FPP. If the SPP is not forthcoming, that absence is an accountable matter, and it will be examined by recipients for its import.

The observation that the non-occurrence of a second speaker’s expectable response is oriented to by participants as a noticeable absence leads into a broader, second point: the parts of adjacency pairs are connected by a relationship of “conditional relevance”. As Schegloff (2007a) explains, “first” and “second” do not simply refer to the order in which the pair parts occur. They also refer to “design features” of the parts and their sequential slots. FPPs possess the property of “first-ness”: they project the relevance of some SPP to follow in the next turn. This feature has two consequences. Firstly, if a turn analyzable as a relevant SPP is produced next, then it is heard as responding to the FPP; in this way the adjacency pair structure contributes to how the subsequent talk is heard. This prospective relevance accounts for potentially puzzling events, such as the fact that an utterance like “I’m tired” can be heard as an answer to a question such as “Are you coming to the party tonight?” Secondly, as noted above, if such an SPP is not produced in the next turn, its absence is an accountable affair; the SPP “is, so to speak, noticeably, officially, consequentially, absent” (Schegloff, 2007a, p. 20).

Thirdly, the fact that FPPs project conditionally relevant next actions provides interactants with a resource for interpretation as well as for action. Adjacency pairs, in other words, constitute an “architecture of intersubjectivity” (Heritage, 1984). Why this is so may be understood as follows. When a first actor A produces an FPP, this action projects a conditionally relevant SPP by actor B. Since B’s SPP displays their analysis of A’s action, B’s response can be inspected by A for adequate interpretation of A’s FPP. If necessary, A can then address misunderstandings in “third position”, the sequential turn following B’s SPP (Schegloff, 1992b). So, for instance, if A asked B the question “Do you know what’s on TV tonight?” and B responded “No, what?”, A could, in next turn, correct B’s understanding of his FPP by saying something like “I don’t know, I’m asking you”. Consequently, if A, in their ‘third position’ turn, does not correct (or ‘repair’) the analysis made by B of A’s FPP as this analysis is displayed in B’s SPP, B can assume that their analysis was adequate (i.e., that both A and B share intersubjective understanding of A’s action).
This process can continue indefinitely throughout the course of the unfolding interaction (Heritage, 1984).

As this brief discussion of turn-taking and sequence organization and the sequential structures that these domains organize (two-turn chains of talk and adjacency pairs, respectively) has hopefully illustrated, the types of structures with which CA is concerned are in profound contrast to the external and determining edifices of conventional sociological interest (Stephen Hester & Francis, 2000; Wilson, 1991). CA’s structures are locally-organized structures of action that parties build in close coordination with one another over the course of their interactions. The units from which they are built (TCUs and turns) reflexively constitute the very sequential structures that provide for the orderliness of those indexical elements as intelligible units of action. In this respect, CA clearly aligns with ethnomethodology’s reflexive conception of social order. On some other matters, however, it has been argued that CA diverges from its ethnomethodological foundations. I will examine some of these issues below. Before doing so, however, I will outline a second methodology that shares ethnomethodological roots but which is concerned with a domain of interactional organization somewhat different from CA’s subject matter.

4.3 **Membership Categorization Analysis: ‘Culture-in-action’**

Membership categorization analysis is a method for analyzing interaction which, like CA, has its origins in Sacks’ work (Silverman, 1998). However, while sequential CA has developed into a “juggernaut” of ethnomethodological research, with hundreds of highly cited articles, and numerous textbooks, conferences, and university courses, MCA remains by comparison a relatively marginal enterprise (Stokoe, 2012). In the years since Sacks’ death, CA has developed into a rigorous method of analysis focusing on the sequential organization of interaction, but “to the virtual exclusion of any focal concern with membership categorization” (Watson, 1997, p. 49). This marginalization of categorial analysis appears to be partly explained by a specific

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41 There are other conceptual reasons for this state of affairs. To a certain extent, these will be addressed below in the discussion on CA’s institutional talk program.
interpretation of Sacks’ intellectual progression, popularized by Schegloff (1995),
that distinguishes between an “early” and “later” Sacks (Housley & Fitzgerald, 2002). According to Schegloff, Sacks abandoned his early interests in categorial phenomena as he developed a more “mature” focus on sequential organization. Sacks, in this version, moved away from invoking categorization practices in his analyses because of an inherent risk of the “promiscuous” use of categories – that is, the risk that the investigator will produce descriptions of conduct by making commonsensical inferences that some membership category is bound to some activity, without analytically demonstrating that and how the proposed connection operated procedurally for participants on that occasion (Hansen, 2005).

Several commentators have argued, however, that the linear account of Sacks’ intellectual movement from category to sequence is misleading (Housley & Fitzgerald, 2002; Silverman, 1998; Watson, 1997). A first point made in support of this claim is that, although Sacks’ interest in categorial phenomena did wane post-1968 as he turned his attention to sequential matters, this move reflected a shift in analytic attention rather than a change in conceptual commitment (Sally Hester & Hester, 2010; Silverman, 1998). Secondly, over the course of his lectures, whether focusing on categorial or sequential organizations, Sacks maintained a fundamental analytic concern with explicating the recognizability of social activities, and understood that participants might be orienting to multiple layers of organization at any moment of interaction (Stephen Hester & Francis, 2000). Explicating the sequential organization of interaction was an important innovation in the project of explicating recognizability, but was not the objective of analysis per se. However, the considerable advances in the description of sequential phenomena made by conversation analysts after Sacks have come at the cost of the neglect of the categorial features of interaction (Watson, 1997). Despite the relative disregard of membership categorization within CA proper, Sacks’ original insights have inspired the development of MCA as an ethnomethodological approach in its own right (Baker, 2000; Butler, 2008; Butler & Fitzgerald, 2010; Fitzgerald & Housley, 2002; Stephen Hester & Eglin, 1997b; Housley & Fitzgerald, 2002, 2009; Jayyusi, 1984; Stokoe, 2009, 2012; Watson, 1978, 1997). I will outline MCA here, but as with the section on CA above, this discussion will necessarily be highly abridged, and more
detailed attention will be given to relevant concepts in the empirical chapters as needs arise.

Central to Sacks’ methodological approach to social interaction was to use “what any member knows, to pose us some problems… And then see whether we can build an apparatus which will give us those results” (Sacks, 1995, p. 487). One of Sacks’ earliest observations about social interaction was that people describe each other using certain categorizations amid other available descriptors (Hansen, 2005). This observation led Sacks (1995) to assert that central to the project of describing members’ ways of producing their activities would be “to find out how they go about choosing among the available sets of categories for grasping some event” (p. 41). In his well-known example of an extract from a child’s story – “The baby cried. The mommy picked it up” (Sacks, 1995, pp. 243-244) – Sacks observed that, when he listened to the story, he (1) heard that the “mommy” in the second sentence was the mother of the baby in the first sentence; (2) heard that the baby’s cries were the reason for its mother picking it up; and (3) observed that many other “natives” would also hear these things. These observations are not offered as sociological findings; rather, their availability comprises an analytic problem. The sociologist’s job, in response to this problem, is to discover the methodological procedures that members use in accomplishing this common-sense hearing.

In Sacks’ (1995) account, there are several core aspects of the membership categorization apparatus. Firstly, “membership categories” are common-sense classifications for describing or recognizing persons, for example, “hipster”, “jock”, “lecturer”, “aunt”, “banker”, “artist”. Secondly, categories are used in interaction through being “collected” together into “membership categorization devices” (MCDs). As Hester and Eglin (1997a) explain, the notion that categories are assembled into MCDs is meant to capture the fact that on specific contextual

42 See section 4.4 below for a more detailed discussion of this point.

43 It has also been suggested that knowledge of “collectivities”, such as, “army”, “bank”, “state”, “city”, “church”, and so on, may be organized according to principles similar to those organizing personal categories, that is, in terms of category-predicate relations (Coulter, 1996; Stephen Hester & Eglin, 1997a; Jayyusi, 1984).
occasions of use, some categories can be heard as logically “going together” with each other, while other categories, if used, would be hearable as the “odd one out”. For instance, the MCD “parties to a basketball practice session” might be heard to include the categories “player”, “coach”, “manager”, and even “parent spectator”, but to exclude “lecturer”, “philanthropist”, and “barista”. Thirdly, categories can take on “predicates”, that is, practices which can conventionally and properly be imputed to a member on the basis of their category membership (Watson, 1978). During a basketball practice session, for instance, it is appropriate and “expectable” for a coach to instruct, correct, and occasionally berate in this context, but not usually for a spectating parent to do the same. These predicates are bound to the category “coach” in the context of basketball training, but not to the category “parent”.

Sacks further outlined a set of rules or normative procedures through which members go about assigning persons to relevant categories. The “economy rule” normatively provides for the use of single membership category to describe someone. Accordingly, single categories are generally heard as an adequate description. The “consistency rule” holds that, if a first member of a given population has been categorized using some category from a particular MCD, then further members of that population can be relevantly categorized using categories from the same MCD. For example, once “coach” has been used to categorize one person in the setting, further persons may be categorized using other categories from the “parties to a basketball practice session” device (such as “players”).

Sacks also specifies a corollary to the consistency rule that he calls the “hearer’s maxim”. This rule assists members in resolving ambiguities in descriptions produced by other members. Ambiguities arise because categories can occur in multiple devices and, accordingly, take on different meanings. For instance, the category-term “player” has very different predicates bound to it when used as a member of the “parties to a basketball practice session” device than it does when collected into the device “parties to a nightclub scene”. The hearer’s maxim resolves such ambiguities by holding that, if two categories are used to categorize two members and those categories can be heard as coming from the same collection, then we should hear them that way (Sacks, 1995). Thus, the utterance “The coach berated the player” is
unambiguously intelligible because both categories are commonsensically heard as belonging to the “parties to a basketball practice session” device.

Further, the coach in this statement is hearable as the coach of the player, rather than “any” coach. This is due to the fact that the device is of a kind that Sacks called “duplicatively organized”. The members of a device like “professions” – which could include the categories “doctor”, “lawyer”, and “professor” – would not conventionally be heard as having any sort of shared belonging. In contrast, members categorized by the use of a device with the property of duplicative organization are hearable as forming a unit. A hearer’s maxim for duplicatively organized devices, then, holds that when one can hear some members categorized by such a device, then one ought to hear them as co-incumbents of the same device (Sacks, 1995).

Finally, Sacks argues that the fact that certain activities are conventionally bound to certain categories functions as a members’ resource for inferring the category membership of an observed actor. He identifies a “viewer’s maxim”, which holds that if an observer sees a category-bound activity being performed, and if it is possible to see the activity being done by a member of a category to which the activity is conventionally bound, then the observer ought to see the actor as a member of that category. In the terms introduced above, if a member observes an activity that could be seen as “a berating”, and knows of an MCD within which that activity is tied to a category of which the actor could be a member (e.g., “parties to a basketball practice”), the actor’s incumbency of the category “coach” membership may be inferred. Plunket (2009) notes that this procedure can be generalized: whenever two of the three features of the categorization apparatus – category, device, and/or predicate – are known, the third may be inferred. Categories are, in this sense, “inference-rich” members’ resources (Sacks, 1995, p. 41).

In an enormously important development of MCA since Sacks’ original work, Hester and Eglin (1997a), amongst others (e.g. Fitzgerald, 1999; Housley & Fitzgerald, 2002; Jayyusi, 1984), have emphasized the distinctiveness of an ethnomethodological version of MCA that approaches categories, MCDs, and predicates as reflexive and indexical phenomena, in contrast to a potentially
decontextualized version. A decontextualized approach to categorization, as found in
cognitive anthropology and ethnographic semantics, “treats language use as a
resource for uncovering culture, knowledge, meanings, etc. which are treated as
independent of such language use and as members’ resources in making sense of
their environments” (Stephen Hester & Eglin, 1997a, p. 12). “Culture” or
“knowledge”, in such an approach, is understood as comprising a pre-given, reified
structure of categorization devices that determines members’ interpretations and
descriptions of their experiences.

Ethnomethodological MCA, on the other hand, focuses on how categories are
collected into devices and tied to predicates as a part of members’ situated
accomplishment of their activities. MCDs, as structures organizing categories, should
not be analytically reified as decontextualized, pre-formed structures. Rather, they
should be approached as locally assembled objects. From this perspective, an MCD
is always and only assembled in situ; what categories a given device collects, and
what predicates are bound to the categories for that occasion, is dependent upon the
recognizable actions and activities through which it is invoked. An MCD can,
therefore, be seen to have a similar analytic status to a gestalt contexture, as
described in the previous chapter. It constitutes a contextual framework of relevant
membership categories and associated predicates, within which members’ indexical
actions and courses of action can be recognizably produced. Simultaneously, those
recognizable actions reflexively determine, via the documentary method of
interpretation, what the device is, what categories it relevantly collects, and which
predicates are bound to those categories for that occasion.

As Hansen (2005) argues, the assertion that membership categorization is an
occasioned practice carries the implication that sequential organization is also
relevant to the recognizability of conduct. However, an effect of the somewhat
uneasy relationship between CA and MCA is that studies tend to foreground either
sequential or categorial aspects of interaction, and analyses focusing on both aspects
have been relatively rare. This state of affairs is unfortunate in that it has hindered
the development of insight into how the sequential and categorial aspects of talk
mutually elaborate one another in members’ accomplishment of recognizable action
I will return to this issue later in the chapter, outlining a methodological approach intended to attend both to sequential and categorial dimensions. Before doing so, however, it will be necessary to specify more thoroughly the deeper conceptual issues on which the CA/MCA disjuncture is based: that is, an underlying tension between CA and ethnomethodology. The following section argues that the controversy between CA and MCA does not represent a fundamental incompatibility between the two approaches. Demonstrating that tensions between the two is in-principle resolvable is essential for the next stage, developing a methodology for studying basketball activities that incorporates elements of both.

4.4 THE INSTITUTIONAL TALK PROGRAM AND ETHNOMETODOLOGY

Scholars working in the broad tradition of ethnomethodology and CA have expressed a number of different points of view concerning the nature of the relationship between the two programs (Clayman, 1995; Clayman & Maynard, 1995; Maynard & Clayman, 1991; Psathas, 1995b). In some cases, self-avowed proponents of one program have criticized the other for perceived shortcomings (Stephen Hester & Francis, 2000; Lynch, 1993, 2000; Lynch & Bogen, 1994; Schegloff, 2007b; Watson, 1997; Wilson, 2003, 2012). These sometimes polemical treatments have frequently crystallized around different perspectives on the “proper” way that social interaction taking place in particular institutional or organizational contexts ought to be analytically approached (Psathas, 1995b). The most disparaging critiques have involved ethnomethodological scholars challenging CA’s institutional program on the grounds that it constitutes an unacceptable departure from CA’s ethnomethodological foundations (Bjelic & Lynch, 1992; Lynch, 2000; Lynch & Bogen, 1994). In this section I will consider a particular version of the ethnomethodological critique of the institutional talk program, one made specifically from the perspective of (contemporary) MCA, and provide an assessment of this critique and its methodological implications. First, though, I will outline CA’s approach to institutional interaction.
Most of the early work in CA focused on “ordinary conversation”, in other words, talk not displaying distinctively institutional orientations (Arminen, 2005). The emphasis on mundane conversation involved a deliberate suspension of interest in the conventional sociological concerns with social structure, social context and social institutions. This suspension was largely driven by the aspiration to develop an observational science concerned with conversational structure as an institution in its own right, and it allowed CA to develop a cumulative corpus of empirical studies (Arminen, 2005; Stephen Hester & Francis, 2000). At the beginning of the 1980s, CA studies began to expand on the findings of this “basic” form of CA to address the question of how talk-in-interaction is related to institutional settings (Heritage & Clayman, 2010). As the field of institutional CA burgeoned, it was characterized by a self-conscious commitment to a pair of methodological strictures, presented by Schegloff (1991b), defining what would constitute the warrantable use of social-structural concepts in any analytic characterization of persons and their contextual environment. Schegloff refers to these restrictions as “the problem of relevance” and “the issue of procedural consequentiality”.

The problem of relevance refers to the issues associated with characterizing someone. Schegloff (1991b) drew on the earlier observation made by Sacks (1972, 1974) that any person whom one might want to characterize by the use of a category term from some set (e.g., in terms of their sex) can also be characterized by use of a term from many other category sets – nationality, ethnicity, religious belief, occupation, subculture, and so on. As such, the fact that someone is, for instance, male, or white, or a lecturer, is by itself no warrant for so referring to them by one of these terms, for the mere fact of correctness would provide for the use of any of the other terms as well. Consequently, Schegloff asserts, some principle of relevance must inform the selection of one reference term over other possible options to describe some member. Schegloff explains that, although Sacks originally developed the relevance problem to describe member’s practices of talking about members, it applies identically to the task of professional sociological analysis. Professional accounts cannot, any more than lay accounts, rely on the mere accuracy of some categorization as a warrant for its selection over other correct categorizations.
The issue of procedural consequentiality applies the observations made regarding person-reference to matters of formulating the context in which some interaction occurs. To modify Schegloff’s (1997) example of the problem, I may note that it is true to say that I am writing this chapter in my apartment, while on summer break from teaching, in the context of an academic argument, as part of fulfilling my PhD obligations, in Auckland. The fact that any one of these formulations of the context in which my action takes place is “true” is not, on its own, a justification for selecting this characterization of the setting over other, equally “true” alternatives.

Schegloff (1997) suggests that sociological methodologies solve these problems of warrantable characterization in one of two ways. The first solution, which he characterizes as the “positivist” approach, is to warrant the selection of some feature of the setting (e.g., an identity category) by that term’s “success” in producing a professionally acceptable account of the data. Success is measured by the term’s ability to generate findings in the form of “objective” and (statistically or theoretically) significant statements about the world (Schegloff, 1997). What makes this type of solution “positivist” for Schegloff is that the warrantability of the selection of some feature by the analysis does not depend on whether or not that feature is demonstrably oriented to by the social actor whose conduct is being described.

Schegloff’s alternative to the positivist solution is to insist that, since it is the orientations of the participants in some event that constitute the intersubjective reality of that event, any professional characterization of the parties to an interaction (e.g., as “male”) or of the setting in which the interaction is occurring (e.g., “in a capitalist society”) should employ the categories that were oriented to as relevant by those participants at the moment of interaction in question. The analyst must be able to demonstrate, in the details of the talk and/or conduct in the data, that these features were relevant to the participants, for to do so “is to show how the parties are embodying for one another the relevancies of the interaction and thereby producing the social structure” (Schegloff, 1991b, p. 51, emphasis in original). Further, Schegloff asserts, not only must the analyst show that some characterization of
context is relevant for the parties, they must also show how the context so formulated is procedurally consequential for the talk:

How does the fact that the talk is being conducted in some setting (say, “the hospital”) issue in any consequences for the shape, form, trajectory, content, or character of the interaction that the parties conduct? And what is the mechanism by which the context-so-understood has determinate consequences for the talk? (Schegloff, 1991b, p. 53, emphasis in original)

The demonstration of a procedural link between some social setting and the ways in which talk in that setting is organized is, for Schegloff (1991b), the essential requirement for an analyst’s formulation of context to be genuinely analytical. Without such a defensible, empirically demonstrated link, the risk is that the analyst’s characterizations of the parties, the setting, and the conduct merely reflect their own theoretical concerns and relevancies rather than the lived reality of the events and their context for their participants. The constraints of relevance and procedural consequentiality thus constitute a rigorous methodological policy through which the analyst can attempt to “understand the object – the conversational episode – in its endogenous constitution, what it was for the parties involved in it, in its course, as embodied and displayed in the very details of its realization” (Schegloff, 1997, p. 168). The methodological question that remains to be answered is what actually counts as a demonstration of parties’ orientations to contextual matters in interaction.

It was noted above that early CA primarily focused on “ordinary conversation”. This focus was, in part, based on a principled assumption that ordinary talk is the primary form of interaction in the social world: it is ubiquitous, and it is the form of interaction through which the majority of childhood socialization occurs (Drew & Heritage, 1992). Mundane talk thus “antedates the development of other, more specialized forms of ‘institutional’ interaction both phylogenetically in the life of the society and ontogenetically in the life of the individual” (Heritage, 2008, p. 305). As the institutional talk program developed, this assumption formed the basis for a comparative approach that treats institutional interaction in terms of its difference
from mundane interactional patterns. Since ordinary conversation is the base form of interaction, the argument goes, it stands to reason that, if social structure were procedurally consequential for some bit of interaction, this consequentiality would consist of visible, systematic departures from and restrictions in the standard patterns of mundane interaction identified by “basic” CA. The standard patterns of ordinary talk were thus treated as a benchmark against which the “institutionality” of institutional interaction could be found (Arminen, 2005; Drew & Heritage, 1992; Heritage & Clayman, 2010).

CA’s institutional talk program has produced a substantial body of empirical studies detailing systematic patterns of talk and conduct occurring in institutional settings (for recent book-length overviews of institutional CA studies, see Arminen (2005) and Heritage and Clayman (2010)). However, while the program’s achievements have been considerable, its methodological strategy has also been subject to criticism by some ethnomethodologists. Of specific relevance to the methodological purposes of my current discussion are the critical appraisals of some of the institutional talk program’s guiding presuppositions that have been made by several ethnomethodologists working in the area of MCA (Stephen Hester & Francis, 2000, 2001; Watson, 2000). In what immediately follows, I outline what I believe to be the strongest of these critical appraisals, and assess its implications for conceptualizing the relationship between CA and ethnomethodology.

In their analysis of the institutional talk program, Hester and Francis (2000) criticize two methodological practices underpinning studies in this tradition. Firstly, they assert that institutional CA explicitly sets out to investigate topics of central interest to conventional sociology, such as institutional organization and the social distribution of knowledge, power, and authority, from an ethnomethodological point of view. Fundamentally, this means attempting to analyze such topics without reifying them as phenomena standing independent of members’ reflexive situated actions, rather respecting them as members’ phenomena. The program thus offers the promise of “some rapprochement between the interests of CA in the organization of interaction and those of mainstream sociologists in the forms and processes of ‘social structure’” (Stephen Hester & Francis, 2000, p. 393). The institutional talk
program’s preferred alternative to conventionally conceived social structure is the idea of structure-in-action – that is, “an object that members attend to as a condition and resource for organizing various occasions of interaction for particular kinds of action and inference” (Zimmerman & Boden, 1991, p. 12). This conception of structure thus appears to accord with the ethnomethodological commitment to demonstrating the procedural relevance of any phenomenon introduced into the analysis: so far, so good.

However, Hester and Francis note that the institutional talk program combines this commitment to demonstrable relevance with a programmatic conception of the relationship between talk and social structure. Talk is understood to be not determined by, but rather enabling of, social structure. The problem, as Hester and Francis see it, is that this conception is not itself a member’s situated understanding, but rather an a priori formulation. As such, employing this assumption as an analytic concept breaches the commitment to refraining from imposing theoretical concepts on the data. The methodological outcome is that institutional CA tends to focus on interrogating participants’ conduct to discover how it may display orientations to conventional sociological themes. Hester and Francis examine a number of empirical studies conducted in the name of the institutional talk program, and show that institutional analysts commonly interpret their data by the use of mainstream sociological concepts (e.g., conflict, power, and control) whose procedural relevance to members is not, in fact, exhibited in the data. The conclusions drawn by institutional talk researchers seem to come more from the program’s commitment to locating members’ orientations to conventional social structural features in the talk than from an attendance to the methodological principles of relevance and consequentiality.

The second problematic feature of the institutional talk program is its principled attempt to describe the “institutionality” of a given interaction in terms of the interaction’s distinctive sequential structures. The basis of this practice is CA’s theoretical assumption that the sequence organizational features of ordinary talk comprise a “master” system, with other forms of talk (i.e., that occurring in institutional settings) comprising specific modifications of this basic form. Hester
and Francis argue that when applied to institutional interaction, this assumption leads to the view that the formal sequential structures of interaction unique to an institutional setting are constitutive of the social institution in question. This claim is problematic because the sequential structures presented in empirical studies of institutional interaction are not actually distinctive to that institution. For example, Maynard (1991) identifies a recurrent sequential structure used in doctors’ deliveries of medical diagnoses to patients that he terms the “perspective display series”. However, as Maynard himself acknowledges, structures formally identical to the perspective display series also occur in cases of “bad news delivery” in ordinary conversation. If these formal structures are not distinctive to their institutional settings, then the recognizability of the talk as occurring in some institutional setting cannot be the product of sequential organization alone.

Additionally, to respond to this problem by attempting to find other formal properties of institutional talk that must be responsible for its “institutionality” is to persist with the foundationalist misconception that the recognizability of talk could be constituted solely by its formal properties. Hester and Francis assert that the recognizability of an institutional activity such as a medical consultation is not contained in its formal sequential organization, but is a product of the reflexive relationship between sequential and categorial organization. To ignore the role categorization plays in the accomplishment of the encounter as a “medical consultation” in the pursuit of the sequential structures said to be constitutive of its identity, is thus to reify the formal (sequential) structures of talk.

At the core of both of these lines of criticism sits Hester and Francis’ crucial claim that the institutional talk program substitutes the concerns of the analyst – whether that be with social structure as conventionally conceived, or with the sequential structures of talk-in-interaction – for members’ situated orientations. Institutional studies are thus theory-driven in that they seek to locate theoretically pre-specified phenomena in the data. This breaches the ethnomethodological stipulation to closely inspect the data for members’ situated orientations to reflexive configurations of
indexical particulars\textsuperscript{44} in accomplishing the local recognizability of their activities. Bjelic and Lynch (1992) succinctly describe the distinction between the CA and ethnomethodological approaches as follows:

Conversation analysts have begun to assign a foundational role to “mundane” conversational sequencing in the codification and analysis of diverse activities. Although we agree that tape-recorded and transcribed records may offer a convenient indexical surface for addressing the situated organization of practical actions, we do not think the analysis of “talk qua talk” can adequately come to terms with the disciplinary activities out of which “talk” arises. …the currently established program of conversation analysis disregards a vast array of practical and temporally organized \textit{phenomena} that simply do not take the form of sequential structures of “talk”, “talk-in-interaction”, or even “institutionally specific talk-in-interaction”. Garfinkel also speaks of “foundations”, but these are \textit{ethnomethodological} foundations, that is, locally produced, used, and recognized contextures of embodied activity that organize the sense and coherence of any constituent movement, utterance, text, or “analysis”. (p. 54, emphasis in original)

As a result of its theoretical commitments, Hester and Francis (2000) claim, institutional studies “miss the phenomenon”. Such studies fail to account for the specific recognizability of moments of conduct for members, and fail to capture the particular, situated configurations of methods that they use in accomplishing such recognizability.

It should be clear from this discussion that there are important differences of opinion between (at least some) conversation analysts and (at least some) ethnomethodologists on central theoretical and methodological issues. In order to move my current project of outlining a methodological approach for studying basketball practice sessions forward, the question that must be addressed is whether these differences constitute a fundamental incompatibility between conversation

\textsuperscript{44} See the discussion of reflexivity, indexicality and accountability in Chapter 3.
analytic and ethnomethodological methodologies. Ultimately, the division between CA and its ethnomethodological critics seems to turn on differences in the two approaches’ respective objects of analytic interest. CA is primarily interested in describing the accomplishment of accountable orderlinesses in talk, and institutional CA’s primary focus is the accomplishment of accountable orderlinesses in institutionally-oriented talk. Ethnomethodological studies, by contrast, focus on the accomplishment of the specific accountable orderlinesses of situated activities. I believe, following Psathas (1995b), that these approaches are characterized by a clear difference in focus, problem formulation, and methodological preference, but do not embody a fundamental incompatibility: both traditions are concerned with describing members’ methodical accomplishment of reflexively accountable orderlinesses. The difference between the two programs’ respective phenomena of interest can, I think, usefully be understood as a matter of focus.

The key distinction between the two programs lies in whether the approach focuses primarily on generic procedures used by members across different situations to accomplish recognizable orderliness, or on unique configurations of methods used on singular occasions to accomplish the specific orderliness of that occasion only. Formal accounts of members’ sequential (generic) methods of constituting accountable orderliness capture something important about the members’ methods that are used on singular occasions, though the analytic interest in describing domains of interactional organization means that such accounts necessarily miss many details of members’ situated accomplishment of recognizable substantive phenomena. Detailed descriptions of singular (specific) configurations of methods, on the other hand, provide “thick descriptions” of the practices that members use on particular occasions to organize the sense of locally accountable, specific orderlinesses (Bjelic & Lynch, 1992), but necessarily restrict the analyst’s ability to contribute to the development of cumulative knowledge about the systematic organizations of methods. In my view, there is no in-principle reason why the two programs cannot be compatible. All things considered, on the question of which “side” in the dispute is more “correct” – CA’s programmatic commitment to building a cumulative science of social interaction, or ethnomethodology’s radical claim that the reflexivity of accounts means that one must drop any “scientific” pretensions to
cumulative or systematic knowledge of social interaction - I share Silverman’s (1998, 2012) viewpoint that this is ultimately a political and a normative one. By this he means that it is a matter of inherent controversy, and, as such, one upon which an individual must elect to take up a particular position. Silverman, like Psathas (1995b), elects to adopt the perspective that the two approaches can complement one another, and I agree that there is no need to see them as competitive with one another. While both take different trajectories, it seems clear that “there is a shared foundational position with regard to the effort to describe/analyze everyday, naturally occurring activities, by preserving their in situ order and organization as phenomena of study” (Psathas, 1995b, p. 152).

This controversy internal to ethnomethodological approaches has been an important issue to work through for the purposes of my study, because major methodological implications follow. I have declared my commitment to analyzing basketball activities in terms of the sequential and categorial forms of organization operative within them, and have made a claim that this decision is theoretically supportable. It is one thing, however, to offer the view that studies of generic sequential organizations and studies of local orderlinesses of interaction are compatible forms of inquiry; it is quite another to suggest how the methodologies underpinning each can be successfully combined to form a coherent research program. The next section attempts to do the latter, outlining how sequential and categorial organization can be methodologically treated as operating simultaneously and reflexively in members’ production and recognition of intelligible action.

4.5 **The Reflexive Organization of Sequence and Category**

In order to build an analytic framework linking sequences and membership categories as reflexively related phenomena, or “two sides of the same coin” (Watson, 1997, p. 73), I shall draw here on several conceptual resources. The combination of these ideas, I will argue, provides a useful way of investigating the organization of basketball activities as forms of action whose accomplishment requires members’ orientation both to sequential and categorial matters. The first resource is the notion of “turn-generated categories”, a term introduced by Sacks
and later developed by Watson (1997) and Fitzgerald (1999). Watson’s discussion of turn-generated categories, in particular, provides a useful starting point because it places sequential and categorial phenomena on the same analytic level.

Watson (1997) begins by arguing that Sacks’ work on turn-generated categories demonstrates that Sacks saw sequential organization as operating in a fundamentally similar way to categorial organization. The crucial idea that Watson develops here is that, in performing a sequential action such as asking a question, the performer constitutes themself as an incumbent of a particular category (i.e., “questioner”). Conceptualizing sequential actions as categorial phenomena is an important analytic move, because it carries the implication that sequential categories, like membership categories, make various predicates relevant to their incumbents. For example, a member occupying the category of “asker” is expected to produce an utterance that is hearable as a question (Fitzgerald, 1999). Watson argues that these sequential categories are turn-generated in the sense that the question of who will occupy a given category is not determined in advance of the situated use of some sequential device, such as a question-answer adjacency pair. It is the deployment of the sequential device itself that generates the sequential categories (e.g., “questioner” and “answerer”), and distributes them amongst the parties to the interaction. And as Fitzgerald (1999) explains, a member’s incumbency of a turn-generated category only lasts for the duration of the sequential action that they are performing. As the interaction progresses, turn-by-turn and action-by-action, members continually move into and out of sequential categories in an ongoing category flow. In this way, sequential categories comprise a basic layer of categorial organization, a methodical resource that members use to produce and recognize actions.

A second important idea is the notion that individual sequences, as minimal, two-turn structures of action (i.e., adjacency pairs), may themselves be embedded within larger, multi-sequential structures. Robinson (2012) suggests the concept of “activity” as a term to describe structurally organized “multiple interactional units the size of sequences or larger” (p. 260) which provide a source of coherence for interactants. The size and scope of the structures collected by the term “activity” may vary widely. An activity may consist of a relatively small structure, such as the
opening of a telephone call, or, to use a basketball example, the phase in which the
coach divides the players into groups at the beginning of a drill. It may extend to a
larger unit of action, such as a topic discussion, or a basketball drill comprised of
numerous individual performances and corrections. An activity may even encompass
an entire episode of interaction, for instance, an entire phone call, or a two hour
basketball practice session. Further, as these examples imply, activities may, like a
set of Russian dolls, have a “nested” quality. While activities have their own
organizational structure, that is, they may themselves also comprise coherent sub-
structures of larger structurally organized activities.

A comment by Levinson provided me with a hint as to how the concepts of turn-
generated categories, activities, and membership categorization devices might be
usefully combined to comprise an analytic tool for investigating basketball activities
as sequentially and categorically organized events. Levinson (2012) asserts that an
activity “imposes a set of roles (membership categorization in Sacks’ terms) and
action types that go with them” (p. 124, emphasis in original). As I understand it,
what Levinson is saying is that any activity has associated with it a set of categories
that are internal to the structural organization of the activity itself. While Watson’s
(1997) idea of turn-generated categories pointed to the existence of categorial
devices operating at the level of individual sequences, Levinson’s remark indicates
that categorial devices also operate at the level of activities. To phrase this more
programmatically, it appears that both sequences, and activities, as multi-sequential
units, can themselves be understood to function as “membership categorization
devices”. Bringing all of these phenomena together under the rubric of MCDs serves
to emphasize the fact that once operative, they function to distribute categories and
category-bound predicates amongst participants for their duration, whether that be a
single sequence or a larger multi-sequential unit. In this way, they provide for the
recognizability of specific sequential actions. If we combine this argument with the
observation made above, that activities can have a “nested” quality, a sophisticated
picture of interaction emerges. Interaction can be seen as a complex flow of
sequential actions in which multiple layers of categorization are ongoingly made
relevant. Some categorial relevancies only endure for a single sequence of action.
Others persist over, and organize, longer, multi-sequential durations (i.e., sub-
activities or entire activities). Still others, once activated, potentially remain operative over an entire episode of interaction\textsuperscript{45}.

Taken together, then, the concepts outlined in this section comprise an analytic resource that attends both to sequential and categorial organization, collecting both forms of organization under the rubric of membership categorization devices. This methodology treats MCDs as dynamic phenomena, which members ongoingly invoke, layer, and move through in the course of conducting their activities, as resources for accomplishing recognizable actions. Locally-assembled configurations of categorization devices thus function as sequentially-unfolding, oriented-to background orders that inform members’ production and recognition of accountable actions. At any moment the “current context” functioning as a background for making sense of a given behavioural display can comprise a complex array of layered categories and categorization devices operating at different levels (i.e., at the level of sequence, activity, entire episode, etc.). In this way, then, categories and devices can be understood to operate as interdependent constituents of locally-assembled and nested gestalt contextures, which, via the use of the documentary method of interpretation, reflexively constitute and are constituted by “bits” of accountable conduct. According to this approach, the task for the analyst is to unpack the interwoven layers of categories that members are invoking, and reflexively constituting, through their sequential production of recognizable actions.

As mentioned at the outset of this chapter, my objective here is to develop a methodological approach that would be adequate for describing members’ accomplishment of the activities exhibited in my data. Up to this point, I have gone some way towards doing so, outlining an approach that addresses both sequential and categorial organization as reflexively related members’ resources in constituting action. However, the nature of the phenomena that form the topic of this thesis – basketball practice activities – also require that the methodology include some tools

\textsuperscript{45} The notion of an “omnirelevant” device, that is, a collection of categories that is potentially applicable at any time in an encounter, and that, when invoked, has priority over other devices in terms of organizing action, is discussed in chapter 6. See Fitzgerald, Housley and Butler (2009) for an detailed definition of such devices.
for capturing members’ embodied and visible conduct in organizing their activities. Accordingly, before concluding this chapter, I will briefly discuss a third and final methodological resource and how it can be incorporated into the methodological framework developed so far.

4.6 **EMBODIED ACTION: WORKPLACE STUDIES AND VIDEO ANALYSIS**

The term “workplace studies” refers to a recently emergent corpus of video-based conversation analytic studies concerned with “the interplay of talk and bodily conduct and how material and digital resources feature in the social accomplishment of social action and activity” (Heath & Luff, 2012, p. 283). As the name indicates, these studies have been particularly interested in members’ use of talk, visible conduct, and material resources to co-ordinate and organize their work-specific actions and activities. Workplace studies have had a major influence on fields such as organizational sociology, human-computer interaction, and computer supported cooperative work. Additionally, they have made valuable contributions to the sociological conceptualization of phenomena such as artefacts, technologies, computer systems, and information, investigating not their “meanings” but rather the ways in which their local intelligibility is reflexively constituted through participants’ orientations to and use of such objects within practical work activities (Heath, et al., 2000). Empirical studies of work activities have been conducted in airport operations rooms (C. Goodwin & Goodwin, 1998), student dental clinics (Hindmarsh, et al., 2011), hospital operating theatres (Koschmann, et al., 2011), and control rooms on the London Underground (Heath & Luff, 1998), amongst many other settings.

Of greater relevance to my project than its contributions to technology-related issues, however, is the analytic attention that workplace studies have directed toward embodied conduct. These studies have shown how intelligible actions can be methodically constructed not only through talk, but also through the simultaneous use of gesture, gaze, bodily movement and position, and material objects and structures in the environment (C. Goodwin, 2000a, 2013). Unlike traditional approaches to nonverbal communication and gesture, workplace studies do not treat
these different modalities as separate communicative “channels”, but rather, following the conversation analytic impetus, they explore how embodied comportment is co-organized with talk in the accomplishment of recognizable action and activities (Heath & Luff, 2012).

Additionally, drawing on video data, these studies have demonstrated that visible/embodied actions can be investigated as sequential phenomena whose intelligibility depends upon their sequential placement (Hindmarsh & Llewellyn, 2010). As Levinson (2012) has demonstrated, embodied actions can themselves be organized into adjacency-pair like action sequences, much as talk is. For example, you knock on the door, I open it, you smile, I extend my hand, and you grasp and shake it. As such, workplace studies are able to illustrate both how embodied conduct plays an important part in the sequential organization of an event, and how bodily action is itself sequentially organized. Exploring the complex ways in which visual and verbal conduct are intertwined in the accomplishment of sequential activities in physical contexts is thus a central preoccupation of workplace studies.

However, although workplace studies now consists of a substantial corpus of studies that has provided important insights into the sequential organization of talk and embodied conduct, there is little research that has combined attention to embodied or visible conduct with a focus on categorial organization. The lack of attention to visual phenomena in MCA is surprising given that Sacks considered visual phenomena in his earliest work on categorization in the form of the viewer’s maxim (discussed above). One study which has attended to the relation between visible and categorial order from an MCA perspective, however, is Hester and Francis’ (2003) brief paper on observation, which shows how visual scenes may be perceived as relational configurations of membership categories, activities, objects, locations, and so on, that “go together”, in a way similar to an MCD or gestalt contexture. Likewise, Jayyusi (1993) has detailed how visible scenes are “glance-intelligible” via the visual availability of categories and their conventionally-tied trajectories of action:

The fundamental point here is that the world is intelligently available to our looking and seeing in specifiable ways, and that its intelligibility is scenically
organized. That scenic organization and constitution is locatable in our category knowledge of persons, places, actions and objects, and the ties between them. Indeed, this category knowledge is itself a perceptual and visual knowledge. (p. 29)

Whilst these papers provide some important insights for my methodological purposes, the picture offered by Hester and Francis and Jayyusi tends to be fairly static, with little indication of how the categorial observability of conduct informs, and is informed by, the sequential organization of conduct. This topic has been largely neglected in the ethnomethodological literature. Watson (1997) has made some brief programmatic statements that seem to go somewhat further towards linking category, sequence and visible orders. He discusses queues as “visibility arrangements” organized by a set of turn-generated categories, such as “head of the queue” or “next in line”, each of which attribute to their incumbents a range of normative rights and responsibilities. In such arrangements, the performance of particular sequential actions can be seen as an obligation bound participants by virtue of their incumbency of particular turn-generated categories. For instance, the person at the head of the queue ought to move close to the service point in anticipation of the completion of the current transaction. A further point, not made by Watson, that I believe can provide an important link between embodied conduct, category, and sequence, is that the occupation of a particular spatial location can itself serve to assign, or “map”, the member to a particular membership category. For instance, walking to the end of the queue and occupying the space behind the last member can make one a member of the queue. This particular point will be taken up in detail in relation to basketball activities in Chapter 7.

It seems clear from this brief discussion that there are potentially complex and consequential relationships existing between embodied conduct and position, categorial incumbency, and sequential organization. While there are many resources available for investigating each of these aspects of interaction independently from the others, it is apparent that more work is required in order to specify some of the concrete ways in which sequence, category and embodied activity may work together in the constitution of activities. In the empirical chapters that follow, I will attempt to
identify some of the particular ways in which participants in basketball practice sessions draw upon all three of these organizational dimensions in accomplishing their activities as recognizable events. The following section summarizes the argument developed in this chapter.

4.7 CONCLUSION

While the previous chapter focused on the theoretical and conceptual foundations informing this thesis’ approach to sporting activity, this chapter was concerned to outline a method for investigating sport ethnomethodologically. The methodological approaches discussed in this chapter, combined together in the way that I have specified above, constitute a complex analytic framework for investigating how parties to basketball practice sessions collaboratively accomplish their activities as recognizable events. Each approach offers guiding principles, concepts and distinctive reflexive structures (themselves drawn from extensive empirical research) which, when combined, constitute a methodology that I have argued is able to capture the “incourseness” of basketball practice activities. CA provides a precise method for attending to the generic structures of sequential organization that members put to context-sensitive use in accomplishing recognizable action. MCA contributes a principled empirical method of studying how members use cultural categories-in-action, assembling them into locally-relevant devices to serve as background contexts for making sense of indexical action. And workplace studies provide resources for fine-grained analysis of embodied action, illustrating that visual conduct is organized sequentially and can be subjected to similar analytic treatment to talk.

The picture that emerges from combining these approaches in the way I have outlined above is one of social interaction as a reflexive relationship between sequential, categorial and embodied organizations, with each domain mutually elaborating the others. The image I offered was of sequences of action as categorization devices that are themselves nested within larger multi-sequential activities that make relevant their own sets of categories. These sequential/categorial devices may be layered in complex arrangements, with various layers being added
and dropped as interaction progresses. Further, it is apparent that devices may be invoked, and sequential actions performed, through bodily movements and spatial positioning, not just talk. This fact adds a further layer of complexity to the organizational gestalt contextures that members build through, and use as resources for recognizing, their situated actions.

The empirical chapters comprising most of the remainder of this thesis will apply this methodological approach in analyzing video recordings of specific activities occurring in basketball practices. At the same time, the methodology will be elaborated and developed through attempting to come to terms with these cases of situated interaction. Before turning to the data analysis, however, the process of collecting, transcribing, and analyzing the data remains to be outlined. The research process forms the focus of the next chapter.
Chapter 5: The Research Process

5.1 Introduction

The empirical chapters of this thesis are concerned with explicating the local social organization of aspects of basketball practice sessions. The analysis presented in these chapters is built around detailed analytic case studies of video recordings of naturally-occurring stretches of interaction between the members of a basketball team. The process of collecting and analyzing this video data raised a host of practical, technical, and conceptual issues and required me to make consequential decisions on a range of matters. This chapter is an outline of this research process. It describes the practices employed to collect and analyze the data, in the process identifying the points at which decisions had to be made and attempting to provide justifications for my choices.

The first section provides some background information about the team itself and how it fits into the organizational structures of Australian junior basketball. Following this, the focus turns to general issues regarding the use of recorded materials for research. I demonstrate that the use of recordings as an analytic technique is deeply intertwined with the analytic mentality of ethnomethodology and CA. The next section discusses the actual process through which the data for this study were collected. The bulk of this discussion is concerned with outlining the practical and technical issues that arose throughout the recording period and the ways in which I attempted to resolve them satisfactorily. The following section considers some conceptual questions about the necessity of supplementing recorded materials with ethnographic fieldwork. The chapter then turns to the ways in which the recorded materials were subjected to analysis. In this section, I explain how certain episodes of interaction were selected for further analysis, the practices that were involved in transcribing the recorded data, and the methods by which the transcribed fragments were subjected to more detailed analysis. Finally, the chapter concludes with a reflection on my decision to rely on single case analyses as a mode of investigation, rather than working with collections of interactional episodes.
5.2 The Research Context

The basketball practice sessions that I recorded on video were held by an elite youth team located in a major Australian city. I filmed the team’s practices over a period of roughly eight months, starting from the pre-season period prior to the 2010 season, and continuing until the end of that season’s playoffs, collecting some 50 hours of video material. The team itself is referred to throughout this thesis by the pseudonym the “Midtown Pelicans” (or just “Pelicans”). In 2010 the Pelicans competed in the top developmental basketball league\textsuperscript{46} for men in the state. They had a successful season, winning sixteen of their eighteen regular season games and finishing league runners-up after narrowly losing the grand final series two games to one.

The team is part of a larger organization, Midtown Junior Basketball Club (MJBC) (another pseudonym), which has a history of administering youth basketball teams, leagues and player development programmes in the city dating back to the late 1950s. In the present day, MJBC administers teams for both girls/women and boys/men across all age grades from Under 12 to Under 20. Official youth basketball programs in Australia are coordinated by Basketball Australia (BA), the national governing body for the sport, and by BA’s constituent members, the state/territory basketball associations. As well as delivering junior basketball programs, these state governing bodies oversee the affiliated local basketball clubs, such as MJBC, which exist within each state. Some junior basketball activities, development programs, leagues and teams are run by BA and/or the state associations themselves, but the remaining bulk of Australia’s youth basketball programs is organized by the affiliated local clubs.

The programs collectively administered by these organizations are ordered into a basketball development pathway, a progression path intended to define the programs through which young players may proceed from their initial involvement in the sport up to elite level. At the base level of the pathway sit junior participatory programs, such as Basketball Australia’s *Aussie Hoops*, a nationwide ten-week program aimed

\textsuperscript{46} As a development league, teams have restrictions on the number of players aged 23 or over they may field.
at introducing children aged between eight and twelve to the sport, and state-based initiatives such as Skill, Fun and Play day clinics. These programs are organized around principles of enjoyment, inclusion, and participation, and the clinics, practice sessions and games held under their banners revolve around creating a supportive and fun environment within which all children, regardless of ability, can take part. While skill development and practice does comprise one focus of such programs, building participants’ self-confidence, encouraging pro-social behaviour (e.g., fair play, cooperation and teamwork) and educating participants about healthy lifestyles are equally prominent objectives.

Domestic basketball competitions comprise the second tier of the pathway. These leagues, played at stadia around the state, are run by the local basketball clubs. Competitions are age-graded, beginning from Under 8 and extending to Under 19 age groups. Players involved in domestic teams usually play one game a week and have one practice session. Like the participation programs, these competitions are intended to be inclusive, with clubs offering the opportunity to join a team, play games, and receive coaching and skill development for any young person who wants to be involved. However, the domestic leagues are also intended to introduce young players into the world of competitive basketball and its features, such as winning and losing and performance assessment.

The third tier of the pathway is comprised of representative competitions. Clubs hold trials and select their top players to represent them in inter-club leagues which, like the domestic competitions, are age-graded. Most states have a number of different representative leagues, which vary in terms of their geographical footprint (city-wide, regional, state-wide), the level of competition, and the prestige accorded to them. The Pelicans team sits at the representative level of this development pathway, and it is at the apex of the MJBC player development program\textsuperscript{47}. Beyond the club representative level of the pathway lie the youth state representative teams (In 2010,\textsuperscript{47} Also, as an Under 23 squad, it is the highest age-graded team in the club, and it functions as something of a preparatory team for those players moving from the age-graded youth representative squads to the open-age senior men’s leagues, which are substantially more physical than the youth competitions.)
two members of the Pelicans were selected to play for the state Under 20 men’s squad in the Australian National Championships), elite development programs such as the National Intensive Training Program, and the national teams selected by BA to attend the World Junior Championships. These representative competitions and programs are designed to identify and select talented athletes and develop them into elite players. The opportunities for players who succeed at these levels include playing semi-professionally or professionally in senior men’s leagues in Australia or overseas, or alternatively gaining a scholarship to play and study at an American college.

5.3 **Ethnomethodological video analysis**

The analytic and empirical core of this thesis consists of three chapters of ethnomethodologically-informed video analysis of Pelicans basketball practice sessions. Before I describe the procedures through which the data were collected and analyzed, I wish briefly to discuss the rationale behind my choice to work with video recordings as the primary data source. As I have outlined in earlier chapters, this thesis investigates Pelicans basketball practice sessions as the contingently-achieved accomplishments of their “order production staffs” (Garfinkel, 2002) – the team’s coaches and players. The decision to approach basketball activities as the practical productions of participants is based upon the ethnomethodological assumption that it is solely through the interactions and orientations of members that any accountable social phenomenon (for instance, a “basketball practice session”) is produced as the objectively real social fact that, for members, it is. Given this presupposition, the central requirement for ethnomethodological studies is to systematically and rigorously investigate how participants produce sense and order from within their practical activities. As this section seeks to demonstrate, the use of recordings of naturally-occurring activities in ethnomethodologically-informed studies – in particular, in conversation analytic research – constitutes an attempt to achieve this analytic objective.

Recorded data have been a central feature of CA’s methodological approach since its beginnings – indeed, Schegloff has observed that without tape-recording, it is
improbable that CA would have thrived as it did (Cmejrkova & Prevignano, 2003). The research techniques of collecting, transcribing, and analyzing recordings of naturally occurring interactions are embedded in the analytic mentality of CA (Mondada, 2006b). Sacks, in a description of the objectives underlying his development of CA, provides some further insight into the nature of this mentality:

Let me try to locate what I’m doing. When I started to do research in sociology I had this particular aim: I figured that sociology couldn’t be an actual science unless it was able to handle the details of actual events; handle them formally, and in the first instance be informative about them in the ways the primitive sciences tend to be informative. That is to say, you could tell your mother something you found out, and she could go and see that it was so. (Sacks, 1995, pp. 621-622)

For Sacks, social science ought to attend to, and be able to account for, the actual, observable details of real social events. He seized upon recordings of conversations as potential methodological resources for making possible the type of analysis he envisaged:

So I started to play around with tape recorded conversations, for the single virtue that I could replay them; that I could type them out somewhat, and study them extendedly, who knew how long it might take. And that was a good enough record of what happened, to some extent. Other things, to be sure, happened. But at least that happened. It was not from any large interest in language, or from some theoretical formulation of what should be studied, but simply by virtue of that; that I could get my hands on it, and I could study it again and again. And also, consequentially, others could look at what I had

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48 One may note the contrast between the idea of sociology propounded by Sacks, and the sense of what sociology ought to be provided in the programmatic statements of classical figures in conventional sociology such as Durkheim. For example, as noted above, Sacks proposes a sociology that would focus exclusively on investigating phenomena that are available and observable to "anyone", that is, any competent member. Durkheim, by contrast, insists that the “social facts”, which comprise sociology’s phenomena do not necessarily appear to our senses in their “reality” and thus require, for their correct apprehension, systematic investigation using appropriate scientific methods (Hughes & Sharrock, 1997)). In suggesting his version of sociology, one can see Sacks’ indebtedness to Garfinkel’s methodological recommendations.
studied, and make of it what they could, if they wanted to be able to disagree with me. (Sacks, 1995, p. 622)

Sacks’ comment succinctly captures several key features of recordings of naturally occurring interactions that make them suitable resources for studying members’ methods. The first is the ability of recordings to preserve, and thus make available for inspection, the observable details of interaction in their temporal and sequential details. While field notes can serve as adequate records of an observer’s experiences of events for some analytic purposes, they do not allow the researcher to recover the phenomena of interest to CA: the unfolding, real-time, interactional details (including not only utterances but also pauses, overlaps, and the like) that participants produce, monitor, and sequentially arrange in the course of building their activities. Recordings preserve much more of the detail of social interaction than the notes and memories produced by participant observation. Secondly, the material existence of recordings allows for their repeated inspection. The fact that recordings can not only be replayed, but paused, rewound, and played back at reduced speed is a crucial resource in developing rigorous analyses of the organization of conduct. Thirdly, recordings provide for the possibility of analysis as a social activity: data can be shared with and checked by others. Recordings “are a public record, available to the scientific community, in a way that fieldnotes are not” (Silverman, 1998, p. 62). In sum, if one is interested in studying the situated organization of social interaction, recordings of naturally-occurring events are a powerful resource.

CA developed mainly on the basis of audio recordings, but interest in the use of video recordings within CA has become more widespread recently. As Have (2007) notes, the advantages of video recordings over audio alone are particularly apparent in settings where participants’ bodies, objects, and/or the material environment play core roles in the organization of action. As CA attention has turned from a singular focus on talk to an interest in multimodal aspects of interaction, researchers have increasingly begun to favour the analytic payoffs offered by video over audio data (Mondada, 2008). Video has also been central to the development of workplace studies as an interdisciplinary field, as the specialized professional activities that form the object of workplace analyses regularly involve the use of visible conduct
and artefacts of various types as constitutive features of their performance (Heath & Hindmarsh, 2002). Given the embodied nature of the activities that comprise the topic of this thesis, the decision to base the study on video as opposed to audio recordings was a simple one. The next section outlines the practical process of collecting the data for this study.

5.4 **DATA COLLECTION**

Once I had gained access to the team, and secured the consent of the coaches and players to participate in the study\(^{49}\), I began regularly attending and filming the Pelicans’ practice sessions. The team trained twice a week for two hours each time, and the practice sessions followed a loose structure including fixed and variable components. Practices usually began with a team talk, during which the coach spoke about team administrative matters, outlined the goals of the session, and, in practices that occurred during the competitive season, discussed points related to the previous weekend’s game and/or the upcoming one. The players would then spend ten to fifteen minutes doing warm-up drills and stretching. The overall structure of the session from this point on could be highly variable. A typical progression, however, was for practice to begin with drills focusing on individual skills, such as shooting, passing, dribbling, or defensive footwork (with the players often being divided up by position – guards in one group, forwards in another, each group working on different skills at opposite ends of the court) before moving into team-based activities, such as practising offensive sets or defensive rotations. The activities themselves likewise tended to follow a progression, usually starting off with a set of restrictions in place before gradually evolving into a something approaching game-like performance. Such progressions would involve, for instance, beginning an activity by restricting the possibilities for player decision-making and gradually opening up more options; moving from an initially restricted playing space through to the use of the entire court; graduating from walking speed through to game speed; beginning with an undefended performance, adding partial defence (with limited numbers of defenders

\(^{49}\) The process by which I gained access to the Pelicans, and their consent to film their training sessions, is outlined in Appendix B.
or restrictions on intensity) and progressing to full game-like defence; and so on. The practice sessions would usually conclude with “punishment” – the players would have to run a certain number of sprints determined by how many mistakes they had collectively made during the session. Finally, there would be a further talk by the coach, which tended to comprise an evaluation of the overall practice and some motivational messages in preparation for the next session or game.

All data captures a selective version of reality, and video data is no exception (Heath, Hindmarsh, & Luff, 2010). The process of collecting video data requires the researcher to make decisions on a range of issues that are consequential for how the data turns out. Recording the Pelicans’ practices was a complex process and I was confronted with practical problems and choices, both in the initial stages and ongoingly throughout the data collection phase of the research project. This section identifies some of the problems that arose from the constraints of the setting, and details some of the practical and technical choices that were made in the attempt to collect useable data.

A first set of issues that arose was related to the choice of whether to film the practices from a fixed camera on a tripod, or to rove around the setting with a handheld camera. The use of a fixed camera position, which captures the entire field of action from a single viewpoint, is often preferred in CA studies. This is primarily due to the fact that a fixed viewpoint means that all of the action within a scene is captured, which eliminates the researcher’s problem of trying to anticipate upcoming courses of action in order to turn toward their scenes before they begin. If upcoming actions are not anticipated but merely followed, the researcher ends up with recordings of events that have already started before the camera caught up with them, meaning that important features of the structural organization of the event may have been missed. However, the spatial layout of the Pelicans’ practices meant that using a fixed camera position was not always a viable option in my case, and I had to devise work-around solutions to capture the best data practically possible under the conditions.
Firstly, the space in which the activities comprising Pelicans’ practice sessions took place was relatively expansive, in that the practice sessions occurred on a basketball court (the dimensions of which are 28 metres by 15 metres), and the activities during the session were distributed around the court space, with some activities employing the entire court. Added to the issue of the large activity space was the fact that the practice facility used by the Pelicans had little available space beyond the court – in some places, the stadium wall was less than two metres from the court sideline. It was thus almost impossible to position the camera at a vantage point from which the lens could capture every part of the court. This constraint was compounded by the fact that, not only were the practice activities mobile and distributed around the entire space of the court, but the coach also roved around the court space during the practices, occupying a variety of locations relative to the players’ activities. This set of circumstances created ongoing problems for my ability to include both the coach and the players in the camera frame at the same time.

I resolved this issue as best I could by identifying, through trial and error, several positions which would provide adequate vantage points for certain types of activity and the coach’s typical range of positions relative to them. When I could anticipate that the participants were about to move into one of these activities, I would reposition the camera accordingly, lifting the small tripod upon which it was mounted and setting it up in a different location. For instance, if an activity was based in one half of the court, the coach would tend to stand either at the base-line of the end where the activity was taking place, or at half-court, and so I would move to the location opposite the coach. If the coach were on the base-line, I would position myself at half court, and vice versa. This practice allowed me to capture the whole activity, including the actions of the coach, in one medium-long shot. However, the coach would often move from one spot to the other, forcing me to decide whether to remain where I was – which might mean losing the coach from the shot – or to move to another spot, thus disrupting the recording. I tended to choose the latter, as having both the on-court action and the coach in the frame at the same time was my primary concern, but I ended up with some “jittery” recordings as a result of repositioning while filming.
A further feature of the setting that made the use of a fixed camera position problematic, was that players who were not involved in the practice activity being recorded, but who were waiting for their turn to enter it, would stand on the sidelines or the base-line to observe. As a result, they would sometimes get between the camera and the activity and/or the coach. The camera was mounted on a tripod via a quick-release shoe, and at those times when my view of the action was obscured, I would remove the camera from the tripod and move around the player(s) in order to get a clear shot. This practice provided (eventual) access to the activity, but also meant periods of obscured action followed by moments of poor image quality as I unclipped the camera and scrambled into a better position.

At times, the problems for camera positioning created by the spatial organization of the practice sessions became intractable. For instance, at certain points during the practices, the coach would split the team into groups and instruct them to perform separate activities at different places on the court. The coach would rove from group to group, periodically making comments or stopping activities to perform corrections. These periods were very difficult to film, as not only did I have to anticipate upcoming events in order to move into a suitable position, but at times the coach would stand at one end of the court and observe a group performing an activity at the other end, which meant capturing the coach and the relevant group of players simultaneously was impossible. As a result, the data collected from these types of events were of very limited quality, and I did not use any clips from these periods in my corpus.

A second practical set of problems related to, but distinct from, camera positioning was the question of how to best frame the action with the camera. In particular, I had to make ongoing decisions about whether to keep the size of the camera shot wide enough in order to capture the entire interactional space and all of the participants in the practice setting as a whole, or to zoom in on a particular interaction and particular interactants. Decisions made at this level are extremely important, because they go right to the heart of ethnomethodology/CA’s analytic mentality. If, as noted above, the objective of studies in this tradition is to analyze the details that members produce, and to which they orient, in organizing their activities, then the production
of video materials for analysis is based on what Mondada (2006b) terms an “availability principle”:

the analytic task of recording (and, in the same way, of digitizing, anonymizing, transcribing, annotating, etc.) is to provide for the availability of relevant details – which indeed makes the analysis possible. Not recording some of these details… would mean not providing for the very possibility of analyzing them and therefore the action they organize methodically. (p. 54)

With regard to this issue, the ongoing problem that I faced while recording was determining which features of the current activity would need to be preserved in order for the video to function as an adequate record of the activity for later analysis. Using a wide camera shot, which would include all parties to an interaction within the frame, was desirable in that any possible contributions to the organization of the activity – by peripheral parties, for instance – would be available for analysis. However, a wider shot also meant that the degree of granularity of the available details was less than it would have been with a closer shot. The risk of remaining at a wide angle was that relevant multimodal details (especially gesture, facial expression and gaze direction) oriented to by participants would not be visible in the recording. In effect, the recording process involved a constant trade-off between including the entire scene of action but losing fine details of visible conduct, and vice versa. Resolving this issue for all practical purposes involved a process of experimentation and progressive refinement as I worked out the implications of different shot widths for data analysis. My general solution was to keep the shot wide enough to include all central participants in an activity, and to zoom in as the coach began to interact directly with specific players. This strategy was relatively successful as I was able to capture clear details, but from time to time it would become clear that, by adopting this approach, I had excluded participants from the shot whose actions or presence turned out to be consequential for the organization of the interaction.

A third set of issues emerged with regard to the quality of the sound that I was able to record. Most of the time while I was recording, the camera was some distance from the activity. At times I was positioned only five or six metres away from the
action, but when events took place at the other end of the court, I could be as far as 30 metres away. Added to the issue of distance is the fact that basketball practice is an inherently noisy affair: bouncing balls, squeaking sneakers, stomping feet, and the shouts of players and coaches echo throughout the cavernous stadium. These features created real difficulties for gathering clear, coherent audio of participants’ talk. My solution to this problem was to purchase a wireless microphone, which I asked the coach to wear on his upper arm for the duration of the practice sessions. The microphone captured clearly the coach’s talk and that of players close to him. However, sound quality would diminish rapidly once players were more than about five metres away from the microphone. The end result was thus that the sound that I collected was partial and perspectival: utterances produced by the coach and other participants close by were captured as details available for analysis, but utterances made by players further away from the coach were difficult, if not impossible, to discern, meaning that some details consequential for the organization of activities were unavailable for analysis. As with my responses to the other practical problems outlined above, the wireless microphone constituted an imperfect solution to a difficult problem.

The problems that arose in relation to the three issues discussed thus far – camera positioning, shot framing, and audio recording – can all be related to a central constraint associated with this research project: the fact that the research was carried out as part of a PhD degree by a single researcher. In a major funded research study conducted by multiple researchers, the basketball events might be captured from a variety of viewpoints and shot lengths, with multiple microphones picking up the utterances of all of the parties to the activities. While making recordings of Pelicans’ practice sessions of this complexity and detail was not feasible in this study, the data corpus I ended up with comprises an adequate body of materials which provided analytic access to certain features central to the organization of activities in the setting. Thus, although I was not able to analyze everything that took place in the setting, I was able to thoroughly investigate some aspects of what took place.

A final issue that bears discussion with regard to the video recording process is that common methodological critique based on Labov’s (1972) “observer’s paradox”: the
fact that the process of observing an activity inevitably transforms it. In my case, this effect may have been further compounded by the fact that, given the practical constraints outlined above, it was not feasible for me to utilize the technique recommended by some methods texts (e.g., Heath et al., 2010) of setting up the camera and then moving away from it in order to avoid being seen by participants to be actively recording them. However, while I recognize that my presence may have potentially affected the action to some small extent, I do not believe that it had any major bearing on how things turned out, for the simple reason that the presence of both observers and cameras at practice sessions is a fairly common occurrence in elite- and even non-elite level sport. At the Pelicans’ practices I attended, there were often other observers present: parents of the players, MJBC members, and players and coaches from other teams. At times, too, there were others filming the practices: modern sports teams often utilize video recording technology as a coaching device, and, in addition, some players’ parents were collecting footage for use in making player highlight reels to send to colleges. Although the Pelicans practice sessions were not, strictly speaking, open to the public, they had the air of a semi-public activity open to the scrutiny of relevant persons. As such, it is my contention that parties to the practice sessions were relatively used to being observed – whether by eyes or recording devices – as they went about their activities, and that the effect of my presence was marginal.

This section has discussed a first topic of data collection, that of producing recordings of basketball activities. The next section considers the issue of whether recordings can constitute a data corpus on their own, or whether the researcher needs to supplement the audio-visual materials with data collected using more conventional ethnographic methods.

5.5 Fieldwork and the issue of Ethnography

Within the variety of what broadly could be termed ethnomethodological approaches to data collection and analysis, there exist differences of opinion regarding what data the researcher should collect beyond the recorded materials to be analyzed themselves. At one end of the spectrum of positions taken on this issue is what could
be termed the “restricted database” position (Have, 2007): analysis should be performed on recorded materials (and the transcriptions of the recorded materials) alone, and other sources of background information, such as field observations, official records and interviews with participants, are largely irrelevant for the purposes of analysis. At the other end of this spectrum is the “unique adequacy” position (Garfinkel & Wieder, 1992), which holds that an adequate analysis of some interaction requires the researcher to become fully immersed in the organization of the setting, gaining a working knowledge of the occupation or domain of activity being studied and the practical activities and tasks being observed. In order to grasp what is at stake in this disagreement, I return here briefly to ethnomethodology’s take on the purpose of research and the nature of social reality.

The objective of ethnomethodological studies is to explicate the practices by which social reality, as that reality is experienced by members within the flow of everyday life, is itself assembled by those members in situated interaction. Since, for ethnomethodology, members experience the social world for the most part as orderly and intelligible, that is, as being comprised of accountable, observable-reportable phenomena, then any ethnomethodological analysis must begin with these observable phenomena. The starting point of any ethnomethodological analysis, then, involves the researcher noticing things that are observably-the-case about some activity or setting (Stephen Hester & Francis, 2004). The researcher’s detection of such observable, common-sense phenomena must inevitably trade upon the common-sense knowledge that they possess by virtue of their competent membership of society. Garfinkel and Sacks (1969/1986) term this ordinary membership “mastery of natural language”, and characterize this competency as follows:

We offer the observation that persons, in that they are heard to be speaking a natural language, somehow are heard to be engaged in the objective production and objective display of common-sense knowledge of everyday activities as observable and reportable phenomena. We ask what it is about natural language that permits speakers and auditors to hear, and in other ways to witness, the objective production and objective display of common-sense knowledge, and of practical circumstances, practical actions, and practical
sociological reasoning as well? What is it about natural language that makes these phenomena observable-reportable, i.e., *accountable*, phenomena? (p. 160, emphasis in original)

The ethnomethodologist is thus utterly reliant on their membership knowledge from the outset in order to identify some phenomena for further analysis. Seen in this light, the debate over what data to collect beyond recordings of interactions can be understood as a debate about what background knowledge the researcher ought to bring to bear upon their analysis of the recordings. This controversy is, in effect, a specific manifestation of the methodological disagreement outlined in the previous chapter (grossly simplified, the issue of whether research ought to focus on the generic procedures used to accomplish social interaction, or, alternatively, on the unique configuration of methods used to constitute the situated intelligibility of a specific activity). A pair of rough connections can be traced from each of these methodological mentalities to a corresponding standpoint regarding the collection of background data. For “pure” CA studies, primarily concerned as they are with investigating the formal, highly general procedures used to constitute intelligible talk-in-interaction, it is commonly assumed that one’s ordinary practical competence in social interaction is sufficient to enable one to recognize accountable interactional phenomena, and therefore the acquisition of specialized knowledge of the setting’s ways is unnecessary (Have, 2007). By contrast, for workplace studies, interested as they are in explicating how the specific orderliness of singular occasions of specialized activities is accomplished, it stands to reason that the researcher needs to acquire a working knowledge of the setting and its activities. This working knowledge, which has been termed “vulgar competence” (Garfinkel & Wieder, 1992), is necessary in order to be able to see what is happening in the way that the members do. In other words, it allows the researcher to detect the specific accountable phenomena produced and recognized by the parties to those specialized activities. In the words of Garfinkel and Wieder:

> the unique adequacy requirement of methods is identical with the requirement that for the analyst to recognize, or identify, or follow the development of, or describe phenomena of order* in local production of coherent detail the
analyst must be vulgarly competent in the local production and reflexively natural accountability of the phenomenon of order he is “studying”.

(Garfinkel & Wieder, 1992, p. 182)

The position I take on this issue, in line with my argument in the previous chapter, is that the matter can be reasonably treated as a practical rather than epistemological one. The question of what background knowledge one requires in order to produce an adequate analysis of some recorded materials seems to me to turn on the order of phenomena that one wants to analyze. If an analyst is interested in analyzing the organization of interaction as a topic in its own right, then detailed ethnographic knowledge of the setting is probably largely unnecessary. On the other hand, if the analyst’s interest is in how the specific accountability of features of specialized settings is accomplished, then a degree of expertise in the ways of the setting will be required in order to produce adequate characterizations of events.

Since my concern in this study is with explicating the endogenous organization of basketball practice, rather than social interaction, then producing an adequate analysis depended upon my ability to recognize, in the way that the parties to the activities did themselves, specific accountable details that were being produced and oriented to in the process of accomplishing the practice sessions. Making these observable-reportable basketball-relevant details noticeable required me to possess vulgar competence in the field of practical action constitutive of Pelicans’ practice sessions. As I mentioned in the introductory chapter, as a result of my long-term involvement in basketball as both a player and a spectator, I began the study already possessing a degree of competence in the ways of basketball practice settings in general. However, in order to adequately recognize what participants were doing in Pelicans’ practice sessions specifically, it was necessary for me to augment the video recording with a degree of fieldwork.

At the beginning of my research, it was very difficult, at certain points of the practice sessions, for me to recognize exactly what was going on and to understand what the players and coaches were talking about. The reason behind the seeming impenetrability of the activities lay in the complexity of the offensive and defensive
systems that the team used to structure their play. Most of my fieldwork was thus
directed towards solving the practical puzzle of “what’s going on here” generated by
my unfamiliarity with team strategies. I conducted semi-formal interviews with two
key informants, MJBC administrator Larry and Pelicans coach Gregg, both of
whom provided me with great assistance in gaining a working knowledge of the
team’s plays. Gregg’s knowledge of the Pelicans’ systems was not only
encyclopaedic but also fine-grained, and as I peppered him with questions about
numerous aspects of the plays he patiently talked me through their workings. Larry
supplied me with an instructional DVD that the club had made for coaches and
players new to the system, and I spent hours watching the plays and diagramming
their movements in order to be able to recognize what the team was doing in specific
situations. Additionally, at opportune moments during practice sessions I engaged in
informal discussions with Gregg, the assistant coaches, and the players. These
discussions primarily consisted of me asking questions to the effect of “what’s going
now?” and “what were you doing just then?” when specific phenomena were
opaque to me.

Although the fieldwork provided me with important background knowledge about
the setting, and was therefore essential for my ability to produce an adequate analysis
of the interactions that take place in the recorded materials, the information collected
during the fieldwork functions as purely supplementary to the recordings. It is the
recordings that are at the heart of this study. This stance expresses what Heath et al.
(2010) term an analytic commitment to “the primacy of recorded data”, a position
which they elaborate as follows: “Observations and ideas gathered through
ethnography are informative, and sometimes highly insightful, but their relevance to
analysis has to be shown within the situated and interactional accomplishments of the
participants’ actions” (p. 107). This commitment, based as it is on the

50 Pseudonyms have been used for all research participants referenced in this thesis.

51 During our interviews, Gregg also spoke about general topics such as his coaching philosophies and
his vision for the team, and went into detail about how he plans coaching sessions, what he expects
from players at this level, and his sometimes-competing twin objectives of developing players’ skills
while also attempting to win basketball games.

52 Larry also educated me on the history of the MJBC and its organizational structure.
ethnomethodological emphasis on the actor’s perspective, returns the analysis always to the visibly-manifested orientations of members in situated interaction. Accordingly, the video data is the methodological fulcrum upon which my analysis, and this study as a whole, turns. The process of analysis comprises the focus of the following section.

5.6 DATA ANALYSIS

CA practitioners recommend conducting analysis of recorded materials by following a logical progression of operational steps. The phases of this analytic process are laid out in various textbooks and methods chapters dedicated to CA’s analytic techniques (a small sample of such publications includes Arminen (2005); Have (2007); Heath, Hindmarsh and Luff (2010); Hutchby and Wooffitt (2008); and Sidnell (2010, 2012a)). I adhered to the general structure advocated by these texts while making adjustments to suit the methodological framework that I have adopted (outlined in the previous chapter) which combines resources from CA, MCA and workplace studies. I describe in this section the steps through which I worked in analyzing the data.

The first phase of the data analysis process consisted of a preliminary review of the data corpus. This phase was actually begun during the data collection period: after every practice session, I viewed the video that I had recorded and noted the activities and events that had occurred during the practice on a catalogue form. This form consisted of a simple Excel spread sheet that had columns for recording the date of the practice, the specific practice activity being performed, the time code of the activity matched to the video file, and various details about the activity (e.g., how restricted it was across the range of options outlined above). A further column contained notes regarding potential phenomena and activities that might be of interest for future analysis. At the end of the data collection period, I thus had a

53 Although the actual process was somewhat more iterative (or messy) than laid out here, involving repeated back and forth movement between the various phases of analysis.
comprehensive catalogue of the events that I had captured and a list of potentially fruitful objects for inquiry.

The second phase of analysis involved what Heath et al. (2010) term a “substantive review” of the data corpus, which involves the selection of candidate themes for detailed analysis followed by the search for further instances of the selected themes. Through this process, a collection of “fragments”, or data extracts, was built up. I began sifting through the data with a general interest in how basketball practices were accomplished as situated social interaction, but without any particular substantive topic in mind. It was during this phase of the analysis that correction events began to emerge as a candidate analytic phenomenon. My attention was drawn to these events in particular for three central reasons. The first was a purely practical one: out of all the activities taking place in the data corpus, correction events constituted the phenomena most amenable for analysis. The practice sessions were made up largely of relatively “mute” activity, with players involved in performing their activities and the coaches observing. I felt that producing an analysis of purely embodied action would have been too difficult with the resources (time, equipment, and number of analysts) I had at my disposal. However, the elimination of these relatively unspoken activities as candidates for analysis did not leave correction activities as the only other option. The practice sessions also included other moments of talk. In particular, at the beginning and end of sessions, and sometimes during the sessions, the coach would bring the players into a huddle and would speak to them at length about team matters. But these episodes were less suitable for analysis than correction events due to the facts that a) they were monologues and featured very little player contribution beyond listening (as well as facial expressions, gaze and so on); and b) the monologues were concerned largely with matters extrinsic to the practice session itself, such as prior and upcoming games and tournaments (although these matters were relevant to the practice sessions, as the activities comprising the sessions were often related to the need to improve on some basketball competency that was performed poorly in a previous game or to prepare for a future opponent). Correction activities, then, comprised the most “interactional” parts of the practices, and thus seemed likely to be analytically fruitful.
The second reason for selecting corrections lay in their centrality to the organization of practice sessions. Corrections eventuate out of a central feature of these basketball practices (one perhaps shared by all instructional settings): the players did not perform their activities with unerring competence. Recurrently, activities included actions by players that were treated by the coach as displays of less than full competence. These phenomena were not (usually) grounds for “trouble”, but were oriented to, by coaching staff and players alike, as mundane and acceptable features of training, and were frequently treated as opportunities for instruction. In this regard, the organization of activities in these practice sessions clearly displays an orientation by participants to the setting as a “scene of instruction”. Treating performances of less than full competence as pedagogical resources (as opposed to, on the one hand, “letting them slide”, or on the other, treating them as occasioning some form of sanction or punishment) is a central feature of instructional and educational settings. Macbeth (2004), for instance, observes that “If knowledge (re)production is the charge of classroom instruction, the production of correct knowledge, and thus correction, unavoidably become a part of the practical and professional organization of the setting, and one of the prevailing orientations of the parties in the room” (p. 721). Instructors’ activities in such settings often focus upon evaluating learners’ performances for their competence in terms of knowledge, understanding or technical skill, and correcting displays of less-than-adequate competence. In fact, as Macbeth suggests, “correction sequences are one of the

54 “Competence” in basketball is clearly a relative term: what comprises a competent bodily performance in an under-12s team practice and in the context of an NBA team training session, for instance, will doubtless be two very different things. The relativity of competence is not, however, a problem that requires sociological or theoretical explanation, for it is something that is ongoingly dealt with during every individual practice session, during each of the session’s composite activities, and at times, with regard to the respective identities of each individual player. Competence, that is, is a members’ phenomenon. What is treated as competent, and likewise what is regarded as constituting less than full competence, for all practical purposes and on any specific occasion, is a situated, embodied accomplishment in interaction.

55 Some performances were treated by the coach as “breaches”, that is, as unacceptable displays of inadequate competence. Such events were relatively infrequent (compared to the number of acceptable inadequate performances) and occasioned displays by the coach of frustration and sometimes outright fury. Several examples of such events are considered Chapter 8.

56 Performances of inadequate competence may be a central feature of elite sports teams and sports coaching in general, rather than being limited to teams of junior elite players whose focus is on
ways in which members display and recognize that instructing is going on” (2004, p. 729). The correction activities that comprise the analytic objects of this thesis thus occupy a fundamental role in the organization of the practice sessions as a whole, and are therefore important objects of analytic inquiry.

Thirdly, as discussed in Chapter 2, correction activities can comprise “perspicuous settings” (Garfinkel & Wieder, 1992) for ethnomethodological investigation. Lyndwall and Lymer (2008) define this term as follows:

[It] refers to the idea that some situations are especially useful for making the competencies and methods implicated in the skilful and fluent mastery of a disciplinary or everyday domain visible and available for analysis. A perspicuous setting, then, would be a situation in which participants achieve a “material disclosure of practices” so that they, as well as the analyst, may “find, examine, elucidate, learn of, show, and teach” (Garfinkel & Wieder, 1992, p. 184, italics in original) these practices and the disciplinary objects they produce. (pp. 189-190)

Correction activities, designed as they are to deal specifically with issues related to the competent performance of basketball activities in ways that enable members of the setting to grasp what is required for mastery of this domain of conduct, also make those methods available for analytic scrutiny. As such, corrections are instructive in that not only can they be examined for how they are themselves organized as practical activities, but the content of the corrections can also provide insights into the competencies involved in playing basketball itself.

Once I had determined that the analysis would focus on processes of correction, I searched through the data again in order to find suitable cases of the phenomenon. I ended up with a corpus of 37 correction episodes. At this point, I began to transcribe
the correction fragments. Transcription is a fundamental aspect of doing CA (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008). The process is emphasized not only because transcripts are easily publishable in journals and shareable with audiences, though this is one reason for their production, but because the practice of transcription is itself a central phase of the data analysis process (Have, 2007). The intensive and repeated viewing of the materials that is required to transcribe an interaction thoroughly helps to focus the researcher’s attention on its organizational features. Have (2007) observes a common experience of CA researchers:

at a first hearing/viewing of a recording, the phenomena of interest to a particular researcher are not at all obviously available. It is only after repeated listening/viewing, and quite often only after repeated efforts at transcription, that certain phenomena “present themselves” to the ears, eyes, and minds of the tape’s audience. (p. 95)

My experience of transcribing the correction activities supports this claim. The process, while sometimes tedious and always time-consuming, forced me to attend repeatedly, to the activities with a level of concentration far greater than I had previously devoted to them. In the process, detailed features and patterns of interactional organization, which became the focus of the data chapters, began to emerge.

Most transcripts of talk in CA employ the transcription system devised by Jefferson in the 1960s or some variant thereof. The claim is not that this system provides a literal representation of the activities in question. As Kendon (1982) observes, no system of transcription produces “neutral” reproductions of events in the world; transcription is an inherently selective process that reflects the theoretical commitments and objectives of the analyst. In accordance with this view, CA

57 It is important to note at this point that the transcript is not regarded as a substitute for the recorded data itself. Transcripts are convenient analytic tools providing quick access to the events under consideration (Heath & Luff, 1993), and are useful given that analysis involves inspecting episodes numerous times. However, in conducting analysis, the transcript does not replace the recorded materials but is used in conjunction with them (Heritage & Atkinson, 1984).

58 See Appendix A for the CA transcription conventions used in this study.
recognizes transcripts as “translations” of naturally-occurring activity into the “language” of the analytic community (Have, 2007). CA’s basic commitment is to investigate social interaction under the assumption that there is “order at all points” (Sacks, 1995). For the analyst, then, “no order of detail in interaction can be dismissed a priori as disorderly, accidental, or irrelevant” (Heritage, 1984, p. 241), and this commitment demands the production of transcripts which enable access to fine details of interaction, including such features as overlaps, pauses, and intonation. Further, CA’s concern with the sequential organization of interaction has informed the design of the transcription system. CA transcription thus involves an attempt to “get as much as possible of the actual sound and sequential positioning of talk on the page” (Heritage & Atkinson, 1984, p. 12), and the outcome is a selective rendering of a recording of interaction which preserves certain relevant aspects of the original events.

I transcribed the talk for all 37 correction episodes, using the Transana software package. Transana allows the user to import video fragments and attach multiple transcripts, which may be time-coded so that each utterance can be precisely matched to frames of video. Further, the software provides for the organization of videos and their associated transcripts into categories and keywords, which was very useful as I began to develop a set of analytic themes. Following the detailed transcription of the verbal parts of the interaction, I started to work on transcribing the visible conduct in these fragments. Soon after I began, however, I realized that the extraordinary detail and complexity of these fragments meant that transcribing all 37 of them would take far more time than I had available for this PhD study. I selected several fragments that I had marked, during the verbal transcription stage, as containing interesting candidate features for analysis, and set to work on these. In the end, the fragments that I selected for transcription at this stage became the data set around which the analytic chapters are constructed.

While conventions for transcribing talk within CA are well-established and widely shared by practitioners, there is no single, generally accepted method for transcribing visible conduct (Heath, et al., 2010). Hepburn and Bolden (2012) delineate three different general approaches that analysts have developed to represent visible
conduct: placing transcriber’s comments noting relevant actions within the transcript; employing a specialized notational system for mapping specific features, such as gaze and gesture; and accompanying a transcript with visual representations, such as video frame grabs. Given the large number of participants involved in the activities I was transcribing, and the complexity of the embodied activities being performed, I found the easiest way of representing the visual conduct was to combine frame grabs with comments. Placing time-coded utterances, video stills and my own comments regarding visible conduct in juxtaposition enabled me to observe the interplay between talk and embodied action and proved an essential resource when I returned to the fragments to conduct detailed analysis.

As mentioned above, in the course of producing detailed transcripts of the correction episodes, I began to notice patterns in the data. As I repeatedly viewed the materials, I gradually built on and refined these initial noticings, and proceeded to group these emerging patterns of action using two distinct categorization devices. The first device grouped activities together by virtue of how they demonstrate members’ methods for dealing with the practical problems of error correction. Simply put, I observed that, in order effectively to correct player performances, the coach must first identify particular, correctable bits of embodied conduct, and must then make the problematic bit of conduct, along with the correct way of doing things, publicly available to the players. Much of the activity in the correction episodes – performed not only by the coach, but also by the players – consists of patterns of methods for dealing with these practical issues. The second device sorted correction activities in terms of how they displayed features relevant to social science themes – the topics of visual perception, instruction, embodiment and moral order. I noted occasions on which these themes appear to become oriented to by the participants as relevant for organizing their practical affairs. These two broad devices were then used to structure the analytic chapters. Chapters 6 and 7 are organized as demonstrations of the first set of practices – the methods used to deal with the dual practical problems of identifying correctables and coordinating correction activities. In these chapters, the categories from the second device – the “epistopics” (Lynch, 1993) – function as “sensitizing concepts” (Blumer, 1986): as the analyses unpack how members resolve
their practical problems, points relevant to the epistopics are also explored. Chapter 8 stands alone somewhat, as it concentrates solely on the final epistopic of moral order.

The final stage of the data analysis was to work closely through the selected fragments and their accompanying transcripts. This process involved repeated, detailed inspection of the materials in terms of their sequential, material and categorial organization. In practice, this meant following two steps. The first was to explore activities to identify: a) where in the sequential unfolding of the interaction particular utterances or bits of bodily conduct occurred b) where in the physical space of the setting particular actions occurred; and c) what categorial orientations these actions made operative and simultaneously relied upon for their intelligibility. The second step was to attempt to specify the mutually elaborative interrelations between these three organizational domains: the complex layering of sequential, categorial and material organizations reflexively oriented to by members in their production and recognition of accountable actions.

This method of working through the episodes by attending to multiple organizational levels accords with the methodological framework outlined in Chapter 4. As I noted there, my objective was to explicate the complex interrelated orientations informing the production of accountable basketball activities. Sacks (1995) sums up this analytic objective as follows:

"a given object may turn out to be put together in terms of several types of organization; in part by means of adjacency pairs and in part in some other type of organizational terms, like overall structural terms or topic organizational terms. And one wants to establish the way in which a series of different types of organizations operate in a given fragment, i.e. in a given, quotes place, on the surface. So one sort of thing that I engage in doing is to take a particular fragment apart in terms of a collection of different types of organization that may operate, in detail, in it. (p. 562)"
Overall, then, the analysis of the fragments consists of an attempt to specify, in as much details as possible, the organizational workings informing their intelligible production.

5.7 Conclusion

I conclude this chapter with a final point regarding the analytic method utilized in this study. The data chapters are each structured around one or more “single case analysis” of data fragments (Sally Hester & Hester, 2010; Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998; Schegloff, 1987, 1988), with other relevant fragments being introduced at opportune times in these chapters to enable explication of specific analytic or thematic points. Schegloff (1987) describes the technique of analyzing single cases as one mode of analysis among several within conversation analysis. Perhaps the predominant mode of data analysis in CA is the practice of building, and systematically analyzing, a collection of data fragments pertaining to a single phenomenon of interest in order to explicate the “generic, context-independent properties” (Sidnell, 2012a, p. 78) of the phenomenon. This technique is primarily geared toward the production of generalizable findings about previously-unknown recurrent features of social interaction. In contrast to the analysis of collections, single case analysis involves unpacking singular occasions of social interaction to explicate a range of phenomena used by members in assembling the sense of the spate of interaction. Such analyses are not necessarily focused on producing previously unknown findings. As an analytic technique, single case analyses are “exercises” in which “the resources of past work on a range of phenomena and organizational domains in talk-in-interaction are brought to bear on the analytic explication of a single fragment of talk” (Schegloff, 1987, p. 101).

As I have made clear in previous chapters, my primary interest in analyzing recordings of basketball activities does not lie in adding to the CA corpus of “generic, context-free properties” of social interaction. Rather, my interests are the substantive one of explicating the “missing whatness” of sporting activity (absent from the conventional sociological corpus), and the methodological one of attempting to combine resources provided by CA, MCA and workplace studies. The
technique of single case analysis, with its ability to provide rich descriptions of singular events, appears to mesh well with these interests, and it is for this reason that I elected to employ this mode rather than work with collections. The outcome of this analytic process comprises the next three chapters of this thesis.
Chapter 6: The situated observational work of basketball coaching

6.1 Introduction: The coaching problem of locating correctables

A central and recurrent feature of the organization of the basketball training sessions that I observed and recorded for this study was the coach’s correction of players’ bodily performances. Generally speaking, the presence of evaluations and corrections of actions in a setting of social interaction is an indication that parties may be orienting to the instructional nature of that setting: as Macbeth (2004) asserts, “If knowledge (re)production is the charge of classroom instruction, the production of correct knowledge, and thus correction, unavoidably become a part of the practical and professional organization of the setting, and one of the prevailing orientations of the parties in the room” (p. 721). The recurrence of sequences involving the correction of less-than-adequate player performances during Pelicans practice sessions is one of the features that constitute these sessions as sites of instruction, differentiating them from informal pick-up basketball games. These insights bring us to the current chapter’s purpose, which lies in exploring a specific aspect of the accomplishment of instructional activities in basketball practice sessions: the coach’s methods of visually identifying correctable aspects of player performances during his observation of practice activities. In taking up this focus, the chapter connects the thematic topic of instruction to the topics of visual perception and embodiment (themes outlined in Chapter 2). It seeks to demonstrate that the professional vision (Goodwin, 1994) utilized by the coach to identify relevant absences of player competencies – the observations that serve as resources for determining what players know, what skills they possess, and what they need instruction in – involves methods

59 What constitutes an adequate performance in basketball training is clearly a relative term: adequacy in an under-12s team practice and in the context of an NBA team training session, for instance, will doubtless be two very different things. The relativity of competence is not, however, a problem that requires sociological or theoretical explanation, for it is something that is ongoingly dealt with during every individual practice session, during each of the session’s composite activities, and at times, with regard to the respective identities of each individual player. Competence is, that is, a members’ phenomenon. What is treated as competent, and likewise what is regarded as less-than-competent, for all practical purposes and on any specific occasion, is a situated, embodied accomplishment in interaction.
of situating players’ embodied displays of conduct within complex sequential, spatial and categorial organizations of action. These visual practices structure the complex perceptual field comprised of players’ bodies and court markings into phenomena relevant to the coach’s current task. In providing the coach with essential information about players’ competencies with regard to specific, relevant skills, his practices of visually assessing player performances are consequential for how the activities, and thus the practice sessions as a whole, unfold as social events. Examining these observational practices therefore comprises an important part of the analytic task of describing the social organization of basketball practice activities.

Ethnomethodological and conversation analytic studies of instructional settings, primarily classroom ones, have taken up the task of explicating the interactional foundations of instructional work. A basic interactional resource that has been identified and detailed in these studies is the three-turn initiation-response-evaluation (IRE) sequence, which consists, in its most simple form, of a) an instructor producing an action (commonly a question) designed to elicit information from a novice; b) a novice providing a response; and c) the instructor then providing feedback on the adequacy of that response (Heap, 1985; Lee, 2007; Macbeth, 2003, 2004; McHoul, 1978; Mehan, 1979). Participants’ orientation to this device is a crucial aspect of the social organization of classroom lessons. Macbeth (2003) argues that the reason the IRE sequence is so central to instructional settings lies in its utility for making knowledge public and witnessable. Heap (1985) echoes Macbeth’s point, asserting that IRE sequences operate as a “machinery” for producing visible knowledge. An instructor’s elicitation in the first turn, through requiring a novice’s response, instantiates a sequential environment within which that response will be analyzed for how it displays the novice’s knowledge. Further, in the third turn position, the instructor’s evaluation can publicly certify the novice’s utterance as constituting knowledge, in and for this occasion. Alternatively, the instructor can use this third turn slot to mark the novice’s response as being somehow inadequate. As Lee (2007) argues, in employing the IRE device the teacher “carries out complex analytic work, estimating what students know and what they do not know… [and] finding and repairing what becomes problematic in the second turns” (p. 207). Studies examining the use of the IRE sequence have demonstrated that the
possibilities for assessing and correcting novices’ displays of competency and knowledge made available by this structure mean that it has immense practical import for the organization and trajectory of instructional activities.

The ethnomethodological and conversation analytic findings regarding the situated practices involved in assessing and producing knowledge in classroom settings provide a backdrop for my analysis of the organization of instruction in basketball practice sessions. In most classroom lessons, as Heap (1985) has detailed, the processes through which instructors and novices jointly “install” knowledge in the room (Macbeth, 2003) are primarily discursive. In standard classroom lessons, whose work can be glossed as “talking through a subject in such a way that it can be learned” (Sharrock & Anderson, 1982, p. 171), the displays of competency that are assessed and corrected by the teacher tend to be verbal productions. However, interesting questions arise when considering the interactional practices and resources through which novices are instructed in skills that are primarily of a manual, rather than discursive, nature.

Such questions comprise a central focus of this thesis. The instructional activities investigated in this study involve such the development of such embodied competencies as learning to see and respond to basketball-relevant phenomena amidst the arrangements constituted by multiple players’ bodies on the court; learning to relocate to appropriate court locations at the right moment; learning to move one’s body in competent ways and at adequate speeds; learning to link planned and drilled play sequences to unfolding, contingent trajectories of action; and so on. A player’s mastery of these skills depends upon their possession and deployment of a range of physical competencies, such as motor coordination, physical fitness and athleticism, visual perception, and technical proficiency in specific bodily movements. Given the embodied nature of these skills, it is logical that their mastery be treated as a matter to be assessed primarily through the observation of players’ embodied demonstrations, rather than something to be evaluated via the elicitation of discursive formulations. The central analytic question that arises from this observation is what organizational resources are employed during practice activities
in order to enable the coach to assess the adequacy of players’ displays of relevant basketball skills.

Before this chapter moves on to address this question via empirical analysis, a further feature of the bodily performances investigated in this study requires discussion, as it distinguishes the basketball activities considered here from some other manual activities whose instruction has been investigated in ethnomethodological research. In an example of such research, Lindwall and Ekstrom (2012) analyze an episode of instructional activity occurring during a class in which students are being taught to crochet chain stitches. In the episode in question, the teacher physically demonstrates to her students how to perform the technique, instructs them to replicate the technique, and then assesses and corrects their performances. The interactional structure of this instructional activity bears similarity to the IRE device, with an observable relation of adjacency holding between the initiation, response, and evaluation turns of the sequence. The difference between the instruction sequence occurring in this lesson and those in classroom settings is primarily one of modality. In particular, the students’ responses to the teacher’s elicitation consist of embodied, rather than verbal, actions. By use of this structure, then, the teacher is provided with organizational resources to see and assess the students’ embodied activities, which are placed adjacent to her request, as responses to that request.

In contrast to Lindwall and Ekstrom’s crochet example, the embodied performances that provide evidence of players’ mastery of basketball competencies are rarely available as stand-alone actions, accomplished by individual players in turns occurring immediately subsequent to an instructor’s elicitations. Rather, players’ actions in these activities take place within complex spatial, sequential and categorial contexts which themselves unfold as the activity progresses. This feature is related to the fact that the practice activities I explore in this study are team-based, and as such, are primarily intended to develop players’ abilities to read and react to complex situations, apply the team’s offensive and defensive principles in real-time, and effectively coordinate actions as a unit (rather than being primarily concerned with developing basic individual skills such as shooting and dribbling).
Team-based activities involve the actions of multiple players who inhabit different sets of roles, responsibilities, and objectives. Indeed, in the case of oppositional team-based activities, where teams of players are pitted against one another, players’ objectives are often conflicting. The accomplishment of such activities requires players to both coordinate their actions with those of their teammates, and predict and/or respond to the moves of their opposite numbers. It is in and through these temporally-unfolding sequences of coordinated and interlocking activity that contexts of action contingently emerge, and it is within these contingently emergent contexts that players’ demonstrations of competency are looked for, assessed, and corrected by the coach. The fundamental analytic point to be made here is that unlike more simple individual actions, player performances during team-based activities are analyzed for their adequacy against a background context comprised of not only the coach’s elicitations, but also the emergent field of action jointly assembled by the multiple parties to the activity.

Since what a competent player performance consists of depends upon the contextual environment within which that performance occurs, assessing and correcting actions rests upon the coach’s “work” of observing the player’s action against its relevant background context and establishing a disjuncture between what the player does and what they ought to do in that situation. The coach’s observation of the activity performances thus involves a complex visual/analytic search for correctable aspects of players’ bodily conduct. With this in mind, the rest of this chapter seeks to elaborate this abstract description of the coach’s “search for correctables” by working through specific cases of coaching corrections and attempting to explicate some of the organizational resources used to locate actual correctable actions in interaction.

\[60\text{With that context, as outlined above, being partially comprised of the temporally unfolding joint actions of multiple participants.}\]
6.2 “YOU DON’T KNOW WHERE YOUR GUY IS”: OBSERVING A CORRECTABLE

The correction example that comprises the central object of analysis for this chapter is taken from a practice activity that lasted about half an hour, referred to as a “shell drill”. To allow readers unacquainted with basketball practice activities to adequately grasp what happens in the correction sequence, I will briefly outline the activity. The drill pits a team of four defensive players against a four-player offensive team, and is intended to practice the team’s system of defensive rotation. In order to focus on this particular aspect of performance, the drill is governed by a set of rules that overlay the standard rules of basketball and serve to restrict players’ options to a limited subset of possible basketball actions. Each drill performance consists of two separate phases. During the first phase, the offensive players pass the ball to one another, with each pass recipient holding the ball for one second before moving it on. Figure 6-1 shows the shell drill set-up (blue circles designate offensive players, red ones defenders). In order to easily represent court spacing and movement, I have used diagramming software developed for coaches (which is itself modelled on the traditional chalk or dry-erase strategy boards used by coaches to draw up plays).

Each time an offensive player passes the ball to a teammate, the defensive players must reposition themselves into appropriate spots as designated by the team’s rotation rules. For instance, if the ball moves to the left wing, the players on the right side must move away from their men and drop into the middle of the court to get into “help” position. Figure 6-2 illustrates this situation (arrows indicate player movement). The ball has been passed to the left wing offensive player (blue #4), and
the two defenders on the right side of the court (red #2 and #3) have repositioned into the middle, into help position. The left high defender (red #1), meanwhile, stays home on his man, observing the “one pass away” rule, which could be worded: “if your man is one pass away from the ball-handler, do not move off him into help position”.

![Figure 6-2: The defence adjusts as the ball moves](image)

The momentary pause between passes allows the defensive players a chance to practice getting into correct position before the ball moves on and a new set of positions must be established. After a period of the ball moving around the perimeter and the defensive players adjusting to each ball movement, the coach will signal the offensive players (either by blowing on the whistle or calling “drive”) to move into the drill’s second phase. Upon the coach’s signal, the ball should move to a wing player (if it is not already in the hands of one), and the wing player should make a drive\(^{61}\) toward the baseline\(^{62}\). Figure 6-3 illustrates this stage (blue #3 is the driving player).

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\(^{61}\) An attacking move to the basket made while dribbling the ball.

\(^{62}\) The out of bounds line at each end of the court.
As the player with the ball attacks the basket, the offensive wing player on the opposite side of the court (blue #4) must make a cut\(^{63}\) toward the basket. The driving player must then try to pass him the ball in scoring position (see Figure 6-4).

As the offensive players make their moves, the defence has to respond. In order to describe this next stage, it will help if I first clarify some terms used to designate geographical features of the basketball court. Areas of the court are frequently referred to by the designators “weak side” and “strong side”. Imagine the court is bisected by a vertical line: the strong side would be the half of the court in which the ball is currently located, and the weak side the opposite half (see Figure 6-5).

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\(^{63}\) A quick move to a new court position made by an offensive player without the ball.
Additionally, the designators “low” and “high” are used to refer to sections of the half court – roughly speaking, the respective areas below and above the free throw line. Combined, two sets of designators partition the half court into four quadrants, as illustrated in Figure 6-6.

Returning now to the shell drill, as the offensive players make their respective moves, the defensive players must fulfill the responsibilities accorded them by virtue of their floor positions. The weak side low defender (red #4) must move into position alongside the on-ball defender (red #3) in order to help close off the driver’s path to the basket (see Figure 6-7).
Simultaneously, the weak side high defender (red #2) must drop down into help position deep under the basket, in order to cut off (and ideally steal) the pass made by the driving player to his cutting teammate. This movement is illustrated in Figure 6-8.

In an adequate performance of the drill, the defensive players will react to the offensive players’ moves quickly and correctly, rotating into the right spots and cutting off the pass, or at least making it very difficult.

The correction sequence analyzed in this chapter occurs early in the shell drill activity, after only a few drill performances have been completed. In the

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64 This correction sequence, along with the drill performance that precipitates it, is available for viewing as a video file on the accompanying disc, where it is labeled “Clip 6.1”. To enable the still
performance that immediately precedes (and occasions) the correction, Mike, the offensive player on the left wing, drives baseline following Gregg’s whistle. As he gets closer to the basket, Mike jumps, preparing to pass the ball to his teammate Chris, who has stepped in toward the basket. Jerome (in the yellow singlet) is the weak side high defender on this occasion (red #2 in Figure 6-8), and he drops down toward the baseline to cut off the pass. Figure 6-9 shows the organization of the court at the moment just before Mike makes the pass.

*Figure 6-9: Still from Clip 6.1, at 00:22.5. As Mike, driving from the wing, looks to make the pass to his teammate Chris, defender Jerome drops down to the baseline to cut it off*

The pass is made, and Chris easily catches the ball in scoring position (see Figure 6-10). Although Chris misses the close-range shot, the damage has been done – the defence has failed to perform adequately its task of cutting off the passing lane.

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images reproduced in this chapter to be matched to the video files from which they have been extracted, I have noted the point in the video clip (in the format minutes:seconds.tenths of a second) at which they occurred.
The transcript below represents the talk occurring during the correction sequence that immediately follows this drill performance.

**Transcript of Clip 6.1**

1 Gregg: You’re watching the ball (0.3) but you don’t know
2 where your guy is.
3 (0.6)
4 Gregg: You gotta see both at the same time (0.3) so if he makes
5 a move in you gotta pick him up (.) he is the only
6 target in the middle.
7 (0.4)
8 Gregg: One more. (.) Let’s go

Gregg’s correctional talk in this transcript (lines 1-5) is directed to Jerome. This is evidenced by Gregg’s visual and gestural orientation toward Jerome, visible in Figure 6-11 (which depicts the moment at which Gregg utters the word “both” (line 3)).
This brief correction provides an opportunity to begin to unpack the methods involved in seeing a drill performance as an accountably correctable event. As will be demonstrated, Gregg’s ability to see the event in this way relies on his orientation to both the categorial and the sequential organization of the preceding event, and also to a practical geography of the basketball court. The remainder of this chapter is concerned with working through this event and specifying a set of visual/analytic procedures that, it is argued, the coach uses in order to be able to see and describe Jerome’s conduct as constituting a relevant error.

6.3 OMNIRELEVANT DEVICES AS RESOURCES FOR LOCATING CORRECTABLES

A first, very basic resource for seeing this error is provided by the respective membership categories of the participants. Throughout the activities occurring during the team’s practice sessions, the participants consistently organize their conduct in ways that display an orientation to the categories and “Pelicans players”. These two categories are constituents of the collection or membership categorization device (MCD) “parties to a Pelicans practice”, which is an example of a type of device Sacks (1995) termed a “standardized relational pair” (SRP) of categories. “Pelicans

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65 I use the plural form here as the team has three coaches: Gregg, who is the head coach, and two assistant coaches. As the assistant coaches do not feature in any of the analyses in this study, I generally refer to Gregg as just “the coach”.
coaches” and “Pelicans players” are not just “any” two types of person one might find in a basketball practice, but are a pair of categories that are commonsensically understood to “go together” in a similar way to other paired categories such as “parent-child”, “friend-friend” and “doctor-patient”. As a first layer of analysis, this section develops the claim that the “parties to a Pelicans practice” device functions, during these practice sessions, not only as an SRP but as a type of categorization device that Sacks (1995) termed “omnirelevant”.

To begin with, it bears reiterating that membership categories play a highly consequential role in the organization of social life due to their “inference-richness”: categories are the “store-house” for the common-sense knowledge that people possess about what persons are like and what they are likely to do (Schegloff, 2007b). When an individual is observed to be an incumbent of a given category, what is known about the category may be presumed to be so about that individual. A further aspect of the common-sense knowledge possessed by members is that many activities are (as discussed in Chapter 4) “category-bound” (Sacks, 1974). Such activities are taken to be expectably done by incumbents of particular categories. For instance, placing someone under arrest is an activity conventionally category-bound to the membership category “police officer”66. While Sacks’ discussion of features that members conventionally treat as being bound to membership categories was limited to category-bound activities, subsequent analysts have expanded upon his original insights, arguing that a range of other category-bound predicates, such as rights, obligations, knowledge, and competencies are also conventionally imputed to people on the basis of their category memberships (Stephen Hester & Eglin, 1997a; Jayyusi, 1984; Watson, 1978).

Standardized relational pairs are an important locus of category-bound predicates (Watson, 2009a). In this case, the category pair “Pelicans coaches” and “Pelicans players”, as gathered together in the local context of a Pelicans practice session, may be seen as organized in terms of interlocking category-bound predicates which

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66 It is important to note that this is an empirical observation about common-sense knowledge in a particular social context, not an ontological assertion about the relationship between a category and an activity.
provide for the distribution of relevant and expectable (as well as prohibited) actions to the members of each of these categories. The “player” – “coach” SRP also works to structure the rights and obligations that incumbents of each of these categories have, both toward members of the paired category and to other members of their own category. Members’ orientations to these predicates contribute to the ways in which they construct their own actions and recognize the actions of their co-participants. Further, category-bound predicates have significance for the situated identification of visible events due to the operation of what Sacks (1974) called the viewer’s maxim. Through the use of this maxim, seeing someone performing an action conventionally bound to a member of a particular category can enable us to see the actor as a member of that category.

This discussion of categories, collections, predicates and rules should not be taken to imply that a given assemblage of categories and predicates just “exists” as a supra-contextual phenomenon, automatically shaping members’ understandings of actions and persons. In a different setting, the categories “Pelicans coaches” and “Pelicans players” could easily be collected in devices other than the “parties to a Pelicans practice” device, and when placed in a different device the categories could generate very different sets of relevancies. Consider, for example, the different predicates and relationships that might be bound to the category “Pelicans coach” if it were placed alongside “radio show host” in the collection “parties to a radio interview”. Such predicates might then include answering the host’s questions, praising the players, offering bits of “behind the scenes” information about the team, and respectfully offering his opinions about rival teams. Assembling categories into collections and tying predicates to the collected categories requires members’ situated, practical reasoning work, work that occurs in relation to the practical and contextual specificities of any given occasion of action. As such, any assemblage of categories and predicates is itself a “contextually-assembled configuration” (Watson, 2009a, p. 43). This understanding of categorization as a contextually assembled matter is crucial to maintaining an ethnomethodological conception of membership categorization. This conception lies in contrast to a decontextualized model in which

67 Discussed in Chapter 4.
cultural categories and collections are reified as cultural knowledge or “meanings” and used as an explanation for cultural members’ talk and action (Stephen Hester & Eglin, 1997b). Ethnomethodological membership categorization analysis refuses to see devices, categories and predicates as possessing self-contained meanings. Rather, it regards their orderliness as something reflexively constituted in and through the particular occasions of their use.

Sacks (1995) asserted that some devices may be omnirelevant for an interaction in that a) they consist of categories that are always potentially applicable during that interaction; and b) when such devices are appropriately invoked, they have authority over other devices that may be in operation in the setting. Omnirelevant devices operate at the level of the overall interaction - as opposed to, for instance, devices that operate only for the duration of a single sequence, such as a “question”. The categories of “questioner” and “answerer” generated by this device remain relevant only until that sequence comes to an end. Although omnirelevant devices are not necessarily operative at all times during the interaction, when invoked, they become relevant for the organization of action. At any sequential point in the interaction, a party may deploy the omnirelevant device as an assumed-to-be-known-in-common background context constituting “who we are and what we are doing”:

> Things may be going along, the device isn’t being used; at some point something happens which makes it appropriate, and it’s used. And when it is used, it’s the controlling device, i.e., there is no way of excluding its operation when relevant. (Sacks, 1995, Vol. 1, p. 314)

In such circumstances, the sequential consequentiality of the device comes to the fore. When actors invoke the omnirelevant device by performing actions bound to their category membership under the device, other actors, as incumbents of other categories under that device, may have category-bound obligations to perform sequentially-relevant next actions.

Sacks (1995) suggests that one way in which an analyst may claim evidence for a device’s omnirelevance to some interactional setting is by demonstrating, firstly, that
there are certain actions that need to be accomplished in that setting. That is, one may show that there is an underlying basis to the interaction in terms of who the parties are in relation to one another and why they are engaged in some interaction (Fitzgerald, et al., 2009). Secondly, the analyst needs to show that these actions rely for their intelligibility on the actor’s membership of a category within the device. In Sacks’ (1995) terms: “the sheer seeing that something being done is intended to be such-and-such an action, or that that observable action is legitimate, may involve reference to that categorical membership” (p. 594). Thus, if the necessary action depends for its intelligibility on the actor’s incumbency of some category under some device, then this can provide grounds for the analyst to claim that members are oriented to the device as omnirelevant for the interaction.

There are a number of actions that must be performed during Pelicans practice sessions in order for these events to progress “normally”. Many of these are predicates of the category “coach”, for instance: starting the practice sessions and announcing the closure of the sessions; initiating and ending individual activities within the sessions; organizing players into temporary teams for individual activities; explaining activities prior to performances; correcting and evaluating players’ performances, often interrupting activities to do so; punishing players for poor or lazy performances; and managing the temporal structure of the practice session, including allocating periods for warm-ups and stretching and for drinks breaks. The point is that the talk and conduct used to effect these actions would in many cases not be intelligible as the action it is (to the participants or the analyst) without orienting to the device “parties to a Pelicans practice” as a background context constituting “who the parties are and what they are doing”. To flesh out this claim, I briefly consider a pair of fragments, both taken from different Pelicans practice sessions to the one during which Clip 6.1 occurred. These bits of interaction serve to illuminate members’ orientations to this device.

Transcript of Clip 6.2

1. Gregg: Stop (0.2) Ross very go:od,(0.3) but– (1.1) come here
In this fragment, Gregg is correcting Ross’s performance of a “screen and roll” drill, and is treating Ross’s movement away from his position under the basket as a correctable action. The features of importance for my purposes here occur in lines 4, 5 and 6 (marked by arrows). Firstly, Gregg’s question in line 4 is not immediately answered, but is followed by a 1.5 second period of silence. During this period, Gregg posts up under the basket, and then moves towards the sideline (Figure 6-12).

Gregg’s movement from the post position out toward the sideline, captured in the stills above, is understandable both as comprising the referent of his deictic...

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68 An abbreviation of “defence”.

69 To post up, a player establishes position in or near the key, turns their back to the basket, and faces a teammate who has the ball, ready to receive a pass from them.
expression “this” that immediately precedes it (line 4), and as a bodily quote (Keevallik, 2010) which re-enacts Ross’s correctable action in the previous drill performance. It is clear that Gregg’s action is neither a) a bodily quote of some other player; b) a reproduction of an action done by Ross on some occasion other than the previous drill performance; c) a demonstration of a commendable action produced by Ross; nor d) an action of which Gregg is the original author. It is clearly recognizable as a bodily quote of just that action performed by Ross in the play immediately prior to the correction. Further, the “question” Gregg poses Ross in line 4 is not hearable as a genuine inquiry as to the reason for the necessity of Ross’ action. Rather, it works both as a rhetorical device used to assert that “we” don’t, in fact, need “this”\textsuperscript{70}, and as a pointer marking Gregg’s upcoming demonstration.

The fact that Gregg’s utterance is understood in this way is displayed in Ross’s response (line 6). Firstly, Ross delays the production of his turn following Gregg’s utterance, enabling Gregg to perform the demonstration which he has prefigured in his utterance. Secondly, when Ross’s response does come, its grammatical form is constructed such that it is not suitable as a response to a why-question. It is structured as a display of understanding, with an agreement token (“Yeah”) plus an elaboration to indicate what he understood the problematic component of his action to be (“moving”).

The fact that these actions are accountable in this way (both to the participants and to sociological analysis) relies on a shared orientation to the fact that they occur in the context of a correction sequence, a structured type of event (usually) positioned immediately following a problematic performance during practice sessions. The parties orient to the held-in-common knowledge that correction sequences frequently refer back to and attempt to deal with a just-prior problem and often include demonstrations of incorrect performances. It is as part of a correction sequence that Gregg’s action is intelligible as a bodily quote, and it is in this context that his utterance is hearable as negative assessment of Ross’ action, rather than a question.

\textsuperscript{70} See the discussion on “reverse polarity questions” in Chapter 8 for further elaboration of this type of action.
In turn, the availability of this cluster of action as a correction sequence, and as a legitimate and effective one, depends on the members’ orientation to the omnirelevant device “parties to a Pelicans practice” and the two relationally-paired categories that it collects. The held-in-common knowledge that the predicate of correcting players’ performances is tied to the category of “Pelicans coach” in this setting is essential to the intelligibility of Gregg’s utterance here. One could imagine, for instance, the meaning of the utterance “Why do we need this?” and subsequent demonstration being understood very differently were it, say, one of the players’ parents (some of whom regularly attend practice sessions) that was producing the turn (or, on the other hand, if Gregg posed the question to a parent rather than a player!). Gregg’s membership of the “Pelicans coach” category is constitutive of the intelligibility of his both his embodied action and his utterance. At the same time, understanding his action as a negative assessment of a player’s performance reflexively contributes to the sense of the actors as members of the “Pelicans coach” and “Pelicans players” categories, respectively. In producing these actions, the participants display an understanding of who they are in relation to one another for this encounter, and of the underlying reason for the interaction.

The following fragment, taken from still another practice session, provides further support for the claimed omnirelevance of the “parties to a Pelicans practice” device.

Transcript of Clip 6.3

1 Gregg: ((Whistleblow x2))
2               (0.3)
3 Gregg: ((Walking towards Lance, lifts up his own sweatshirt, looks at his t-shirt, and pulls sweatshirt back down. Picks up ball))

71 This is not to imply that the fact that the actions are understandable as “just these” actions is solely due to the categorial membership of the participants. For instance, the sequential position in which Gregg’s bodily movement occurs (directly after the players’ drill performance, and directly after the word “this”) as well as the spatial location of the action (Gregg goes to exactly the spot on the floor that Ross occupied when he made his move) also contribute to making Gregg’s action understandable as a bodily quote. These aspects will be considered in detail throughout this thesis. For now, though, it is adequate to point out that categories form an essential ingredient in the overall relational configuration that constitutes the background context for the action’s intelligibility.
In line 6, responding to Lance picking up the ball after crossing the half-court line (an error made repeatedly, by several different players), Gregg demands a black top (the colour of the singlet Lance’s team is wearing) and commands Lance to leave the floor. In different circumstances, Gregg’s talk might be heard first and foremost as announcing a change in the practice game’s player personnel, establishing Gregg as a replacement for Lance. Gregg’s utterance here, however, is hearable as a rebuke (and a particularly severe one) rather than as genuinely effecting a change of this nature. That the utterance is hearable as a rebuke depends on a background orientation to the “parties to a Pelicans practice” device. Physically playing in these sorts of games is an activity bound to the category “Pelicans players”, and is expressly not something that the coach does. The fact that actually playing in this game is not an option for Gregg means that his utterance is not heard as expressing his genuine intention to replace Lance, but rather conveys his exasperation at the players’ performance (and its treatment as a rebuke rather than a declaration of intention is evident in Lance’s response: he refrains from following Gregg’s command to “fuck off”). In a similar way to the talk and conduct in Clip 6.2, the intelligibility of the utterance as an action is constituted by the omnirelevant device’s operation, and the categorial environment it establishes has clear sequential implications for the participants’ conduct. For
instance, leaving the court was not a relevant next action for Lance in this interaction.\footnote{Nor, however, was offering an explanation for his conduct, as evidenced in Gregg’s treatment of Lance’s utterance as an “excuse”. This event will be considered in greater detail in Chapter 8.}

The preceding examples have sought to demonstrate that the “parties to a Pelicans practice” device is omnirelevant to this setting and functions as a members’ resource for establishing and maintaining the contextual nature of the interaction. The discussion of omnirelevance has suggested that many of the actions and events taking place in the setting may rely on the use of the device for their intelligibility. Bringing these insights to bear on the correction event in Clip 6.1, the initial point can now be made that Gregg’s identification of Jerome’s correctable action depends upon Gregg’s orientation to the underlying basis of who the parties are to one another and what they are doing there. The “parties to a Pelicans practice” device, its constituent categories, and their respective predicates and relational features are an essential resource in establishing the sense of this action.

This first layer of analysis has generated a very basic observation about some of the necessary background context oriented to in recognizing any bit of action as a correctable event. However, the analysis has not yet provided substantial insight into how the singular event in question – Jerome’s conduct in this drill performance – was found to be a correctable. Nor has it shed any light on how the correctable is given a specific sense as distinct from other correctables. The “parties to a Pelicans practice” device is thus a necessary, but not sufficient, resource for locating correctables in the midst of practice activities. Following on from this discussion, the next section seeks to develop the analysis of this case by adding in some further layers of categorial orientation that provide resources for distinguishing correctables in finer detail than the very general mechanism outlined so far.
6.4 Colour team categories and turn-generated categories

As mentioned above, the fact that the categories “Pelicans coach” and “Pelicans players” are omnirelevant in the sessions is not to say they are the only categories used or usable at any moment during the practice. It means, rather, that they stand as a background that may be invoked and made relevant at any time during practice sessions. In addition to this device, further identity categories may become invoked as relevant at various times within the on-going activity. The idea of a dynamic flow of categorical relevancies suggests that rather than treating context as a fixed “frame” surrounding an interaction, “the local environment of interaction may be usefully approached as one involving layers of context, with these layers embedded within the flow of interaction” (Fitzgerald & Housley, 2002, p. 585). Different layers or sets of categories, once deployed in interaction, serve to activate “alternative bodies of common sense knowledge, inference, perception, etc., as relevant to conduct and understanding in the situation, and of the situation” (Schegloff, 2007b, p. 469). Over the course of a Pelicans practice session, a variety of different practice activities are performed. Depending on the nature of a given activity, different sets of membership categories may be operationalized and layered over one another. Accordingly, this section introduces two categorization devices that operate at the level of the activity (the shell drill) and describes how they function as interlocking resources for the organization of action within this drill.

During the initiation phase that precedes the beginning of actual performances of the shell drill, Gregg divides the players into three teams of four: “black team”, “red team” and “skins team”.

**Table 6-1: Colour team categories**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Colour team categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>shell drill</td>
<td>“black team” / “red team” / “skins team”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As might be expected, given the fact that players wear reversible singlets (black on one side, red on the other) to these practices, these colour categories are not unique to the shell drill but form basic categories for team-based activities (as opposed to individual or non-team based group drills). Even when colour teams are
operationalized as a category device in other activities, however, they may be used differently to the way in which they function in this drill. For instance, there may be only two teams, rather than three. Or, each team may have three players, or five, rather than four. Further, depending on the drill, teams may have substitutes who take the place of other members of that team at given intervals. Colour teams thus operate as a flexible device that can be configured to suit the purposes at hand and then remain operable over the course of an activity. They may even persist beyond the individual activity for which they are established – the same colour teams may be imported directly into a new activity.

Alongside these colour team categories sits a second set of categories that are of a somewhat different order. While the team selection process during the initiation phase of the shell drill puts in place the set of colour team categories that remain relevant for the overall activity, the turn-by-turn organization of the drill also functions to generate a set of locally-relevant categories. To develop this point I draw on Watson’s (1997) reflections on the notion of turn-generated categories. Watson’s work has involved an attempt to overcome the ‘dualism’ in ethnomethodology and conversation analysis (discussed in Chapter 4) which is commonly expressed in the practice of attributing analytic precedence either to the sequential aspects of interaction (which has become the central focus of contemporary CA) or to membership categorization practices (Watson, 1997). Part of Watson’s project has involved highlighting the fact that, in interaction, participants’ intelligible production and recognition of an action or utterance is demonstrably both sequential and categorical, involving a “back-and-forth” reflexive consultation of the two aspects. In developing his argument about how the relation between category and sequence may be realized in interaction, Watson draws on Sacks’ lecture on the “caller” – “called” category pair in telephone conversations. In this lecture, Sacks shows how this category pair comprises “identities for conversation” in that the categories of “caller” and “called”, though sequentially embedded and generated by the turn-taking organization of the activity of a telephone call, possess similar characteristics to membership (or social) categories (Fitzgerald & Housley, 2002). As Sacks (1995) puts it, “[a] thing that called can hardly ever get out from under is that they are the called and that the other is the caller, and that there are all kinds of things affiliated
with that” (Vol. II, p. 163). The affiliated “things” Watson mentions are predicates which are normatively bound to each of the two categories. “caller”, for instance, may have the obligation to find possible points at which to offer the option toward ending the conversation, orienting to the fact that they may have taken “called” away from some other activity through producing utterances acknowledging this possibility (such as “I’d better let you go”). “called”, on the other hand, possesses alternative techniques for closing oriented to the fact that they are the recipient of the call. For instance, “this is costing you a lot of money” – or perhaps nowadays “You must be running out of minutes”. These respective techniques may be seen as categorically-bound to the categories “caller” and “called”. The categorically-relevant selection of alternative sequence types by “caller” and “called” illustrates “the intricate and inextricable interweaving of categorical and sequential aspects of the talk” (Watson, 1997, p. 69).

Watson’s observations regarding turn-generated categories provide a valuable resource for unpacking the organization of action in the shell drill. The turn structure of this activity is based on the one operative in real basketball games, during which possession of the ball alternates between two teams. This turn-by-turn structure functions to generate a relational pair of categories, “offence” and “defence”. Each of these turn-generated categories must always be filled by one of the teams involved in the game in order for a basketball game to function at all, and rules govern when the teams switch from one category to the other (for example, after a made basket or a turnover). Like the colour categories discussed above, this generic turn-taking system is flexible and can be modified to fit the circumstances and purposes of specific drills and activities. In the case of the shell drill, there are two particular conditions affecting the way the generic turn-taking system is configured: a) there are three (colour) teams involved in the drill; and b) the purpose of the drill is to practice the team’s defensive rotation. The turn-taking system needs to be modified somewhat to accommodate these features. This is done through two mechanisms. Firstly, the coach introduces a third turn-generated category. This category is not explicitly named, but I will refer to it here as “observers”.
TABLE 6-2: TURN-GENERATED CATEGORIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Turn-generated categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>shell drill</td>
<td>“offence” / “defence” / “observers”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Secondly, he configures the rules governing colour teams’ transition from one turn-generated category to another in a way that will allow teams to have several turns at playing defence in a row. Modifying the transition rules is not treated as something that will happen automatically. In the initiation phase at the beginning of the drill (see Transcript 6.5), Gregg explicitly formulates a policy that serves to “map”73 the colour teams onto turn-generated categories and to organize the teams’ transition between them. Even before he tells the players what they will be doing in the drill, Gregg maps “skins team” onto “offence”, maps “red team” to “defence”, and tells “black team” they will be observing to begin. The players take up appropriate positions on the floor, and Gregg follows with an instructional sequence outlining the parameters of the drill. Once this is complete, and before he initiates the first drill performance, Gregg formulates a “rotational policy” as follows: each team plays defence three times, then defence steps out of the drill, offence becomes defence, and the observing group becomes offence. The “colour teams” device and the turn-generated categories are thus oriented to as interlocking resources used in organizing the activities. A given player’s incumbency of a particular colour team, once established at the outset, remains consistent for the duration of the drill, whereas their membership of a turn-generated category varies as the drill unfolds sequentially.

Over the course of the drill, the players are expected to monitor the ongoing action for upcoming category transition points, and to display that they have re-mapped themselves onto a new turn-generated category by occupying new spatial locations on the court. The following brief clip provides an illustration of this expectation by

73 This term is appropriated from Sacks’ (1995) notes on children’s games. Sacks observes that “On beginning game play, or on changing games (from game A to game B) or on starting another play of game A after some prior play of game A, or on making changes in the personnel during a game’s play, children recurrently map the set of players-to-be into the set of [game] categories” (p. 490).
showing a case in which the players fail to perform the re-mapping procedure at a relevant point.

**Transcript of Clip 6.4**

1 Gregg: **Rotate three**
2
3 Gregg: → **QUICK**
4
5 Gregg: You guys are on defence let’s go

In this fragment, Gregg responds to the failure of “skins team” to promptly re-map themselves onto the “defence” category at the end of another team’s three-turn incumbency, giving the team a shouted hurry-up. The orientation to sequentially organized re-mapping requirements demonstrated by the participants here illustrates the intertwined nature of categorical and sequential relevancies in the organization of the drill.

The categories “offence” and “defence” generated by this turn-taking system function within the drill as an SRP with sets of predicates bound to each of the categories. It was noted above that the turn-taking system is a generic one which can be configured for the specific drill being performed. Similarly, the categories themselves, though generic to basketball activities, are also sensitive to the local contexts in which they become operationalized. What the categories mean on this specific occasion is reflexively constituted by the practical purposes of the current drill. In this regard, it may be suggested that there are ‘family resemblances’ (Wittgenstein, 1958) between locally-specific manifestations of the activities “playing defence” and “playing offence”, that is, between the local sets of actions glossed by these general terms. The work of contextually configuring the sense of “offence” and “defence”, that is, of tying predicates to the two categories that will stand for this drill, also occurs during the initiation phase. To illustrate how these generic categories come to have a drill-specific sense, it is worth now exploring the interaction comprising the initiation phase in its entirety.

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74 Along with, presumably, activities occurring in many other sporting settings.
Transcript of Clip 6.5

1 Gregg: Ay we’re just gonna work- go deep.
2 (0.8)
3 Gregg: That’s it
4 (1.9)
5 Gregg: We’re just gonna work on our first rule here.
6 (0.7)
7 Gregg: So we’re gonna (0.6) work on rotation?
8 (0.9)
9 Gregg: Hold the ball for one second (.) and then pass it to anyone.
10 (0.8)
11 Gregg: No steals, (0.4) okay so let them pass and let them receive the ball, (0.3) but I do wanna see a lot of pressure (0.3) when you play defence on your man (0.2) put some heat on the ball put the hand in the face (.) don’t drop both of your hands down here, (0.4) and let them pick and- (0.3) choose (.) who they’re gonna make a pass to.
12 (0.3)
13 Gregg: So plenty of pressure, (0.4) let them make a pass, (0.3) let him catch, (0.3) and then pressure again.
14 (0.4)
15 Gregg: So we can pass to anyone we can go skip pass one pass away doesn’t really matter. ((sniff))
16 (1.3)
17 Gregg: We gonna start off with drives on the baseline to start off with.
18 (0.7)
19 Gregg: Okay? So I wanna make sure that every time (0.6) these two guys play defence on the wing, (0.5) they encouraging their man on the wing to drive baseline.
20 (0.5)
21 Gregg: When I call (. ) drive, (0.8) pass the ball here to Marco, (0.6) when I call drive, (1.0) I want him to take a drive (0.3) an I want that guy over the re to step in on the baseline ready to catch the ball, (0.8) okay, (0.3) so we want help here(0.5) an now you must (0.2) make a pass to the guy on the baseline Marco.
Gregg: → Okay? and y-it's-it's your job to put y' hand on it.

Gregg:→ O-an-an-an-and to get it.

Gregg:→ Alright? So it's if it's a turnover I don't care. (0.2)
→ just throw it there, (.) good defensive effort (0.2) we
→ come back out again.

Gregg: And then we just work on rotation.

During this sequence, Gregg produces a set of utterances that can be heard as instructions for the upcoming drill by drawing on his knowledge (and his knowledge of the players’ knowledge) of the general conventions of playing offence and defence, and of the team’s offensive and defensive systems, as a set of background understandings. The orientation to these categories is visible, for instance, at lines 9-10, where his instruction to “hold the ball for one second and then pass it to anyone” is recognizable as applying to a specific unstated group of people: players who are members of the category “offence” during a given drill performance. Likewise, his subsequent utterance (line 12), “No steals… so let them pass”, though not specifically addressed to members of the “defence” (though he does use the word in line 14), is hearable as applying specifically to these members via the use of knowledge of what “defence” does, in general.

At the same time as they draw on the sense of these categories for their meaning, Gregg’s instructions modify the categories, configuring just what they mean for this occasion. In particular, the categories are configured to match the defensive focus of the drill. This is made visible in the ways his instructions differ for offensive and defensive play. The instructions treat offence as a matter of merely following procedure. They cast adequate performance on offence in terms of following a series of steps: “hold the ball for one second and then pass it to anyone” (line 9); “take a drive” (line 35) and then “step in on the baseline ready to catch the ball” (line 36), and so on. These steps are presented as actions the offensive players will need to perform in order to make the drill function. Further, Gregg’s instructions imply that that offensive performance will not be a matter for evaluation and assessment during
this drill. He declares a forgiving attitude toward offensive mistakes (“if it’s a turnover I don’t care”) and encourages a lack of effort and precision (“just throw it in there”). Such a lenient treatment of passing is rare in these practice sessions, and exhibits the status of offence in this drill as means to its effective functioning, rather than an end.

The instructions Gregg provides regarding defensive performance are in marked contrast to his comments about offence. While adequate offensive performance is constituted – for this drill – as merely a matter of observing procedures, the players are instructed that adequate performance when on defence will require them to display good defensive technique and the application of effort. This orientation to defence is made explicit several times during this initiation phase. In lines 13-18, Gregg emphasizes aspects of effort, intensity and focus (“put some heat on the ball”, “put the hand in the face”, “don’t drop both of your hands down here”). Later in the initiation phase, he states exactly what the responsibilities of the defensive players during this drill are (“I want that guy over there to step in on the baseline ready to catch the ball” (lines 35-36), “it’s your job to put y’ hand on it… and to get it” (lines 40-42).

Perhaps most tellingly, these defensive techniques are not treated as mere discrete and general basketball skills, but are collected together as comprising a core team competency. At the outset of this fragment, Gregg frames the drill’s overall purpose, explaining to the players that “we” are about to work on “our first rule” (line 5). The “rule” in question is clearly hearable as belonging specifically to the “Pelicans team” due to Gregg’s use of inclusive pronouns (consider the difference that might be effected had he referred to it as “a first rule”). Gregg then clarifies what the rule is in his next utterance (line 7), repeating the subject and the verb of his prior utterance but replacing the object of “work” with “rotation”. This linguistic repetition enables “rotation” to be heard as an elaboration of “our first rule” – thus, in this drill, the players will be practicing the Pelicans basic rotation rule. The explicit reference to this set of competencies as a rule, and thus as something generalizable, serves to extend what is going to be worked on here and now to other settings and occasions – most notably, to competitive game situations. It also emphasizes the fundamental
importance of this competency. That is, the fact that what will be practiced here is defined as a “Pelicans rule” creates an orientation to the upcoming course of action as not just the practice of an isolated skill, but as an exercise in establishing mastery of a technique central to the effective incumbency of the Pelicans team category. No such gravity is attached to the production of offensive action in this drill.

For the purposes of my analysis, the crucial importance of the process, outlined above, by which Gregg attaches specific predicates to the turn-generated category pair “offensive team – “defensive team”, lies in the relevance that the category-predicate combinations have for the coach’s practices of locating corrections. The effective performance of a specific set of defensive competencies has been identified by the coach as providing the purpose of the drill and as comprising an important criterion for determining competent membership of the team. Simultaneously, this process of parameter-setting also ties a local predicate to the category of “coach”: that of “examining members of the category ‘defensive team’ for competent performance of actions related to defensive rotation rules”. The process stipulates a specific a category-relationship between the coach and the defensive players for the duration of the drill. The coach orients to this configured relationship to shape what he looks for and finds on the court, with this orientation constituting an important part of the solution to the ongoing coaching problem I identified earlier in this chapter as that of visually identifying relevant correctable. The coach’s orientation to the current activity narrows down a field of possible correctables to a set of actions relevantly performed by incumbents of a particular turn-generated category.

The orientation to scrutinizing defensive, rather than offensive, performance is displayed in the differential structure of the corrections occurring over the course of this activity (which lasts approximately half an hour). While the coach comments upon aspects of offensive performance throughout the drill, these comments are almost entirely limited to directives, that is, simple procedural instructions such as telling players to pass rather than shoot. 75 By contrast, the defensive corrections

75 The coach negatively evaluates offensive performances several times, and rebukes an offensive player once during this drill, but not until its last five minutes. This last section consists of a phase of competitive game-play, where the first team to reach three defensive “stops” wins. The competitive
during this drill, while sometimes consisting of directives, regularly involve other actions (either alone or in combination) including: negative evaluations of performance; elaborations on the nature of the mistake, its causes, and its import; embodied demonstrations of the incorrect and/or the correct bodily performance; and rebukes displaying the coach’s frustration at the players’ repeated errors.

While it was argued earlier that omnirelevant devices function as organizational resources operative at the level of the practice session as a whole, this section has specified a second layer of organizational resources operative at the level of the individual activity or drill. By examining the organization of the shell drill, it has been shown that this activity functions as a type of categorization device through generating the categories of “offence” and “defence” (and “observer”), defining a set of predicates attached to each of the categories, and governing participants’ transition between them. Further, it has been noted that the “shell drill” device provides the coach with essential resources for searching the visible field to locate relevant correctable objects.

If we apply these findings to the stretch of play containing Jerome’s error, we can develop a clearer picture of how Gregg was able to see a relevantly correctable action. Jerome’s membership of the “red team” results in his being mapped to the turn-generated category of “defensive team” for the play in question. As an incumbent of this category as configured for this occasion, a set of expectable actions related to competent defensive performance are predicated to him. Meanwhile, as “coach”, Gregg is category-bound to observe and correct defensive players’ adherence to the team’s defensive rotation rules. These categorial orientations comprise a background scheme informing Gregg’s observation of the performance in question.

More, however, is involved in Gregg’s discovery of this correctable than use of this scheme alone. Up to this point we have only specified the responsibilities of the focus during this phase may account for the emergence of negative evaluations of offensive performance after their earlier absence.
“defence” as a unit; but the correction is addressed toward Jerome as an individual member of this unit. The question of how Gregg distinguishes Jerome’s action as the problematic one within this unit remains. The next section builds on the analysis so far by attempting to resolve this issue.

6.5 Ball-relative categories

Gregg does not merely correct Jerome as just any incumbent of the defensive team, but as a categorically differentiated member of that unit. The fact that a method for categorically differentiating between the players on the team units is operational in this drill is available from the beginning of the activity. The transcript below reproduces a segment of the initiation phase.

**Transcript of Clip 6.5 (partial)**

29 Gregg:  Okay? So I wanna make sure that every time (0.6)
30 → these two guys play defense on the wing, (0.5) they
31 encouraging their man on the wing to drive baseline. (0.5)
32 Gregg:  When I call (.) drive, (0.8) pass the ball here to
33 Marco, (0.6) when I call drive, (1.0) I want him to
34 → take a drive (0.3) an I want that guy over there to
35 → step in on the baseline ready to catch the ball, (0.8)
36 → okay, (0.3) so we want help here(0.5) an now you must
37 (0.2) make a pass to the guy on the baseline Marco.
38 (0.5)
39 Gregg:  Okay? and y-it's-it's your job to put y' hand on it.
40 (0.3)
41 Gregg:  O-an-an-an-and to get it.

In explaining the players’ responsibilities, Gregg makes reference to players in terms of their occupation of various court locations: “these two guys… on the wing” (line 30), “that guy over there… step in on the baseline” (lines 35-36), and “we want help here” (line 37). In doing so, he differentiates the defensive players from one another using a geography of the basketball court. At the same time, his instructions make reference to a sequentially unfolding course of events: defensive players on the wing
encourage their man to drive baseline, Gregg calls “drive”, the wing player drives, the defender steps in on the baseline, and so on. The geographical and sequential ordering of these instructions implies a level of organization – one tying together not only sequential and categorial, but also spatial, relevancies – operating within each individual drill performance. As the analysis below demonstrates, as a drill performance unfolds sequentially, each movement of the ball from one position on the floor to another (whether as a result of a pass, or because the player with the ball dribble-drives to a new spot) generates a set of categories which differentiate the four defensive players by virtue of their spatial location. The members of the defensive team become mapped on to these categories as the configuration of the court changes. In what follows, I am going to use the term “ball-relative categories” to distinguish these categories from the turn-generated ones described above, and to emphasize the relevance of space for their assignation.

The mapping of players onto ball-relative categories during drill sequences relies on the capacity of some categories to be transformed from categories within devices into devices in their own right. Watson (1978) suggests, for example, that the category “Protestant” may be treated as either a category in the device “types of faith”, or alternatively as a device with its own categories such as “vicar”, “member of the congregation”, and so on. In a similar way, as well as comprising a category in the “shell drill” device, “defensive team” can itself operate as a device comprised of categories. Distinctively, though, the constituent categories of the ‘defensive team’ device operative in this drill are spatially organized. This is not as simple as saying that certain locations on the court function to allocate sets of rights and responsibilities to defensive players that move into them. Rather, these categories operate through the spatial relations between the positions on the court of the four defensive players relative to one another, to the offensive players, the ball, and the court markings.

There are at least two alternative ways in which these ball-relative categories can be configured. For one, they can be assigned with regard to the player’s distance from the ball, measured in units of passes. Figure 6-13 shows the ball in the high left player’s hands. Table 6.3 lays out the ball-relative categories of each of the defensive
players as positioned in the figure in terms of their number of passes away from the ball.

*Figure 6-13: Ball-relative categories organized by number of passes from the ball.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location of ball</th>
<th>Ball-relative categories (device 1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>left high</td>
<td>on-ball defender (red #1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>one pass away (red #2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>one pass away (red #3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>two passes away (red #4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Alternatively, ball-relative categories may be configured by reference to the court as a space partitioned into quadrants. A player’s incumbency of a given category depends on which quadrant he occupies relative to the ball-carrier.

*Figure 6-14: Ball-relative categories organized by quadrant*
Each of these devices distributes appropriate predicates for action to its constituent categories, predicates which are applications of the team’s defensive rules and its division of defensive labour. As outlined above, the activity rules which were put in place at the beginning of the drill stipulate that each performance of the drill will be comprised of two phases: a restricted phase involving the offensive players passing the ball around and the defensive players adjusting accordingly, and an attacking phase. During the restricted phase, as the performance progresses sequentially, the first device, which assigns categories based upon the number of passes away from the ball each player stands, becomes operative. The device functions to provide defensive players with a set of geographical co-ordinates to tell them where to go, and distributes defensive responsibilities (as specified in Table 6.5)

![Diagram](image_url)

**Figure 6-15: Ball gets passed to left wing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sequential action</th>
<th>Ball-relative category</th>
<th>Category-bound predicates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ball gets passed to</td>
<td>on-ball defender (red #3)</td>
<td>put pressure on the ball carrier</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
left wing | one pass away (red #1) | deny the pass to blue #1  
| two passes away (red #2) | sag to the split line ready to help  
| two passes away (red # 4) | sag to the split line ready to help  

The trigger for the transformation to the attacking phase is the coach’s shout of “drive”. This action by the coach is made sequentially relevant by the performance of the preliminary phase for an appropriate period. It is a sequential predicate of the “coach” category, in this drill, to initiate a change of performance phase at an appropriate time. The coach’s call/whistle works as both a selection device and a directive, selecting the player with the ball (or, if this player is not a wing, then the next wing player to receive the ball), and directing that player to drive to the basket. Once the offensive player begins his drive, the second ball-relative device, which is primarily concerned with specifying predicates related to defensive rotation, generates a further set of relevant next sequential actions for each of the defensive players (as specified in Table 6.6).

Figure 6-16: Wing player drives baseline

Table 6-6: Predicates bound to ball-relative categories

---

76 The imaginary line running vertically down the court, bisecting it into weak and strong sides.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sequential action</th>
<th>Ball-relative category</th>
<th>Category-bound predicates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>wing player drives baseline</td>
<td>on-ball defender (red #3)</td>
<td>stop the wing player driving to the basket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>strong side high (red #1)</td>
<td>deny the pass to blue #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>weak side high (red #2)</td>
<td>drop to the split-line under the basket to cut off pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>weak side low (red #4)</td>
<td>help on-ball defender stop the wing player’s drive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The relevance of these ball-relative categories for producing and recognizing action is made explicit by the coach at a number of points over the course of the drill. An example of Gregg’s use of them to find correctables occurs in the following extract.

**Transcript of Clip 6.6**

1  Gregg:  You’re one pass away as soon as he gets the ball you
2    should be on your man there.
3  (1.1)
4  Gregg:  Early Boris early on the line. (. ) Mid post we gotta
5    help him.
6  (1.8)
7  Gregg:  Let’s go.

In lines 1 and 2, Gregg corrects Stan, who has become an incumbent of the ball-relative category “one pass away” but has failed to produce the category-bound action of stepping out on his man to deny the pass. In line 4, Gregg displays an orientation to Boris’ incumbency of the “weak side low” category in seeing that he ought to have stepped in to the path of the offensive player earlier than he did. Simultaneously, Gregg’s reminder to Boris to position himself on the (split) line displays an orientation to Boris’ incumbency of the “two passes away” category.

The discussion of ball-relative categories up to this point has sought to demonstrate that these categories are sequentially and spatially activated, and that, once activated, they work to distribute further relevant sequential actions, as well as predicates of task, responsibility, and spatial positioning, to their incumbents. If a player fails to produce a relevant sequential action or to fulfil a relevant responsibility bound to his category, then this can become observable as a relevant absence, and can warrant the
initiation of a correction sequence. Relating this discovery back to the ongoing coaching problem that initiated this discussion, of locating relevant displays of less-than-adequate performance in the observable field of action, we can now formulate a members’ situated solution to this problem which could be worded: “if you can find an absence of a predicate bound to a category of which a particular player is an incumbent, you can legitimately treat that as a correctable”.

The next section returns to Gregg’s correction of Jerome’s performance in Clip 6.1 to demonstrate that the absence of a category-bound predicate was indeed the issue in this correctable. Further, it addresses the specific nature of the absent predicate identified by Gregg: the failure by Jerome to gather knowledge crucial to the competent performance of defensive responsibilities attached to his current ball-relative category.

6.6 **THE VISIBLE AVAILABILITY OF ABSENT KNOWLEDGE**

Building on the analysis so far, the section rounds out this chapter by bringing the organizational resources specified above to bear on the original correction sequence, attempting to explicate just how Gregg is able to see Jerome’s conduct as something a specific kind of error. As he begins the correction, Gregg’s initial utterance (lines 1-2, reproduced below) explicitly formulates Jerome’s error as a matter of possessing inadequate knowledge of relevant features of the court environment.

**Transcript of Clip 6.1**

1 Gregg:→ You’re watching the ball (0.3) but you don’t know
2 → where your guy is.
3 (0.6)
4 Gregg: You gotta see both at the same time (0.3) so if he makes
5 a move in you gotta pick him up (.) he is the only
6 target in the middle.
7 (0.4)
8 Gregg: One more. (.) Let’s go
As the weak-side high defender in this drill performance (red #2 in Figure 6-16), Jerome must position himself in the correct location (on the split line, underneath the basket) and cut off the driver’s pass to the player cutting to the hoop (see Table 6.7).

**Table 6-7: Predicates bound to ball-relative categories**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sequential action</th>
<th>Ball-relative category</th>
<th>Category-bound predicates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>wing player drives baseline</td>
<td>on-ball defender (red #3)</td>
<td>stop the wing player driving to the basket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>strong side high (red #1)</td>
<td>deny the pass to blue #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>weak side high (red #2)</td>
<td>drop to the split-line under the basket to cut off pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>weak side low (red #4)</td>
<td>help on-ball defender stop the wing player’s drive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order that he may perform this action effectively, it is essential that Jerome know the location of both the ball and his man. Possessing knowledge of the whereabouts of these two objects is an essential responsibility, a category-bound predicate, of this ball-relative category in this specific context. That possession of this knowledge exists as an important predicate of this category is evidenced in the fact that Gregg repeatedly corrects incumbents of this category over the course of the drill and makes explicit reference to their lack of such knowledge. Indeed, after a string of such errors, he devotes an extended instructional sequence to resolving this particular issue (see Transcript 6.7 below). Importantly, what counts as a player knowing where his man and the ball are in these specific circumstances is a massively practical affair. In an abstract sense, Jerome might legitimately maintain that he knows the general location of his man. It is certain that he is aware that his man is, for instance, in the stadium, and on the basketball court, and somewhere behind him. But whatever he knows of his man’s spatial position does not count as legitimate knowledge in this instance: the knowledge called for by his category incumbency is “observably and reportably” (Garfinkel, 1967) absent. What “knowing where your man and the ball are” practically consists of, in this instance, is the competent performance of certain relevant embodied practices. The fact that this knowledge is located in the player’s embodied production of these visible practices, rather than “inside the head”, means that the player’s possession, or lack of possession, of that
knowledge, is public. It also means that it is available to the coach’s visual scrutiny as he observes the action on the court.

In the extended instruction sequence mentioned above, the coach makes these embodied practices explicit for the players (and thereby for the analyst).

**Transcript of Clip 6.7**

1 Gregg:  "Fuck"
2 (0.4)
3 Gregg:  Go _____ over here double team
4 (5.6)
5 Gregg:  I know y- I know we ____ know it? (0.4) and we all say we
6 know it but we’re not doing it we had (..) four or five
7 where we failed.
8 (0.6)
9 Gregg:  We down here on the split line now? (.). we’re deep
10 enough so we can shoot both of these guys at the same
11 time.
12 (0.3)
13 Gregg:  Ahkay?
14 (0.4)
15 Gregg:  He makes a move, (0.5) I step in, (0.3) and I block him
16 out. (.). I see the ball, (.). and I can feel where he is
17 (0.3) so he goes up high, (0.4) I go up high with him.
18 (0.7)
19 Gregg:  Ohkay? (.). Shot goes up, (.). I’ m already boxing him
20 out.
21 (.)
22 And he’s got no chance of getting this ball right now.
23 (0.5)
24 Gregg:  Ahkay?

Following the repeated failure of players to display their competence in producing the bodily performance in question over the course of the drill, the coach intervenes to demonstrate how to do “knowing where your man and the ball are” competently in this scenario. The coach’s demonstration in this sequence makes reference to two
key aspects of this competence. The first appears in lines 9-10, and relates to the player’s bodily position in space: the player should position himself on the split line “deep enough” to “shoot both of these guys at the same time”. Rather than just telling the players where to position themselves on the floor, Gregg’s talk and embodied demonstration illustrates a “player’s technique” for generating, in the midst of action, a set of court coordinates which will direct the player to an appropriate spot on the floor. The technique involves the player establishing a triangle whose points are comprised of the ball, himself, and his man, and then running a “test” of his field of peripheral vision to determine whether he can see both the ball and his man simultaneously. The performance of the test involves the embodied action of pointing at, or “shooting”, the ball and the man to verify whether the player has visual access to both. The inability to see both objects at the same time means the player has not gone deep enough (that is, far enough toward the baseline) to establish an angle between the points of the triangle acute enough that both objects fit within the geometric field of his vision. Figure 6-17 illustrates Gregg’s demonstration of this procedure.

*Figure 6-17: Still from Clip 6.7, at 00:21.2. Gregg demonstrates the procedure for seeing the man and the ball*
The second practice demonstrated by Gregg in this sequence deals with the defender’s problem of knowing where both the man and the ball are as the action brings them closer together and the distance between them decreases. This makes it impossible for the defender to visually perceive both his man and the ball without positioning himself so “deep” that he would be unable to perform his defensive responsibility of cutting off the pass. Resolving this problem requires the player to orient to his man’s movement toward the basket by moving into his man, making contact with him, and, while maintaining this contact, turning his body so that he is facing the ball and his back and rear are touching his man. In this way, the defender is able to gain knowledge of where the man and the ball are by seeing the ball and feeling the man’s position on the floor (see Figure 6-18).

Gregg’s explicit demonstration of these practices draws attention to the “coach’s fact” that the absence of a player’s required knowledge of relevant features of the environment can, in these circumstances, be established via an analysis of the bodily position and body movement of the player in question. If the player fails to a) position himself in the correct location from which that knowledge can be gathered; or b) perform the demonstrated, sequentially relevant actions of looking and feeling
for information, then they can be said, legitimately, not to be in possession of that knowledge. The absent knowledge in question is thus a visibly available embodied phenomenon.

The fact that Jerome does not know where his man is, for the purposes of this activity, is visibly available in his embodied conduct. Firstly, as the ball-carrier begins his drive, Jerome not only fails to establish a position “deep enough” to see both his man and the ball, he faces in the wrong direction entirely. Figure 6-19 shows his position as the offensive wing makes his drive.

![Figure 6-19: Still from clip 6.1, at 00:22.1. Jerome (in yellow) fails to establish the correct position to see the man and the ball.](image)

The still in Figure 6-20, taken from another performance during this same drill, illustrates a different player displaying the correct technique at a similar stage of the performance.
Secondly, as his man and the ball carrier move toward the basket and draw closer together, Jerome also fails to establish bodily contact with the offensive player. Figure 6-21 illustrates Jerome’s position relative to his man at the moment when making bodily contact has been made relevant by the unfolding action.

Figure 6-20: A player correctly establishing position to see the man and the ball.

Figure 6-21: Still from Clip 6.1 at 00:22.8. Jerome fails to establish bodily contact with his man.
In order to be able to see that Jerome does not “know” where his man is, and is thus failing to perform the drill adequately, Gregg does not require access to Jerome’s “private” cognitive processes or thoughts. Rather, Jerome’s lack of knowledge is publicly visible and available through the application of members’ methods for placing his embodied action in a sequential, categorial and spatial context.

The objective of this chapter was to specify how a particular correctable piece of conduct comes to be seen as just that object. In reaching an explanation of how Jerome’s action is intelligible as displaying an absence of relevant knowledge, this analysis comes to a conclusion. The following section draws together the analytic points and discusses their relevance for the overall project of this thesis.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter began with the question, which had emerged from a comparison of basketball practice sessions and classroom instruction, of how a basketball coach is able to assess the adequacy of players’ displays of relevant basketball skills. Clearly, this ability is a prerequisite for correcting and instructing players. An answer to this question was suggested: player performances may be evaluated via the coach’s “work” of visually observing players’ actions against a contingent contextual backdrop comprised of the joint actions of multiple parties. Seeing an action against its relevant background context, the coach is able to locate disjunctures between what a player did, and what they should have done, in that context. The subsequent analysis was occupied with specifying what the visual-analytic work of “searching for correctables” might consist of. In the process, this chapter has explicated some of the methodical procedures the coach uses in order to undertake this search.

The analysis centred on a single correction episode but drew on other fragments to illustrate relevant points. In working through this correction, multiple layers of membership categorization devices were shown to be invoked and oriented to by the participants. These MCDs corresponded to different levels of action: from the “omnirelevant” device operative at the level of the practice session as a whole, to the “shell drill” device whose categories persist for an entire activity, down to the “ball-
relative” device which structures single drill performances. The sequential layering of these devices, as activities proceed turn-by-turn, illustrates the reflexive relationship between categorial and sequential relevancies in the organization of action. As action unfolds sequentially, different “category environments” (Jayyusi, 1984) are made relevant, and the predicates associated with the now-operative categories function to generate relevant next sequential actions for the participants. The analysis demonstrated the participants’ orientation to interlocking sequential and categorial relevancies by showing that the coach relied on both organizational dimensions in order to analyze Jerome’s conduct as a correctable event. Additionally, a third organizational dimension, space, was shown to be integrated into the analytic resources the coach brought to bear on the visible scenes he inspected. Introducing the notion of ball-relative categories, it was argued that spatial orientations can function analogously to membership categories, with players’ bodily positions relative to one another generating category-like sets of rights, responsibilities and sequential relevancies.

The analysis in this chapter explicated some ways in which the coach of this team employs his knowledge of interlocking categorial, sequential and spatial aspects of organization in order to identify relevant correctables. As such, it contributes important observations to the thesis’ overall project of respecifying sporting activities as practical productions. The accomplishment of even mundane activities, such as identifying a player’s performance error, was shown to rest on the mobilization of a great deal of fine-grained knowledge regarding the organization of the setting. Additionally, the analysis provided an important insight into the organization of instruction in manual settings. It has demonstrated that instruction is dependent upon the practices of professional vision (C. Goodwin, 1994) exercised by the coach. In this instance, professional vision is deployed in order to search for an absence of sequentially- and spatially-relevant and category-bound predicates. This search is highly consequential for how the practice session is organized as an instructional setting in that finding such an absence can provide a warrant for initiating correction and instruction activities.
This chapter has also provided some insight into the topic of embodiment. Through the detailed investigation of the visible availability of an absence of knowledge, the body has been shown to be oriented to as a locus for the discovery of (absent) knowledge and competency. However, crucially, this can only occur if that body is located in a web comprised of an encompassing activity and sequential, categorical, and spatial contexts. Detached from this background, the body would lose its situated relevance.

This chapter constitutes a first stage of the analysis of correction events, showing how a particular piece of conduct might come to be seen as a correctable, and as such, as an event warranting the initiation of a correction sequence. What remains is to explore the organization of a subsequent correction event itself: how a correctable is dealt with in and as a stretch of social interaction. The next chapter takes up this matter.
Chapter 7: The embodied organization of basketball correction activities

7.1 Introduction: From locating correctables to organizing corrections

This chapter continues the project of describing the situated accomplishment of correction events in basketball coaching. While Chapter 6 explicated some members’ practices for identifying correctables during the performance of basketball drills, the objective of this chapter is to specify what happens after correctable phenomena have been identified. It explores how such phenomena are taken up and responded to by the coach as warrants for launching sequences of correction and instruction, and how these corrective and instructional activities are organized by the coach and players as intelligible activities.

While watching the recordings of corrections that I had captured, I made an initial set of observations about some gross variations in the ways the correction activities were organized. Firstly, the corrections varied with regard to when they occurred in relation to the action on the basketball court. At times, the coach would correct the players during a performance, without stopping it, via commenting “over the top” of the players’ ongoing action. On other occasions, he would wait until the players had completed their performance, and then initiate the correction during a “natural” break in the activity. On still others, he would launch the correction in the midst of an ongoing performance-in-progress, bringing the action on the court to a sudden halt. The coach’s corrections also varied with regard to the location from which he corrected the players. He would sometimes remain in the position from which he observed the performance, which was always outside the bounded space within which a drill performance takes place. At other times, he would walk into the play-space and delivers the correction from close quarters. Finally, it was immediately observable that the coach produced corrections using a range of different types of action: talk, of course, but also a range of different gesture types, including deictic gestures, pragmatic gestures, and iconic gestures.
These very preliminary observations of some orderly features of correction sequences generated a pair of general question with which to begin to explore the data: to what local, practical relevancies and problems do the ways in which corrections are organized display an orientation, and how do their organizational properties resolve these problems? With this central question in mind, I approached the data, beginning with the issue of the coach’s periodic decision to halt a play-in-progress to initiate a correction sequence. Consideration of the contingencies that might account for this decision led me to a range of other issues, in particular those centred on the core problem of making correctable events and their corrections visible and available for instructional work. This problem, and the ways in which participants’ orientations to it function to shape correction events in basketball activities, comprises the principal analytic theme organizing the chapter’s investigation.

In exploring the organization of correction activities and sequences, this chapter follows the procedure taken in the last chapter. It works through a specific stretch of interaction – in this case, one involving two different correction events separated by a drill performance – while bringing in other examples to further explore relevant points77. The next section launches the analysis by defining and explicating an initial issue, the coach’s practice of halting a play-in-progress in order to launch a correction event.

### 7.2 Correction Initiations: Building Frameworks of Joint Attention

**Transcript of Clip 7.1 (Correction 1)**

2. (1.2)
3. Gregg: Why are we trying to make a pass from here,(0.9)

---

77 The core data for the chapter consists of a fragment of video (available on the accompanying disc as Clip 7.1), which depicts a stretch of a Pelicans practice session in which occur two drill performances, each followed by a correction sequence. The transcripts for the two correction events are reproduced in full below (separately labelled as Clip 7.1 (Correction 1) and Clip 7.1 (Correction 2). This particular stretch of action has been chosen due to the range of correctional features made visible in the corrections, as well as for the perspicuous contrasts provided by the juxtaposition of the two corrections, which are different in important ways, as will be demonstrated.
alright? when it's not on.

Gregg: Come over here.

Gregg: Every time we have a wall(.) this guy is channelling us sideline.

Gregg: But he's giving us great look there(.) great look there(.) and great chance to penetrate.

Gregg: So take him on↑ HARD.

Gregg: We've practiced this drill where we penetrate to the- with one foot in the- in- in- in the key and we back it up.

Gregg: Now take a dribble out, and you got yourself a good angle to run yellow.

Gregg: We continue to try to force the ball from here to post(.) to four man(.) to feeder(.) and try to run pick and roll on the top(.) from there.

Gregg: It's terrible angle(.) to make any of these decisions.

Gregg: Sure:ly if you can't dribble the ball from here(0.6) to there(.) with your left hand(.) you shouldn't be playing basketball at this level.

Gregg: Or in that position. Alright?

Gregg: Take him down(.) and if he doesn't get in front of you; then you help yourself you have here two on one he's gotta stop,(0.5) step in and help you; and then we got a big; if he doesn't; you go all the way through; if two man is helping down we kick out for a shot.

Gregg: They're taking your options away but you're not making good decisions on the floor.
Gregg’s first action of the first Correction 1 in Clip 7.1, his utterance “Hold on” (line 1) is, by virtue of its lexical content and the sequential position in which it occurs, clearly designed to halt the players’ performance-in-progress before it reaches a natural conclusion. The players also orient to the utterance in this way, immediately stopping their play. This practice of halting the ongoing action in order to initiate a correction was a frequent occurrence in the Pelicans training sessions I observed. However, it is also clear that the organization of this practice activity, with the players producing embodied performances while the coach (and others) observe from the sideline, provides the structured possibility that the coach could (and, indeed, he sometimes does) correct the players without halting their performance. For instance, he could instead utter evaluative and corrective statements “over the top” of the ongoing play action. By “structured possibility”, I mean that no inherent conflict is created by the coach talking over the top of the players’ performances: there is no built-in orientation to a requirement that either players perform or the coach talks at any one time. Alternatively, the coach could have waited until the performance had reached its natural conclusion and initiated the correction in the space following its completion. Given the availability of these alternatives, it seems pertinent to begin this analysis of the organization of correction sequences by considering the possible local/practical reasons the coach may have for regularly initiating his corrections via halting a play-in-progress.

A first point to be made in this regard is that while the practice of uttering comments over the top of player performances may provide a useful correction option in some circumstances, it has definite shortcomings as a correction format on other occasions. In particular, depending on the activity in progress and the specific features of the correction, “over the top” correction can be problematic in that it limits the coach’s ability to evaluate whether his correction has been adequately attended to and correctly understood by the players. The activity that the players are performing in Clip 7.1 is a case in point. The players are working on their offensive sets in a full 5-

78 By this I mean at a point at which the performance could not yet reasonably be seen to be complete.
on-5, game-speed drill. This drill possesses a quality shared by (at least) all of those practice activities that replicate game-like situations: due to the speed and complexity of such activities, adequate performance in them depends upon the players directing their full attention to the play-in-progress and its relevant features\textsuperscript{79}. As an additional factor, the specific features of the activity that are attended to as relevant by each of the players at any given moment depends on the sequential stage of the play, the momentary spatial arrangement of bodies on the floor, and the category-bound predicates distributed among the players (including, as explicated in the previous chapter, predicates made sequentially relevant via the operation of turn-generated categories). It can thus be suggested that the structure of attention during such game-replicating activities takes a differentiated form, in which the relevant features attended to may well vary from player to player, depending on the moment-to-moment organizational specificities of the unfolding activity and the various trajectories of action that the players are contributing to building.

Given the structure of players’ attention during such activities as both a) fully focused on the task at hand and b) differentially focused according to the practical tasks of each position, then, if the coach corrects players via over the top commentary in the midst of this action, he can reasonably expect two things with regard to the players’ attendance to his correction: a) that the players may hear any verbal utterance he produces, and b) that they probably will not see any visible actions he makes. The fact that the coach cannot easily establish with any certainty whether the players have heard him presents obvious problems for the coach’s ability to evaluate the efficacy of the correction. However, it is the fact that the coach’s actions most likely will not be seen by the players that presents the greater problem with regard to his objective of developing their mastery over the skills required to become a competent basketball player. Over the top correction thus constitutes a

\textsuperscript{79} I am relying here on a common-sense observation that the speed and complexity of game-replicating activities demands players’ full attention, whereas some activities which are performed at less than full pace, or that restrict the players’ activities substantially, can be successfully accomplished with a level of attention that might still allow for attendance to other features of the setting, such as the coach’s utterances. Of course, this is not a hard and fast distinction and the level of attention required can change moment-to-moment during an activity, depending on the specifics of the action in progress at that point in time and space, and the categorial incumbency of the player.
situation in which the joint attention of the participants, particularly their joint attention to a visual field, is difficult or impossible to establish.

Goodwin's (1997, 2000b, 2003, 2007b) research into the organization of instructional activities offers some insights into why securing joint visual attention might be critical for accomplishing processes intended to assist newcomers in developing competency, and, in turn, why establishing and displaying such attention might be oriented to as a necessary practical requirement by parties to such activities. Goodwin (2007b) has observed that certain embodied structural arrangements are prevalent in the processes of education/apprenticeship through which novices develop “mastery of the practices that constitute being a competent member of a relevant community” (p. 57). Goodwin analyses instructional events occurring in the midst of apprenticeships in archaeology, surgery, and chemistry, as well as the case of a father doing homework with his daughter. He shows that in all of his examples the participants, one of whom is an experienced practitioner and the other less experienced at performing the activity, assemble embodied arrangements in which, through mutually aligning their bodies and gaze, they display their shared attendance to one another, and to work-relevant objects in the environment. In doing so, the participants publicly produce a “triadic framework” of mutual attention consisting of instructor, novice, and the object that is the focus of their work (C. Goodwin, 2007b). The images reproduced in Figure 7-1 illustrate these embodied frameworks and the relevant environmental phenomena to which the parties are attending.
Goodwin (2007b) argues that the ubiquity of interactive structures that establish a joint focus of attention between instructor and novice in situations of education and apprenticeship is due to the fact that the newcomer to a community of practice becomes a competent member of that community by developing their capacity to recognize relevant features in the environments that constitute the sites of that community’s work, and to deploy that recognition in building work-relevant action. This capacity to recognize and respond to work-relevant structure in the environment is, Goodwin (2007b) asserts, achieved via repeated processes of “moving through, and working within, that environment in the company of a more senior member of the community” (p. 59). The embodied participation frameworks featured in Figure 7-1 are central to this process because they establish a public locus of mutual attention in which both parties are positioned to see work-relevant structure in the environment and the work-relevant actions of the other participant.

The activities that Goodwin investigates share a central organizational feature: they are all characterized by the fact that both instructor and newcomer are co-participants.
in performing the activity that comprises the object of the lesson. Both the archaeology professor and her student, for instance, are occupied with the task of excavating a section of dirt in concert with each other. The fact of co-participation both affords and requires the participants’ establishment of a framework of joint attention at the outset of the activity, and the maintenance of that framework over the activity’s duration if the activity is to run smoothly. That is, establishment of a joint framework of attention between novice and expert is a requirement of the activity – it is, as it were, “built-in” to its very organization. Since the participants, in collaboratively building their action, are necessarily jointly attending to one another and a shared environment, the expert can then employ this attention framework as resource in order to incorporate instructional or correctional action into the activity performance itself:

Through the structure of mutual accessibility created through the participation framework the senior practitioner … can interact with the newcomer in a rich variety of ways; for example, she can collaboratively structure the organization of individual actions, evaluate what has just been done, intervene in the midst of ongoing action, and build subsequent action that takes as its point of departure what the newcomer has just done. (Goodwin, 2007b, pp. 59-60)

A central feature of such apprenticeship practices, then, is that the expert’s activities of correcting/instructing occur as a part of their accomplishment of the work-relevant task in concert with the newcomer. Instructional practices in these activities depend for their sense and their efficacy upon the fact that they are embedded within such tasks, and upon the joint attention focus that these tasks both require and afford.

The development of competency in basketball, no less than in archaeology or surgery, requires the cultivation of a novice’s ability to recognize relevant features in the environment and to respond to these features by building relevant action. However, in contrast to the activities considered by Goodwin, the activities through which basketball competencies are developed are characterized by a framework of participation in which no embodied, joint focus of attention between expert and
novice tends to be established during the performance of the activities. In fact, the practical requirements of performances militate against the very possibility of establishing such a joint attention framework. Unlike the examples of scientific, medical and archaeological practice considered above, the expert practitioner is not directly involved in the performance of the activity\textsuperscript{80}. The coach, positioned outside the field of action, is involved in a separate activity from the players – namely, scrutinizing the field of action in order to identify relevantly correctable aspects of their performance (as was shown in Chapter 6). Meanwhile, the players involved in the performance of an activity attend to the field of action from within that field itself, with the environmental features that each individual player attends to moment-by-moment being differentiated, as outlined above, according to the trajectories of action that each player is at that moment focused on building (see Figure 7.2). The framework of attention during performances of basketball activities thus consists of, on the one hand, the players’ differentiated attendance towards specific field features relevant to their individual tasks, and on the other, the coach’s orientation to field relevancies related to his category-bound obligation to locate correctables. As a result, a) there is no guarantee that all (or, indeed, more than one) of the players will be attending to the same feature(s) of the environment at any given moment; and b) there is no guarantee that all (or any) of the players are orienting to the feature(s) of the environment that the coach has identified as relevant to a located correctable.

\textsuperscript{80} In fact, in contrast to the experts in Goodwin’s activities, many coaches actually cannot adequately perform the activities in which novices are engaged due to physical limitations of age, athleticism, motor coordination, fitness, and so on.
Given that, as Goodwin has shown, the accomplishment of instruction frequently requires directing novices’ attention toward relevant and consequential structure in the environment, the organization of basketball activities and the structure of attention established during their performance make it difficult for the coach to instruct/correct effectively while the activity is in progress. The establishment of a state of mutual orientation to features of the environment that the coach, as the expert practitioner, is treating as relevant to the current activity cannot, due to the organizational features of basketball activities, be easily accomplished while the performance remains in progress. By halting the action, the coach summons the players’ attention away from their individual foci of attention and towards him (see Figure 7-3). Securing the players’ gaze allows the coach, as will be illustrated later in this chapter, to perform corrections via gesture and through redirecting the players’ visual attention toward relevant phenomena.
It thus appears that one reason why the coach may choose to initiate a correction by halting a play performance is that doing so provides a means of resolving the practical-interactional problem of establishing of a joint framework of attention between the participants. Of course, as mentioned above, the coach also has the option of initiating the correction once the drill performance has come to a natural conclusion. While this option affords the same opportunities for establishing joint attention as halting the play-in-progress, correcting the players upon completion of the performance raises a different set of practical problems with regard to making features of the field of play visually available for instructional work. These problems, and the potential usefulness of halting the play for bypassing them, will be returned to later in this chapter.

This section has built on Goodwin’s assertion that novices develop competency in a domain of practice by exploring work-relevant environments with more competent practitioners. It has argued that the differentiated attention structure characterizing team-based basketball activities creates a requirement for the coach to establish a joint framework of attention before effective coaching interventions can be performed. The suggestion has been made that the coach’s frequent practice of halting players’ performances-in-progress in order to initiate corrections could be explained, at least in part, by this requirement, in that the action of halting the play provides one means by which the coach may summon the players’ attention – in particular, their gaze. Drawing the players’ visual orientation toward him allows the coach to then direct the players’ attention toward relevant phenomena in the
environment (although halting corrections is not the only way that such an attention framework can be established). The next section elaborates this analysis by turning to a related, but more complex, set of problems that must be resolved in the process of accomplishing corrections in team-based activities. As will be demonstrated, in order to perform intelligible correction activities, not only must the players’ attention be corralled, but in addition the very visual fields upon which their attention will be directed must *themselves* frequently be assembled. As will be shown, this process often requires the collaborative interactional work of multiple participants.

### 7.3 Building Embodied Perceptual Environments for Correction Activities

As outlined above, a central aspect of apprenticeship involves newcomers moving through their work environment with an experienced practitioner who is able to direct the novices’ attention to work-relevant features of that environment. In the workplace activities that Goodwin explores in his various studies (Figure 7-1), the external environment to be worked through is comprised of a (relatively) spatially and temporally stable object or terrain: the body of the patient, the vat of chemicals, the section of dirt under excavation, and so on. Such environments are persistently available, to both newcomer and expert, as a locus for visual attention and an object for physical manipulation, affording collaborative instructional work. Such perceptual environments provide ready-made fields of visual phenomena that can be transformed by the expert via discursive and embodied methods into instances of phenomena relevant to the profession, such as a “cystic artery” (C. Goodwin, 1994). The “work environment” within which basketball activities are conducted, however, differs from those found in the settings considered by Goodwin in a manner consequential for the ways instructional activities get organized in practice sessions. Unlike chemistry, archaeology, and so on, the relevant environmental structure to which participants are attending is centrally comprised of the acting bodies of the players themselves. In performing drills, players orient to and act within the dynamic configurations of bodies and ball formed in the structured spaces organized by the court markings. In the process, their bodies become constitutive parts of the structured field comprising the play space. This fact can mean that correctable
aspects of a player’s conduct are not visually accessible to that player as he performs the action in real-time. In order to recognize and understand a mistake, a player frequently needs to see his own body as an object within the relevant configuration of bodies, ball and court markings. However, this may necessitate the player taking up a visual orientation quite different from that called for during the performance, when the player inhabits his body and sees outward from his physical location, directing his attention toward task-relevant features.

A further feature complicating the availability of relevant visual phenomena to players is that the phenomena that comprise correctables in basketball activities—bodily performances (e.g., “poor decisions” and “ball-watching”) and “missed” perceptual objects (e.g., “gaps” and “open men”)—are fleeting. Such phenomena frequently come into being for only fractions of a second within complex activity configurations before perishing in the unfolding action (cf. Keevallik, 2010) and, as a result, being rendered visually inaccessible for subsequent correction work. The aforementioned requirement that work-relevant features be rendered visible if newcomers are to develop the competency to recognize them and build action appropriately, combined with the spatial and temporal challenges to this visibility which arise from the ways in which basketball activities such as the one in Clip 7.1 are organized, mean that certain practices must be employed in order to (re)construct a visual field within which the coach may point out relevant phenomena to the players. Certain embodied and interactional work, that is, must frequently be performed in order to construct adequate environmental conditions within which correctables can be made visually available for instructional purposes. This section describes several situated methods through which this visual availability is achieved.

A first practice involved in making phenomena available for correction work is the coach’s movement, prior to delivering the correctable proper, into the midst of the play-space. During players’ performances of drills, the coach is generally positioned outside the play-space, for the obvious practical reason that he needs to avoid getting in the way of the unfolding action on the court (Figure 7-4). Once play has come to a halt (either naturally or due to the coach’s intervention) the coach then has the choice of delivering the correction from the position he is occupying (outside the play-
space) or moving into the play-space to correct from within it. In both of the corrections featured in Clip 7.1, the coach precedes his correction proper by moving from the sideline into the play-space (Figure 7-5).

**Figure 7-4:** Still from Clip 7.1, at 00:07.2. During the drill performance, the coach is positioned outside the play-space.

**Figure 7-5:** Still from Clip 7.1, at 00:13.1. Directly after halting the play, the coach moves into the play-space.

It will be argued here that this coaching practice of re-positioning oneself within the play-space at the outset of a correction sequence is a method for dealing with the problem of making corrections visibly available because it affords the coach greater capacity to employ relevant material structure in the environment in producing intelligible talk and action. In making this claim, I am drawing on Goodwin’s (2000a) argument that the situated sense of action depends not only upon the sequential organization of interaction, but upon members’ simultaneous use and orientation to a range of what he terms “semiotic resources”, themselves lodged
within structurally different types of “sign systems”. Elaborating on the different phenomena that might be oriented to in a stretch of interaction, Goodwin (2000a) lists “a range of structurally different kinds of sign phenomena in both the stream of speech and the body, graphic and socially sedimented structure in the surround, sequential organization, encompassing activity systems, etc.” (p. 1490). Members, Goodwin asserts, build and recognize action by juxtaposing various semiotic resources in ways that allow these phenomena to mutually elaborate one another. He uses the term “contextual configuration” to refer to the “particular, locally relevant array of semiotic fields” (p. 1490) to which participants demonstrably orient in the production and recognition of talk, action and visible phenomena. As I will demonstrate below, the semiotic resources available to the coach for building the specific sense of correctables are relatively limited when he is positioned outside the play-space as compared with those available to him when he relocates to positions within the play-space.

The relatively restricted resources available for producing sideline corrections may or may not prove to be an issue in establishing the sense of a given correctable, depending on the nature of the problem. Of course, when outside the play area the coach still has a wide range of sign systems available for establishing a correctable’s sense, including spoken language, membership categories, and gesture. The following fragment (Clip 7.2), for instance, shows an occasion during which Greg produces two separate corrections (labelled C¹ and C² in the transcript) of two different players’ actions, from the sideline without treating the limited range of semiotic resources available for building a correction from this location as problematic.

Transcript of Clip 7.2
1 Gregg:C¹ The screen is not set.
2 (1.2)
3 Gregg:C¹ Gotta wait for Tony to be there↑ and then read the options.
4 (0.4)
5 Gregg:C² Again Tony they go under, (. ) try to slip.
6 (0.4)
Gregg: C² You have a shot there both of the guys went down you had a wide open shot didn't even look for it.

(0.6)

Gregg: Let’s go.

In order to establish the sense of the correctable actions in this correction sequence, Gregg utilizes several different kinds of semiotic phenomena. Firstly, he employs the affordances that the semantic and syntactic structure of spoken language offers for describing previous events and for contrasting what a player actually did with what he should have done. In the case of the first correction, for example, Gregg characterizes the movement of the offending player (Prasad) as premature by explaining that a necessary preliminary action (the setting of the screen) had not yet occurred when the player began his movement, and contrasts what happened with the procedure that the player should have followed under these circumstances: wait for the screen, analyze the defensive players’ responses, and react accordingly.

Secondly, Gregg deploys the membership categories made available by the framework of the particular activity currently taking place. At the wider level of “Pelicans practice session”, these consist of the category pair player/coach and their relevant predicates (as discussed in the previous chapter). At the more detailed level of the current practice activity, a screen and roll drill, each performance involves two teams, offence and defence, each comprised (at this stage of the drill) of two players. The two players on the offensive team, in turn, are divided into two different roles: a “ball-handler” and a “screener”. Each of these positions implies specific predicates of action that become activated as the play unfolds. Gregg utilizes these categories to elaborate the sense of his utterances. The intelligibility of the first correctable as a case of “making a move before the screen has been set” relies on an orientation to the drill-relevant actions of “setting a screen” and “using the screen”, which are respectively bound to the offensive players “screener” and “ball-handler”. Further, hearing that the first correction is directed toward a mistake made by Prasad depends on an orientation to Prasad’s incumbency of the “ball-carrier” category during the play in question.
Thirdly, Gregg is able, even from this sideline position, to employ gesture as an embodied semiotic modality for building action. The study of gesture is a rich and complex topic in its own right, with a burgeoning corpus of studies concerned specifically with gesture as a situated social practice (Kendon, 2004; D. MacNeill, 2000; Schegloff, 1987; Streeck, 2009). Further, recent research in workplace studies has begun to explore the multimodal interplay of talk, bodily conduct (including gesture) and material objects in the interactional accomplishment of activities in various professional settings (Grieffenhagen & Sharrock, 2005; Heath, 2002; Luff, Pitsch, Heath, Herdman, & Wood, 2010; Mondada, 2006a; Suchman, 1987). While I have neither the time nor space to do full justice here to the complex uses of gesture in composing basketball training activities, I wish to discuss some features of gesture that are directly relevant to the current discussion.

A number of gestures are embedded in the organization of the brief corrections occurring in the clip above. Since my purpose in considering gesture here is to contribute to a larger argument that moving into the play-space enables practices for accomplishing corrections, I do not work through a complete typology of the multiple forms of gesture work done in this sequence. Rather, I consider three examples of gesture taken from the sequence to demonstrate that certain types of gesture are unaffected by the spatial location of their production (outside or inside the play-space), and are thus available for correction-building from any position. However, I suggest that the absence of other types of gesture (which I later show to be present in corrections made from within the play-space) may be due to the fact that resources necessary for their production are largely unavailable from outside the play-area. If it can be shown that these types of gestures are, as I suspect, highly useful methods for making correctables visually available, the access provided to these gestures from within the play-space would seem to be a strong rationale for the coach’s regular practice of relocating from the sideline.

The task of making analytic sense of the example gestures considered below has been facilitated by drawing on Kendon’s (2004) characterizations of different ways in which a gestural component can contribute to an utterance’s meaning or expression. Kendon describes three broad functions that a gesture may perform in a
given context of use. Firstly, a gesture may perform a referential function, either by representing an aspect of an utterance’s content, or by pointing to an object (either concrete or abstract) featured in the discourse. Kendon characterizes three main ways in which gestures may work in a representational manner: the gesturer may use a body part to model some object being referred to; they may enact an action featured in the talk; or they may depict an object by “sketching” its shape. Secondly, a gesture can perform pragmatic functions. Pragmatic gestures contribute to an utterance’s meaning in ways unrelated to its propositional content, through, for instance, indicating the kind of action in which the speaker is engaging. Finally, Kendon mentions that gestures may be used to perform interactive or interpersonal functions, such as allocating turns at talk.

At this point, I turn to an analysis of three examples of gesture made by the coach in Clip 7.2. The first example, which is actually made up of two separate gestural components tied to a single utterance, occurs in concert with Gregg’s utterance “The screen is not set” (line 1) (see Figure 7-6). As he says the word “screen”, he brings both his hands out, arms supine, in front of him at waist level. When he reaches the word “set” at the end of the utterance, he elaborates this gesture by raising his shoulders (Figure 7-7, though the shrug is more clearly visible on the video).

![Figure 7-6: Still from Clip 7.2, at 00:08.1. Hands out, palms up](image)
These two gestural components perform a pragmatic function, helping to constitute the type of action that Gregg is doing with his utterance, by displaying his stance toward the content of the utterance. Kendon (2004) argues that gestures of the palm-up family are often used to convey a sense of offering or giving, thus defining the object of the utterance as something being “given”. While Gregg’s utterance on its own consists of a factual statement about a state of affairs at a certain moment in time, by holding his palms up as he speaks, Gregg displays that what he is doing in producing this factual statement is not merely providing a description of some circumstances, but offering that description as an explanation for what occurred in the prior play. In other words, the fact that the screen was not set when the ball-carrier began his movement is offered as a reason for seeing the ball-carrier’s action as problematic. Gregg’s shoulder-raise at the conclusion of the sentence upgrades the gesture into a shrug. The upgrade adds the further pragmatic meaning that the propositional content of the utterance is, or should be, obvious, which in turn may work to imply that the error was a particularly foolish one.

The second example from the clip also comprises a pair of gestures made during the course of a single utterance. As Gregg says the words “Gotta wait for Tony” (line 3) he extends his right hand, palm open and supine, out in front of him, and then pulls it back toward him from the elbow (Figure 7-8). Gregg continues this utterance with the words “to be there”, and as he does so he closes his hand into a fist, turns it over so that it is palm down, and draws it up and closer to his body. As he utters the word “be” he pushes his fist downwards (Figure 7-9).
In contrast to the pragmatic gestures considered above, these gestures appear to perform a representational function: Gregg uses his hands to model (at various degrees of abstraction) the players’ bodies and their trajectories of movement. In the first gesture, Gregg’s motion of pulling his supine hand toward his body models semantic content that is only implicit in the utterance “Gotta wait for Tony”; that is, the path of action that Tony takes in moving from his original spatial location, to a new spot near the ball-carrier in order to get into position to set a screen. In the second gesture, Gregg’s fist abstractly depicts the properties of a well-set screen, where the body comes to form a solid, stable, motionless obstacle that the ball-carrier can run off in order to get free of his defender. The downward movement of the fist depicts the screen in its gestation phase, as it were; as Gregg reaches the word “there” the fist halts its movement and emphasizes that the screen is only ready for use once the screener has reached his final position and stopped moving. Like the retracted supine hand movement, the fist gesture contributes to the meaning of Gregg’s utterance by providing propositional content left out of his talk – in this
case, the action that the ball-carrier must wait for Tony to complete (establishing correct body position for a good screen, and then becoming motionless) before he can begin his move.

A third gestural example from Clip 7.2 occurs as Gregg says the words “wide open shot” (line 9). As he does so, he makes a gesture that represents action in a different way to the examples above. Unlike the gestures modelling action, in which the coach used his hands to represent players’ bodies or their bodies’ trajectories of movement, this gesture (Figure 7-10) enacts the actual embodied action that is being referred to, the act of shooting a ball. This shooting gesture contributes to the semantic content of the utterance “wide open shot” by providing the verbal expression with a more specific meaning. It does so by depicting a specific type of shot, information that was left unspecified in the utterance. There is a range of different types of shot in basketball – layups, jump shots, set shots, floaters, hook shots, dunks, and so on. Gregg’s gesture enacts the shooting motion made in performing a jump shot or set shot. The specific form of shot is not mentioned in Gregg’s utterance, it is only provided in the gesture. So in providing a physical enactment of a type of shot, Gregg’s gesture makes the meaning of the shot he is referring to in this instance (the “wide open shot” that Tony “had” but didn’t take, or even “look for”) much more precise.

![Figure 7-10: Still from Clip 7.2, at 00:18.8. Gregg enacts the “shot” referenced in his talk (line 9)](image)

This discussion of corrections produced from outside the play-space has attempted to demonstrate that the coach does have a variety of semiotic resources available to him for producing a correction from the sideline, including talk, membership categories,
participation frameworks and certain forms of gesture. What I seek to show below, however, is that by relocating into the field of action, the coach provides himself with greater access to resources that are highly useful in building correctables: the court-lines and the practical geometry they afford, the basket, the ball, and the players’ bodies. When arranged in close proximity to the body of the coach, these features of the scenic environment become far more easily coupled with his gestures. Recent research on gesture has demonstrated that, rather than being a self-contained embodied system, gesture is frequently “environmentally coupled” (C. Goodwin, 2007a; Streeck, 2009). Environmentally coupled gestures are tied to features of the settings in which they are produced, so that grasping their meaning depends on taking into account relevant structure in the environment. In the production of environmentally coupled gestures, the simultaneous use of gesture, verbal language, and relevant environmental features mutually elaborate one another to create a multimodal “action package” whose sense is, as a whole, greater than that of its individual parts (C. Goodwin, 2007a). As I will illustrate, a good deal of the work of building correctables is accomplished through the use of the environmentally coupled gestures opened up by the coach’s relocation into the terrain of play. In order to develop this claim, I return now to the pair of corrections appearing in Clip 7.1, and examine some features of the gestural work occurring in these corrections that is made possible by Gregg’s relocation into the play-space. I focus on two specific practices that occur repeatedly in the clip, enactments and pointing gestures, and discuss how these gestures both elaborate, and become elaborated by, environmental features.

The first form of gesture I wish to explore here is a class which I term “environmentally coupled enactments”. Like the gesture of shooting the basketball which accompanied the utterance “wide open shot” in Clip 7.2, these gestures add precision to the verbal accounts of action that they accompany by demonstrating features of the action being referred to. However, environmentally coupled enactments are unique in that they achieve their meaning through being tied to relevant structure in the environment. A first example occurs in Clip 7.1 (Correction 1), as Gregg says the words “Now take a dribble out” (line 19).
Transcript of Clip 7.1 (Correction 1) (partial)

16 Gregg: We’ve practiced this drill where we penetrate to the-
17 (. ) with one foot in the- in- in- in the key and we back
18 it up.
19 (0.4)
20 Gregg: Now take a dribble out, (0.3) and you got yourself a
21 good angle to run (0.4) yellow.

Prior to producing the utterance in line 20, Gregg has walked down into the key area
toward the low post, establishing himself in position there with Jerome playing the
part of his defender (Figure 7-12).

*Figure 7-11: Still from Clip 7.1, at 00:35.4. “WITH ONE FOOT IN THE- IN- IN THE KEY” (LINE 17)*

As he says “Now take a dribble out”, Gregg spins his body so that he is facing the
basket, dribbles the basketball, and steps away from Jerome (Figure 7-13).
In this example, Gregg’s enactive gesture makes physical and visible an action explicitly referenced in the talk (“a dribble out”). In the process, the gesture adds new propositional content to the verbal utterance in that it displays spatial relationships between objects on the basketball court, relationships which are crucial to the sense of the utterance but absent from the verbal component. At the beginning of the dribble enactment, Gregg is positioned low, partially in the key, and is proximate to his defender. After making the dribble out, Gregg is re-positioned a couple of metres away from his defender, and he is able to show (via his pointing gesture) that he now has an open passing lane to the player standing at the opposite high post (off camera) (Figure 7-13).
Gregg’s enactment of the dribble in this fragment clearly demonstrates that the dribble move he refers to in his talk includes, as a part of its meaning, that it is intended to be a means for the ball-carrier to create space from his defender. While his talk mentioned the direction of the dribble (“out”), and its intended result (“you got yourself a good angle”), it left implicit the information regarding how the dribble move creates these conditions: i.e., by reconfiguring the relative spatial positions of the ball-carrier and his defender. These details are filled in by the visual structures constituted in and through the enactment of the dribble move.

The capacity of Gregg’s gesture to supply this necessary spatial detail crucially depends upon the gesture being coupled to phenomena in the environment. The fact that the dribble move is intended to create space between the ball-carrier and his defender is not provided by Gregg’s talk and enactive movement alone. The visibility of this aspect of the enactment requires a recipient to attend to the “object” comprised by the defender’s body and the space that the dribble move creates between Gregg and his defender. Further, the gesture must be relevantly situated within the spatial environment constituted by the court-lines. The sense of the dribble move depends partly upon the fact that it is produced in a particular area on the floor – performing the same movement out by the three-point line, for instance, would not mean the same thing. Specific details regarding the location of the action are left implicit in the talk: Gregg’s instructions are to begin in a position “with one foot in the key” and then “take a dribble out”, but these instructions do not provide the players with a set of coordinates precise enough to be useful as a template for action. The enactment, by being produced in a specific location visible by reference to the environmental structure provided by the court lines, thus fills in the detail left unspecified by the verbal component. Rather than being the spatially ambiguous action that it would be if understood by reference to the talk alone, the action takes on a precise spatial identity.

A second example further illustrates the use of environmentally coupled enactments to bring into being actions that are only implicit in the verbal component. The strip of action I consider here occurs later in correction 1. While a number of gestural
components are produced in this strip of action, the specific enactment I consider here occurs as Gregg utters the words “and then we got a big” (lines 37-38).

Transcript of Clip 7.1 (Correction 1) (partial)
35 Gregg: Take him down, (.) and if he doesn't (0.7) get in front of you↑ then you help yourse- you have here two on one
36 he's gotta stop, (0.5) step in and help you↑ and then we
37 got a big↑ if he doesn't↑ you go all the way through↑ if
38 two man is helping down we kick out for a shot.

In this stretch of the correction, Gregg is demonstrating the options that the ball-carrier might have given various defensive responses to the action of dribbling into the key. In lines 35-36, Gregg explains that if the ball-carrier’s defender does not manage to get in front of the ball-carrier, then “you have here two on one” (line 36) – in other words, another defensive player, the forward, will be forced to guard two players – the ball-carrier and the defensive player’s own assigned player, the offensive forward on the baseline. As Gregg says this, he moves closer to the basket along the path the ball-carrier would have open to him in this situation. In line 37, Gregg explains that the defensive forward will have to step toward the ball-carrier to cut off his path to the basket. If this situation occurs, Gregg continues, “we got a big” (lines 37-38). As he says this, he produces a gesture which enacts the action of passing the ball to Steve (Figure 7-14), who, during the previous drill performance, had been the offensive forward (and therefore the “big” – a nickname for a power forward or centre – to which Gregg refers) located on the baseline.
There are several important points to be made about this gesture. Firstly, the vocal component of the statement makes no mention of the action in question here, the pass to Steve. A player-category (“a big”) is referred to, but Gregg’s sentence “we got a big” does not unambiguously describe the “big” as a pass-recipient. The gesture, in this case, is necessary to elaborate and disambiguate the meaning of the verbal component by visually specifying what “we got a big” means in this case: that the forward is unguarded and available to the ball-carrier as a potential pass-recipient.

Secondly, both the enacted pass and the verbal utterance are elaborated by phenomena in the environment. That the gesture is meant to represent a pass is not obvious from the gesture alone: unlike the shooting gesture discussed above, which is an example of what Kendon (2004) terms a “narrow gloss” gesture, this one does not have a simple and obvious meaning. Very similar gestures to the one Gregg uses to indicate “passing the ball” here are sometimes used, for instance, to instruct players to move to different locations on the court. The embodied context in which Gregg’s passing gesture occurs here constitutes an essential background for establishing its meaning. A key component in building the sense of this gesture is the embodied contribution made to producing a background for its interpretation by Patrick, the player who been guarding Steve during the previous drill performance. Approximately three seconds before he produces the passing gesture, Gregg has moved beneath the basket. At this point, Patrick is standing roughly in the position...
he had been occupying when the correction began: close to his man, Steve (Figure 7-15).

![Figure 7-15: Still from Clip 7.1, at 01:18.1. “You have here two on one” (line 23)](image_url)

Following Gregg’s utterance “he’s gotta stop” (line 37), there is a half-second pause before he continues. During this pause, Patrick repositions himself into the help position he would be expected to take up were a guard to penetrate into the key. The pause appears to indicate that Gregg is waiting for Patrick to respond before he continues with the demonstration (and indeed, though it is difficult to see on the video, it looks as though Gregg indicates to Patrick to move over by sweeping his hands from left to right). As Gregg resumes his prior talk with “step in and help you” (line 37), he also seems to physically move Patrick over further to the right, into the relevant spot. Patrick is now almost beneath the basket, and has left his man, Steve, wide open (Figure 7-16). It is within this reconfigured organization of bodies that Gregg performs his gesture enacting the pass to Steve.
The combination of the closed-off driving lane (a situation which would make passing the ball an appropriate response for the ball-carrier) established by Patrick’s repositioning, and the open player standing on the baseline in the direction toward which the gesture is made (i.e. a potential passing option), provide environmental resources which interact with the talk and gesture to establish the sense of Gregg’s bodily movement as a “pass”. In this sense, the intelligibility of Gregg’s action is a collaborative accomplishment which involves the work of multiple participants.

Thirdly, following Gregg’s gesture phrase, Steve produces an enactment of dunking the basketball. Steve’s embodied response to Gregg demonstrates that he has understood Gregg’s action as describing a pass to him. Also, by visibly taking up Gregg’s gesture and building a course of action from it – producing a second enactive demonstration that logically extends from the action taking place in the Gregg’s enactment – Steve displays that he has taken the gesture into account in grasping Gregg’s meaning and in constructing his response. The gesture, then, is a crucial feature of the overall propositional content of the statement, not merely an accompaniment to the verbal content.
The above examples have illustrated how moving into the play-space provides the coach with access to environmental resources that can be coupled with enactive gestures, and how the resulting environmentally coupled enactments can contribute to the task of building corrections. At this point, I would like to turn to the question of how spatial location and environmentally coupled enactments work in concert with the categorial order of these activities to generate intelligible phenomena.

Sacks’ (1995) draft paper on children’s games examined the use of membership categorization devices in the organisation of play activities. In this paper, Sacks identified two core categorial phenomena present in games: the category-set of players and the category-set of game events (in other words, “the people taking various roles and positions and the things they do” (Butler & Weatherall, 2006, p. 446). These category-sets, Sacks noted, are stable: they remain unchanged over individual occasions of play and persists through changes in personnel. Further (and as mentioned in Chapter 6), Sacks suggested that at the beginning of play, upon restarting play, when changing games or on making changes in personnel, participants map themselves and their co-players onto the set of available player-categories, using either the players’-to-be personal names or some pronouns (note that mapping is described here as a wholly verbal procedure). My discussions of categorial work in the previous chapter illustrated that player categories of various types can be central to the organization and intelligibility of basketball activities. I want to expand upon this topic here by discussing two points related to the practices
of mapping members to relevant membership categories in correction activities. The first is the fact that during corrections, the coach frequently draws upon the “mappable” property of player-categories, in other words, the fact that activities are constituted by a “stability of categories over interchangeability of personnel” (Sacks, 1995, p. 492), in order to produce recognizable enactments. The second is the proposition that mapping might be accomplished spatially, rather than only verbally. This point will return the discussion to my argument that the coach has access to greater resources for building corrections from within the play-space by arguing that relocating into the field of action makes this process of “spatial mapping” far easier.

At the beginning of Clip 7.1 (Correction 1), Gregg walks into the play-space and positions himself next to Clyde – the incumbent of the “point guard” category during the prior play, and the player who had made the pass which precipitated the coach’s intervention. Rather than directing his bodily orientation and gaze toward Clyde, Gregg calls for the ball and then faces the basket, replicating Clyde’s bodily position and direction. In taking up this spatial location and displaying this bodily orientation, Gregg establishes the embodied conditions whereby he can be understood as having now mapped himself onto the point guard category: that is, occupying a player’s space and bodily orientation appears to be a mapping procedure open to the coach. That he is able to do so requires an orientation to player-position categories as interchangeable, mappable phenomena. At the same time, however, it is clear that player categories are not able to be exchanged at any time by any participant – for example, by players in the midst of a drill performance. While Sacks pointed out that the re-mapping of players can be occasioned by a change in game participants, or a restart of change of game, I suggest here that a temporary re-mapping can be made relevant by a correction sequence, with a return to the prior categories being effected at the conclusion of the correction. Further, the option of occupying a player category is not open to just anybody. An orientation to the current context as a “time out” from play, a correction activity, as well as to Gregg’s incumbency of the “coach” category and the fact that procedures such as this are legitimate predicates of that category, are necessary for what takes place here to be intelligible as a mapping procedure.
All of the environmentally coupled enactments that Gregg produces in Clip 7.1 (Correction 1), including the dribble enactment and the pass enactment analyzed above, rely for their intelligibility as the actions they are on the understanding that he performs them as an incumbent of the “point guard” category. The enactments, that is, can be understood as specific game-events (the dribble move is not just ‘dribbling the ball’ but precisely this dribble move, made by this player, in this situation) in part because of the participants’ knowledge that those game-events are the province of the point guard in this particular scenario. At the same time, the production of these actions in their environmental (spatial) locations helps to establish the fact that Gregg’s incumbency of the player-category is still operative. Environmentally coupled enactments and the practice of mapping onto player-categories should thus be seen as mutually elaborative phenomena: the sense of one helps to constitute the sense of the other.

Gregg performs all of his enactive gestures in Clip 7.1 (Correction 1) as an incumbent of a single player category, the “point guard”. If we briefly examine a section of another correction in which Gregg moves between player categories, we can begin to get a sense of just how efficient a tool the spatial mapping procedure is for building correctables. The following transcript presents the relevant section of Clip 7.3.

**Transcript of Clip 7.3 (partial)**

22 Gregg: Ay (. ) le- l- let me just talk about something get thir-
23 uh- get red to set up the offenses here.
24 (2.7)
25 ???: ( )
26 Gregg: Yeah just red. (0.3) "Just red."
27 (2.7)
28 Gregg: "Go in a line with your five and the ring."
29 (0.3)
30 ???: (five)
31 Gregg: "yep (0.2) So you're up here"
32 (0.8)
33 Gregg: Ay (0.2) Just on the thi:rd option here (0.3) we pass
34 the ball to two man, (0.8) an-and Diamond Valley will
play no different.

Gregg: They know this guy's going.

Gregg: Okay? (0.3) so we gotta be looking at this.

Gregg: Catch the ball and stay up high.

Gregg: So if I have it (0.2) if my man has gone under the screen to cheat and wait (0.3) we might have an open shot here.

Gregg: Okay (0.2) so let's do that same against each other.

Gregg: Number two.

Gregg: °Just step out for a second°

Gregg: Pass the ball back here.

Gregg: I'm watching the ball.

Gregg: Ball goes over here.

Gregg: Alright? I'm watching the ball here.

Gregg: You stay.

Gregg: So bring your man down to the three point line and stay.

Gregg: Feeder gets the ball.

Gregg: Now we looking to go.

Gregg: Now what I want you to do is find his man and set the back screen on him.

Gregg: So y'gotta go and find his man and set the back screen on him.
Gregg: So if his man is in a line with him bang hit him, (0.3) an as soon as he does that you go hard (0.5) ba- (0.2) g- ga- g- go hard through the middle.

In this fragment, Gregg initially moves into the spot of the “point guard” position, mapping himself onto that category, and from here he produces a number of environmentally coupled gestures recognizable as actions performed vis-à-vis his incumbency of “point guard”. Once he concludes this section of the correction he begins a second section (which he marks with the announcement “Number two” (line 54)). At this point he relocates into the space occupied by the “5 man”, and as he does so he instructs the player who is already there to step out of his spot (Figure 7-18). By this procedure, Gregg re-maps himself from the point guard category onto the “5 man” category. Following this spatial re-mapping, Gregg enacts a screen which is intelligible by reference to this new player-category (Figure 7-19). As this example illustrates, the spatial mapping procedure enables the coach to rapidly move in and out of different player-categories. This in turn allows him to generate recognizable, specific actions without the need for extended verbal explanations of exactly what he is doing.

Figure 7-18: Still from Clip 7.3, at 01:06.5. Gregg moves the incumbent “5 man” out of position, mapping himself onto the player’s category.
As mentioned earlier in this chapter, basketball activities occur in complex and dynamic perceptual environments. In order for correction and instruction to take place, relevant visual phenomena often need to be (re)constructed by the parties to the activity. Making relevant features visually available for to the players, and establishing a shared orientation amongst the players toward these features, is a central concern of the coach during such activities. The enactive gestures outlined above constitute an important means by which the coach can produce highly specific basketball-relevant actions. The cases discussed have also illustrated that the process of producing recognizable basketball actions is an inherently collaborative one, in which the accomplishment of intelligible actions is often dependent upon the embodied contributions of multiple parties.

Enactments are not the only form of gesture to take advantage of the resources provided by moving into the play-space. A second class of gestures recurrent in correction activities is comprised of the diverse range of gestures that can be collected together under the term “pointing”. Kendon (2004) notes that pointing gestures are used to direct attention toward objects, locations, or directions in the space beyond the speaker. This can be either the physical space that the participants share, some space existing beyond the current visible environment, or some abstract space. What I want to explore here, however, is not how pointing gestures might work to direct attention to various environmental features that can be said to pre-exist the pointing action, but rather how pointing can function in correction sequences as part of larger embodied practices of shaping visible elements of the
environment into basketball-relevant events and objects. One method of rendering features of a material environment visible and intelligible is the embodied practice that Goodwin (1994) calls “highlighting”. Highlighting consists of practices through which features of a perceptual field are discursively shaped into the “phenomenal objects” characteristic of some professional domain. A perceptual field can be highlighted in various ways. One basic highlighting technique involves the simultaneous use of talk and pointing gestures in such a way that the two mutually elaborate one another and the visual environment. Through this practice, what is pointed at and talked about becomes performatively configured as a work-relevant structure, a visible manifestation of some category of professional knowledge. The following clip provides a perspicuous example of this process in action. Gregg uses an environmentally coupled pointing gesture as an essential part of a situated practice of defining an empty space on the court as a certain type of basketball-relevant object, a “gap in the defence”.

Transcript of Clip 7.4

1 Gregg: Hold on. (. ) hold on hold on.
2 (0.3)
3 Gregg: Aaaah
4 (1.3)
5 Gregg: Be in the game.
6 (0.2)
7 Gregg: Go set it up again
8 (1.7)
9 Gregg: Just go: go to the same spot, yup (. ) same spots.
10 (0.3)
11 Gregg: Go up Boris.
12 (0.9)
13 Gregg: Step out Eric
14 (0.2)
15 Gregg: Man, are you blind? (. ) Mike?=
16 Mike: =Nah
17 Gregg: Fuck.
18 Mike: Yeh
19 Gregg: Look at that.
20 (1.0)
21 Gregg: Man, what else ya want?
22 (0.8)
23 Gregg: Fuck corner, (0.2) I’m here.
24 (1.0)
25 Gregg: There’s no-one else there.
26 (0.3)
27 Gregg: He goes backdoor we stand- you could take him one on one
28 sh- do whatever you want.

As Gregg asks Mike “are you blind?” (line 15) he raises his hands to a forty-five degree angle, either side of his thighs, with palms supine in a shrug-like gesture. Following Mike’s response (line 16), and timed to coincide with the utterance of his own expletive (line 17), Gregg brings his hands sharply around in front of him and pushes them away from him in the direction of the space on the floor that he is referring to, converting his shrug into an environmentally coupled, two-handed point (Figure 7-20). Gregg holds this position as Mike produces his agreement token (line 18), and then, as he says “Look at that” (line 19), he thrusts his hands out in front of him while bending forward at the waist, producing a dramatic, exaggerated, full-torso point (Figure 7-21).

Figure 7-20: Still from Clip 7.4, at 00:52.9, “Fuck” (line 17)
A variety of different semiotic phenomena are employed in the process of highlighting and defining the physical space on the court as a “gap in the defence” here. As such, this example provides a useful place to summarize the different practices that have been outlined in this chapter so far, while bringing in some new analytic resources. Firstly, the play-space as a whole, comprised of players’ bodies and court markings, constitutes a phenomenal field available to the participants’ scrutiny. The availability of this field is, in part, an outcome of the fact that Gregg halted the previous drill performance before it reached completion, which means that the players have not moved around a great deal, and their bodies are still arranged roughly as they were at the point when the correctable occurred. Still, some work does need to be performed to reconstruct the field as it was, and this accounts for the instructions that Gregg issues to various players (lines 7 to 13) to return to the floor positions they had occupied at the relevant moment during the drill\(^{81}\). Secondly, Gregg’s pointing gesture directs attention toward a particular aspect of that spatial domain. Thirdly, the target of the point is a region within the larger spatial domain, bounded by players’ bodies, but within whose boundaries there is an absence of bodies. That the target of the point is a region, rather than some individual object, is implied by the form that the pointing gesture takes: Streeck (2009) notes that gestures made toward a field are often made with a flat hand, as opposed to individuating gestures which tend to use an extended finger. Fourthly, the talk that

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\(^{81}\) This reconstructive process will be elaborated upon in detail later in the chapter.
accompanies the pointing gesture elaborates the sense of what is being pointed at. Gregg uses the deictic term that to refer to the target of the point, rather than *there*, which would seem to be the more appropriate term if the objective had been to indicate a spatial location. In making this deictic selection, Gregg formulates the empty space on the basketball court as a type of entity, an object. By formulating the space in this way, this semantic operation contributes to the process of transforming an area of space into a basketball-relevant thing: a “gap in the defence”. Fifthly, the talk and the pointing gesture both take place within the encompassing activity of a practice drill. The activity distributes predicates of action to the members, in particular the expectation that the coach will correct player errors. Once the play has been halted and the correction sequence launched, players can reasonably expect that the coach’s upcoming action will involve the identification of a problematic bit of conduct. It is within this framework that the empty space on the court that the coach identifies can be grasped as not merely a “gap” but as a “missed object” constituting a correctable. And sixthly, the embodied participation framework generated by Gregg’s halting of the play and his relocation into the play space affords the mutual orientation needed for him to direct the players’ attention to the relevant environmental feature.

This stretch of interaction also illustrates how the practice of highlighting environmental features through pointing can be integrated with environmentally coupled enactments. At the beginning of the correction sequence, Gregg positions himself next to Mike, establishing the conditions in which he can spatially map himself onto Mike’s player-category. Once Gregg has highlighted the empty space on the court and made it intelligible as a gap in the defence, he moves into it, receives the ball, and enacts possible next actions (Figure 7-22). His actions in this space are understandable as enactments of what Mike should have done as a response to the gap. The object that has been built through interactional work, the “gap”, thus becomes taken up and used as an environmental resource – it functions as a context for building the sense of further gestures.
The missed objects that are the topics of many basketball corrections can be difficult things for players to see during a performance occurring in real-time. In this case, for instance, the object in question consists of an absence of bodies in a particular spatial location (framed by other bodies and court lines), an object that only exists temporarily, coming into being for a fleeting moment during the unfolding play-action. Practices for construing the phenomenal field in ways that make such missed objects stand out thus comprise key tools in a coach’s repertoire. Pointing gestures can be used, as in the above case, to help locate with precision and then reify objects simultaneously articulated in talk. The pointing gesture, as part of a larger course of action, links the object mentioned in the talk to relevant aspects of the visual field. In the process of pointing out and classifying the feature, the coach not only reveals a feature to the players, but also instructs the players how to see the space, for example, as a “gap in the defence”. Further, by integrating enactive gestures with environmental features that have been defined as objects of a certain kind, the coach can demonstrate how to competently respond to such features. The correction in Clip 7.4 thus consists of an instruction for competently seeing, within the complex and dynamic structure of the court, a core basketball object, and for building relevant action in response to that seeing.

It was mentioned in the discussion of Clip 7.4 that prior to the coach’s identification of the “gap”, certain embodied work had to be carried out in order to reconstruct the phenomenal field of players’ bodies and court space into a configuration suitable for making relevant phenomena visible. This reconstructive work forms the final topic of
this chapter. The frequent practice, within correction sequences, of re-building embodied environments on the court is a consequence of the sequential organization of basketball events and objects. Not only do relevant phenomena such as players’ actions and “gaps” exist only briefly, and not only are they dependent for their identity upon the spatial and categorial contexts in which they occur, but the identity of players’ actions and objects on the court is also frequently contingent upon the sequential position in which they occur within an unfolding trajectory of play-action. In such cases, in order to get to a place where correction can be intelligibly accomplished, a process of manipulating the environment may need to be undertaken. This process involves the construction of a precisely ordered spatial and categorial context that represents a specific sequential moment during the preceding drill performance. It is against this sequential/categorial/spatial background that a particular correctable object can be seen (and used for correction and instruction). If we turn now to Clip 7.1 (Correction 2), we can see that a substantial section of this correction sequence – lines 3-23 – is taken up with precisely this task of context-building.

Transcript of Clip 7.1 (Correction 2)
1  Gregg: Alright (.) ((Whistle blow))
2       (1.0)
3  Gregg: Go back and set it up here black.
4       (1.2)
5  Gregg: Ay set it up here red can do that.
6       (2.2)
7  Gregg: Listen up you guys on the sideline over there.
8       (1.9)
9  Gregg: Run yellow.
10      (2.3)
11 Gregg: Or did we make a pass to Jason (.) Sorry we did. =
12 ????:    =Flex
13 Gregg: We ran flex. (.) My bad.
14       (0.5)
15 Gregg: Make a pass (.) before that.
16       (0.3)
17 Gregg: Make a cut.
18       (0.6)
Gregg: This guy he:re, (1.0) alright? is there.

(0.6)

Gregg: Alright?.

(1.4)

Gregg: This guy he:re,(0.5) was for a split second (0.4) there.

(0.4)

Gregg: Alright? And you just standing there (.) you do noth-

absolutely nothing (.) all I wanna do is (.) step in

this corner and get the ball.

(0.4)

Gregg: Read the game (.) watch the ball (0.4) watch the ball

(0.4) your man is now focused (.)*just stay here*

Keith: =oh yeah

(0.4)

Gregg: Your man is focused now on that.

(0.4)

Gregg: Alright? (. ) So you might have a slip the:re, (0.4) get

the ba:ll, (. ) and score.

(1.0)

Gregg: Alright?

(0.5)

Gregg: If not, (0.5) then he goes your man is high (0.3) go

meet him here.

(0.3)

Gregg: Right there *stay there*

(0.3)

Gregg: Alright?

(0.3)

Gregg: You go back follow your man.

(1.1)

Gregg: Alright?

(0.3)

Gregg: So- pin him here.

(0.3)

Gregg: Don’t give him room to just move around.

(0.3)

Gregg: And now maybe here (. ) we can have that, (0.3) or we can

step out and receive the ball so we can run the play.

(0.3)

Gregg: Instead we sitting here sitting here sitting here (0.3)

he helped (.) went to the split line, (0.3) you started
stepping out here (.) and he covered that as well.

Gregg: To me that is impossible.

Gregg: Alright?

Gregg: Read the game (0.3) waiting what he does (0.3) keep an eye on the ball all the time (0.3) your man cheats goes away, ((Claps hands)) step in there and score (.) easy bucket.

Gregg: Let’s go.

The process of getting to a place where relevant phenomena can be adequately seen and understood is accomplished, in this correction event, by the players working through a sequence of embodied movements (under the direction of the coach’s verbal instructions) that reshape the spatial field step-by-step in accordance with the sequence of actions that comprised the original play. At the beginning of the correction (line 3), Gregg instructs the players to “Go back and set it up here”. The players respond by taking up the floor positions that they had respectively occupied at the beginning of the prior drill performance. Once they have done repositioned themselves, Gregg instructs them to run “yellow”, the play that (he thinks, though incorrectly, as it turns out) they were running in the prior performance. The players begin to walk through the first actions that constitute this play, and as they do so Gregg recognizes that this was not the play that they had been running. He checks his understanding verbally by asking if the play had begun with a different event (“Or did we make a pass to Jason” (line 11)). His suspicion is confirmed by a player who utters the name of the play that the players had actually been running, “flex” (line 12). Gregg’s next utterance, “Make a pass” (line 13), is understood by the players as an instruction to halt the reconstruction in progress and re-start the process of building the sequential course of action.

The procedure performed here of checking the sequential events that the players are reconstructing in the correction sequence against those that occurred in the prior performance, illustrates that an orientation to verisimilitude informs the production
of this re-enactment: the point of performing this sequential course of action is to produce an adequate\textsuperscript{82} representation of a real set of events, a sort of embodied three-dimensional artefact. As a representation of the spatial organization of the court at the moment when the correctable action occurred, the built re-enactment is far superior to, for instance, drawings or video for the coach’s purposes here in that its properties afford certain practices that facilitate correction and instruction. Once the players have built the field into a representation of a sequential moment of the previous play, Gregg is able to employ the reconstructed field, which he can now assume is oriented to by the players as a particular spatio-temporal context, interactively to make relevant phenomena visible to the players. In effect, the coach now has at his disposal an embodied contextual background which can be moved through three-dimensionally and interacted with in various ways. For one, the re-enactment can be physically manipulated in order to assemble adequate representations of prior states of affairs. A perspicuous example of such activity occurs at line 23 of the transcript. As Gregg says “This guy here”, he grabs the player beside him, David, by his right elbow and pulls him into position. Gregg continues repositioning David as he resumes his talk with “was for a split second”, delaying the end of his utterance, the word “there”, until he has successfully placed David in the correct location.

Physical manipulation of the reconstructed field can also be used to construct visible states of affairs that did not occur, but should have. A little later in this correction, as he says “So you might have a slip\textsuperscript{83} there” (line 34), Gregg shoves Steve, moving him into an open space beneath the basket (Figure 7-23). He pauses to wait for Steve to reach the relevant location, and then completes his utterance with the statement “get the ball, and score” (line 35). His instruction is tied to the visual availability of Steve’s body, which is now unguarded and ready to receive a pass. The practice thus

\textsuperscript{82} What counts as “adequate” is a function of the practical purposes at hand. So, for instance, running the same play as the prior performance comprises a necessary criterion for adequacy; running the play at the same speed, on the other hand, does not, as is demonstrated by the players’ walking-pace movements during the re-enactment.

\textsuperscript{83} A “slip” occurs when a player setting a screen fakes the screen and cuts behind the defender to accept a pass.
works to generate a representation of a correct response to the situation that has been rebuilt.

Additionally, the coach is able to use the reconstructed field as a background for producing his own demonstrations in the form of environmentally coupled enactments. This practice is visible in Clip 1 (Correction 2) immediately after the initial phase of rebuilding the spatial field has been reconfigured. Once Gregg has shifted David into the correct position (as discussed above) and thus assembled the spatial field as it was during the performance, he maps himself onto Steve’s player-category by moving into the space Steve had been occupying during the play. In this space, Gregg enacts a “waiting to receive the ball” stance – knees bent, arms up, palms toward the ball-carrier, making a target for the ball (Figure 7-24). Coupled with his talk (“you just standing there you do noth- absolutely nothing” (lines 25-26), Gregg’s enactment here is intelligible as a reproduction of Steve’s error in the previous play – it is a physical embodiment of the correctable around which this correction sequence is centred. Gregg’s action here makes Steve’s conduct in the prior play visible as a failure to respond adequately to a specific set of circumstances, but it is only visible in this way because the preceding interactional work in this correction sequence has allowed the action to be re-inserted into the precise spatial location and sequential position within which it originally occurred.
Finally, once constructed, the embodied field can be worked through multiple times to show different contingencies and appropriate responses. We saw above that Gregg shoved Steve into an open space while saying “So you might have a slip there” (line 34). Once Gregg has pointed out that a scoring opportunity may arise from this move, he begins his next statement by going back to the sequential position prior to Steve’s “slip”. Grammatically, his statement is based upon a conditional (“If not” (line 39) which links this utterance back to the earlier state of affairs described in line 34. “If not” draws upon Gregg’s use of “might” in the earlier utterance, relying for its sense on the relative epistemic uncertainty expressed by the use of the modal verb. At the same time, Gregg takes up the position where Steve had been before Gregg shoved him, that is, at the moment when he might have had “a slip” (Figure 7-25). From this position, he is able to demonstrate an alternative trajectory of action: what Steve should do, in this circumstance, if he does not “have a slip”.

**Figure 7-24: Still from Clip 7.1, at 02:30.1. “YOU JUST STANDING THERE” (LINE 25)**
In summary, the reconstructed perceptual field collaboratively assembled by the coach and the players comprises a crucial coaching resource for engaging in correction and instruction activities. It provides a framework within which players’ errors and relevant objects, which are fleeting phenomena during real-time basketball activities, can be clearly reproduced – though enactments and pointing gestures – for extended scrutiny. It is highly flexible, allowing for ongoing spatial reconfiguration and sequential progression, as well as regression. And it allows for the demonstration of correct responses to states of affairs. If Goodwin (2007b) is correct in his assertion that novices become competent members of a community of practice by moving through work-relevant environments in the company of a more senior practitioner, and learning to see and respond to relevant features of those environments, then it would appear that the practices of reconstructing and working within embodied fields that I have identified in this chapter are central to the process of learning to play basketball.

As a final point, the fact that detailed interactive work dedicated toward building an environmental context is often necessary in order for corrections to be delivered in these activities returns me to the discussion on halting the play-in-progress that opened this chapter’s analysis. Recall that in Clip 7.1 (Correction 1), the coach halted the players’ performance immediately after the correctable had occurred. In accomplishing the correction, much of the work that takes up the first phase of Correction 2 was unnecessary: because the play had been stopped in progress, the
sequential and spatial framework of action was still largely there, as it were, to be exploited in the subsequent correction sequence. Much of the “setup” work detailed in Correction 2 was therefore rendered unnecessary. So, while letting the play run to its natural completion point may from some perspectives appear preferable for preserving the autonomy of the players, it seems that there may be good practical reasons why the coach might want to halt ongoing play performances. It may be the case that beyond issues of power, there are, to paraphrase Garfinkel (1967), good organizational reasons for “bad” coaching practices.

7.4 Conclusion

Where Chapter 6 explicated how correctable events are visually identified during practice activities, this chapter set out to investigate how correctables are dealt with and resolved. It explored this question by focusing on a stretch of action (Clip 7.1) during which two drill performances and two correction events occurred. It also examined several other fragments of video in order to illustrate complimentary and contrasting phenomena. The analysis took as its starting point Goodwin’s (2007b) assertion that a novice learns to be a competent practitioner in some domain of practice by exploring work-relevant environments with an expert. As was explained, however, certain features of basketball practice make the activities in this setting different from the practices considered by Goodwin, and these differences have consequences for the ways in which instructional activities in basketball are organized. For instance, the distributed structure of attention characteristic of team-based basketball drills means that the coach must often perform interactional work to summon the players’ attention before he can begin to effectively correct errors.

The majority of the chapter was then taken up with explicating a set of practices dedicated to resolving the problems associated with making correctables and their

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84 I am thinking here of sociological studies involved in critiquing sport coaching practices, such as those discussed in Chapter 1. Researchers such as Cushion and Jones (2006), for instance, have expressed concerns about asymmetries in power between coaches and athletes in sport and the “authoritarian behaviour” and “symbolic violence” deployed by coaches in their interactions with players.
corrections visually available for instructional work. The dynamic, ephemeral nature of players’ actions and basketball objects as they occur and appear during the real-time flow of drills presents serious difficulties for the participants’ ability to subject relevant phenomena to extended, in-depth scrutiny. This is compounded by the fact that the exact sense of a correctable object often depends upon its precise location within spatial, categorial and sequential frameworks of organization. As a result, before a correction can be made, elaborate environments within which correctables can be rendered visible, and therefore available for correction work, often need to be established. The process of building these environments was shown to consist of the step-by-step reproduction of the sequence of movements occurring during the play in question, with the spatial field becoming progressively reshaped in the process until the relevant sequential position has been reached. The outcome of this process is a highly manipulable three-dimensional embodied representation of the prior play that allows for both physical restructuring and interactive use. This reconstructed event-field comprises perhaps the paramount resource for producing corrections in basketball coaching, as it affords detailed opportunities for pointing out and demonstrating relevant objects.

The analysis also demonstrated a pair of practices deployed by the coach to accomplish corrections within these reconstructed fields. The first consists of the use of environmentally-coupled gestures (C. Goodwin, 2007a), including enactments and pointing. These embodied practices link gesture, talk and the material structure in the environment (i.e., players’ bodies and court markings) into mutually-elaborative action packages. Such structures of action were shown to be crucial in producing demonstrations of errors and correct performances and in shaping features of the court into basketball-relevant objects. Combining talk with gesture and the physical environment enables the coach to reveal relevant features to the players, instruct them in how to competently see such features, and demonstrate how to respond appropriately to them. The second practice deployed within these reconstructed fields of action was what I termed a spatial mapping procedure. This practice involved the coach moving into the space occupied by a player and replicating the player’s bodily orientation in order to map himself onto different player-categories. This procedure enables the coach to move in and out of different player categories
efficiently (i.e. without needing to verbally state what he is doing) and, in the process, to construct a spatial/categorial environment within which he is able to produce actions recognizable as enactments of player errors and correct performances. Overall, in identifying and describing these practices this chapter contributes some insight into how instructional activities are interactively accomplished and managed in the basketball setting.

In terms of the themes outlined in Chapter 2, the analysis in this chapter offers some important insights into the topics of embodiment and instruction. The central importance of bodies in the organization of correction activities has been demonstrated – in particular, through the use of bodies in building reconstituted perceptual fields within which visible errors and corrections may be produced and recognized. In this regard, bodies have been explored as a members’ phenomenon, that is, in terms of how they are oriented to by participants in the organization of their activities. With regard to instruction, this chapter outlines some of the complexities that arise for pedagogical practice in basketball due to the nature of the activities being performed in this setting. Particularly problematic for instructional purposes were the distributed attention of the players and the potential visual inaccessibility of the objects to be corrected. In elaborating some of the methods participants used to deal with these problems, this chapter has provided some original insights into the organization of instructional activities in the sport setting. In this way it makes essential contributions to the thesis’ overall project of respecifying sporting activities as members’ practical productions.

This chapter concludes the analysis of the structural organization of correction sequences. The following chapter takes up another theme, the moral organization of basketball practice activities. While the analyses so far have focused on practices for dealing with performances that are problematic in terms of basketball competency, the next chapter is concerned with how participants analyze and respond to normatively problematic performances.
Chapter 8: The moral order of basketball practice activities

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The two previous chapters have investigated and described some members’ methods for organizing basketball correction events as situated practical activities – that is, some procedures used to produce correction events and their features as locally accountable, orderly phenomena. In this chapter, I turn to exploring members’ situated practices as constitutive of an order that is not only locally rationally accountable, but also simultaneously and unavoidably, locally morally accountable (Fox, 2008). Thus, while the earlier chapters were concerned to explicate participants’ practices for producing and recognizing basketball-relevant objects in training sessions, this one focuses on the parties’ mutual accomplishment of “moral objects”. I begin the chapter by briefly outlining Garfinkel’s unique approach to understanding norms as constituting, rather than regulating, social action. Next, I look at how Sacks’ conception of membership categorization devices has been developed, most notably in the work of Jayyusi, Watson, and Housley and Fitzgerald, as a means of exploring members’ practical methods of displaying and recognizing the normative accountability of their own and others’ actions. The remainder of the chapter is then dedicated to analyzing some instances of situated action in basketball practice sessions where members’ constitutive moral orientations and practices of moral reasoning are visibly relied upon in accomplishing “local configurations of moral organization and sense” (Housley & Fitzgerald, 2009, p. 346). By delineating some features of the moral organization of basketball training activities, this chapter contributes an important dimension to the thesis’ overall project of describing how parties accomplish basketball training sessions in and as situated practical action.

8.2 ETHNOMETHODOLOGY AND THE MORAL CHARACTER OF SOCIAL ORDER

Since the publication of Parsons’ The Structure of Social Action (1937/1968), devising a solution to the “Hobbesian problem of order” has been a central project
for sociology (Burger, 1977; Dawe, 1970). As noted in Chapter 3, the Hobbesian problem begins with the view that “in the absence of external constraint, the pursuit of private interests and desires leads inevitably to both social and individual disintegration” (Dawe, 1970, p. 207). Given such a conflict-ridden “state of nature”, the existence of apparently orderly social systems is seen to require explanation, which, in sociological theorizing, usually involves stipulating some kind of external constraint on the conduct of individual actors (Dawe, 1970). In the influential solution to the Hobbesian problem of order offered by Parsons, the external constraints take a normative form: human action is seen to be governed by sets of shared values and norms which are institutionalized as “role expectations”, and internalized by individuals as “needs dispositions” (Parsons & Shils, 1951/2001). A crucial feature of Parsons’ formula is that it theorizes norms and values as constraining and determining conduct: they operate as “causal dispositions to action” (Heritage, 1984, p. 22). Further, these normative underpinnings of people’s actions are conceptualized as being unavailable to ordinary actors, operating, as it were “behind their backs”. If actors were capable of reflecting upon their own internalized values they would be able to act strategically in relation to them, and Parsons’ theoretical system could no longer function as a “normative bulwark against the Hobbesian Machiavel” (Heritage, 1984, p. 32).

Parsons’ argument had a powerful impact on the field of sociology, and Garfinkel has himself acknowledged the formative role that Parsons’ The Structure of Social Action played in the development of his program of study (see Chapter 3). Whilst Parsons had approached the question of social action and organization via the Hobbesian problem of social order, however, Garfinkel integrated this focus on moral order with his investigations of the phenomenological problem of social order. To recap the point made earlier in this thesis, in Schutz’ phenomenology of the social world, to which Garfinkel was heavily indebted (Anderson, et al., 1985; Eberle, 2012; Heap & Roth, 1973; Psathas, 2004), the problem of social order was treated not as a moral one but rather as the cognitive problem of how people make sense of

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85 Parsons may appear an outdated target, but as Housley and Fitzgerald (2009) note, “this notion of normative regulation of social action and behaviour also finds resonance within Foucauldian thinking” and remains “a central feature of modern sociological theorizing” (p. 346).
the objects of the social world. Schutz’ “verstehende” approach to social action contrasted brightly with Parsons’ neo-Kantian focus on developing objective explanations for social phenomena. Schutz emphasized the necessity of attending to the ways in which events and actions are known and oriented to by actors as crucial for any characterization of the social world, as it is on the basis of their “common-sense constructs” that actors ground their action. The problem of order, from this perspective, becomes the question of how social actors “come to know, and know in common, what they are doing and the circumstances in which they are doing it” (Heritage, 1984, p. 76).

Garfinkel’s decision to follow Schutz and treat the problem of order as the problem of how members achieve intersubjective understandings of their circumstances and actions led to ethnomethodology’s programme: investigating and describing members’ methodical procedures for producing and recognizing “what they take to be ‘social facts’” (Psathas, 1980, p. 3, emphasis in original). Jayyusi (1991) asserts that Garfinkel’s distinct achievement, with regard to the longstanding sociological and philosophical questions of moral order, was to respecify such questions as matters of practical relevance for members of society. Garfinkel accomplished this respecification by demonstrating that the intelligible orderliness of social scenes (that is, order in the “cognitive” sense outlined above) was itself normatively grounded. As Garfinkel (1964) puts it:

A society’s members encounter and know the moral order as perceivedly normal courses of action — familiar scenes of everyday affairs, the world of daily life known in common with others and with others taken for granted … They refer to this world as the “natural facts of life” which, for members, are through and through moral facts of life. For members not only are matters so about familiar scenes, but they are so because it is morally right or wrong that they are so. (p. 225)

86 Though it should be noted that the predominantly cognitive approach of Schutz’s phenomenology, and the retention of this cognitivism in Garfinkel’s early work, has led at least one commentator to describe this early incarnation of ethnomethodology, which was more interested in sense-making as a cognitive process than as embodied practices in concrete settings, as better termed protoethnomethodology (Lynch, 1993).
Garfinkel’s claim that moral order is “constitutive of the intelligibility of human action and human understanding” (Jayyusi, 1991, p. 237) was not made as a general theoretical principle, but was founded on Garfinkel’s discovery, made through a set of “breaching experiments” (or as Watson (2009b) terms them, “interventions”), that actors, in their work of constituting the local sense of action, treat one another’s actions as the products of accountable moral choice.

Schutz (1962) had proposed that pragmatic social actors engaged in mundane activity: a) adopt the natural attitude that things in the world are as they seem to be (rather than doubting or questioning such things, as a scientist might); b) assume that their experience of the phenomenal world is identical “for all practical purposes” with that of others87; and c) conduct their affairs on the basis of this assumption. The existence of a “common culture” in this understanding is not, as in Parsons’ scheme, an ontological fact. Rather, any understandings held in common by social actors exist as background expectancies oriented to by social actors themselves in accomplishing their concerted action. Garfinkel’s interventions were designed to uncover the background expectancies that, in a given setting, are operating to sustain members’ assumptions that the reciprocity of perspectives holds. His practice of disrupting the “normally thoughtless orderly character” (Rawls, 2005, p. 711) of routine activities was based upon the principle that “successfully disrupted situations should enable one to infer the absence of some essential procedure and, by working backward, elucidate its constitutive import in normal circumstances” (Maynard & Clayman, 2003, p. 178). The hostile reactions of the subjects of these experiments illustrated that, for parties in interaction, the reciprocal commitment to the constitutive expectancies required to establish a common intelligible social world is not merely a cognitive process, but something they rely upon and “trust” each other to do (Garfinkel, 1963). Garfinkel thus demonstrated that maintaining the reciprocity of perspectives is treated by parties to an interaction as an enforceable moral obligation. A party’s displayed failure to adhere to the expected local order “threatens the sense

87 This is Schutz’ general thesis of reciprocal perspectives, which was outlined in Chapter 3.
of things” (Watson, 2009b, p. 480), and is thus regarded as a sanctionable departure from the “natural facts” of the setting (Garfinkel, 1964, p. 236).

As discussed in Chapter 3, Garfinkel had in other experiments demonstrated that lay sense-making involved an orientation to the documentary method of interpretation. Garfinkel’s interventions had been designed to create unintelligible situations. The experimenter would perform actions which did not accord with the presupposed documentary pattern, the background of recognizable here-and-now circumstances to which, given the assumption of the reciprocity of perspectives, people could reasonably be expected to orient in producing and recognizing their behaviour. In the event of such breaches of expectable courses of action, Garfinkel (1964) postulated, “the members’ real perceived environment on losing its known in common background should become ‘specifically senseless’” (p. 236). However, and critically for my purposes, during the interventions the experimenters’ deviations from the norm of maintaining the reciprocity of perspectives did not produce the “cognitive anomie” (Maynard & Clayman, 2003) in the experiments’ subjects that Garfinkel had hypothesized. Rather than finding experimenters’ actions to be senseless, subjects overwhelmingly treated such actions as motivated departures from perceivedly normal courses of action. The experimenters responsible for the breaches:

…were immediately treated as having departed from the use of shared procedures for producing and recognizing “sensible plain talk”. And, in turn, that visibility gave rise to “secondary interpretations” by the subjects which, though non-specific, involved the subjects’ belief that the experimenters were behaving in a fashion which was “somehow hostile”. (Heritage, 1984, pp. 99-100)

Two important, interrelated points regarding the ways in which norms and rules apply to action emerged from this discovery. The first, as observed by Heritage (1984), is an understanding of norms as constitutive, rather than regulative, phenomena. Heritage explains that the classical sociological conception of norms as determining or causing conduct relies on treating the empirical circumstances in
which actors apply norms as being both established, and understood in common by all of the actors involved, prior to the norm’s application. Garfinkel’s approach inverts this understanding: “the common norms, rather than regulating conduct in pre-defined scenes of action, are instead reflexively constitutive of the activities and unfolding circumstances to which they are applied” (Heritage, 1984, p. 109, emphasis in original). Norms and rules, as constitutive background expectancies, provide taken-for-granted resources which members employ in determining (via the documentary method) what an action is. Norms are thus a necessary precondition for establishing the very intelligibility of action.

The second point to emerge from Garfinkel’s experiences is that all social action is reflexively accountable. By referring to the reflexive accountability of action, or, synonymously, the “incarnate” property of action, Garfinkel refers to the fact that ordinary actions, in their specific sense, are both constituted by and constitutive of the settings in which they are embedded. The production and recognition of an action’s situated sense is entirely dependent upon a setting’s participants’ orienting to a currently relevant array of background assumptions. As a result, each next action, in its very intelligibility, irremediably “reflects back” on the unfolding circumstances within which it is embedded, either maintaining, elaborating or altering the sense of these circumstances as action temporally progresses. This, of course, is the fundamentally sequential property of social order exploited so effectively by conversation analysis: the details comprising the background context for establishing the sense of any action are continuously reconstituted by those self-same actions, producing a set of “constantly kaleidoscoping order properties with which objects are rendered intelligible” (Rawls, 2008, p. 705). Since all actions are reflexively accountable, and since norms constitute essential background assumptions with which this accountability is made available via the documentary method, we can see that, in fact, all action is normatively accountable. There is no possibility of a “time out”:

from the normative accountability of actions, analyzed as “chosen”, which are visible through the application of the method… The normative accountability of action is thus a seamless web, an endless metric in terms of
which conduct is unavoidably intelligible, describable and assessable. (Heritage, 1984, p. 100)

Garfinkel’s investigations provide a first set of resources for investigating the moral order of basketball activities. A second set is offered by Sacks’ work on membership categorization. The following section discusses how membership categorization analysis can contribute to an understanding of norms-in-action.

8.3 Membership Categorization Analysis and Normative Accountability

Sacks’ work on membership categorization analysis, as explored and utilized in earlier chapters of this thesis, provides a means of examining members’ use of situated practices of categorization in the process of constituting orderly social scenes, identities and activities. In recent years, MCA has also begun to explore the fundamentally normative character of members’ situated categorical procedures for constituting recognizable phenomena. As such, it has emerged as a powerful means of investigating the reflexive relationship between morality and intelligibility (i.e., the normative accountability of action). The essentially moral character of members’ categorization practices has been most explicitly discussed in the work of Jayyusi (Jayyusi, 1984, 1991), and of Fitzgerald and Housley (Fitzgerald & Housley, 2002; Housley, 2002; Housley & Fitzgerald, 2002, 2003, 2009). As an important first point linking this section of the chapter to the previous section, Jayyusi has demonstrated that the Garfinkelian interest in the normative constitution of intelligible action is also a feature of Sacks’ approach to membership categorization. As she points out, Sacks’ conceptual armoury of category bound actions, rights and responsibilities (expanded in later MCA work to the more general notion of category bound predicates) describes members’ resources for displaying and recognizing the moral accountability of actions (and of absences of action). Jayyusi is worth quoting at length on this point:

Very clearly, the use of even mundanely descriptive categories, such as “mother”, “doctor”, “policeman”, for example, makes available a variety of
possible inferential trajectories in situ, that are grounded in the various “features” bound up with, or constitutive of, these categories as organizations of practical mundane social knowledge. These features might be “moral” features in the first place (such as the kinds of “rights” and “obligations” that are bound up with one’s being a “mother”, or a “doctor” or “policeman”), or they might be otherwise – such as the “knowledge” that is, for example, taken to be bound up with a category such as “doctor”, or the kind of “work” that is taken to be constitutive of, or tied to, a category such as a policeman. But even in the latter case, it turns out that as evidenced in our actual practices, for example, “knowledge” has its responsibilities – even these features provide grounds for the attribution of all kinds of moral properties, for finding that certain kinds of events or actions may or may not have taken place, for determining culpability, even for defeating the applicability of the category or description in the first place. (Jayyusi, 1991, p. 241)

Jayyusi argues here that members’ categorial constitution of persons, actions, and so on is moral at bedrock, regardless of whether explicitly “moral” issues are brought to the fore. In other words, categories and predicates provide resources for members’ reflexive “practical-moral inferential work” (Housley & Fitzgerald, 2009, p. 347). Members’ situated use of membership categories invokes category-bound predicates which, whether explicitly “moral” or otherwise, function to specify perceivedly normal and expectable identities and forms of conduct (or as Baker (1997) terms them, “categories of moral actors and courses of moral action” (p. 97)). Such predicates constitute setting-relevant normative expectations of all kinds, by whose use action can be reflexively rendered intelligible and normatively assessable. Thus, in Jayyusi’s (1991) words, “Intelligibility is constituted in practico-moral terms” (p. 241). In addition, as noted above in the discussion of Garfinkel’s notion of “trust”, members expect each other to orient to this categorical apparatus: it is “part and parcel of the common-sense procedural knowledge which is assumed, and morally required, to be held by competent society-members” (Watson, 2009a, p. 85).

Jayyusi (1991) further observes that the intertwining nature of intelligibility and moral accountability has been demonstrated by conversation analytic studies of the
sequential organization of talk-in-interaction. Such studies have shown that sequential structures such as adjacency pairs frequently possess preference characteristics, with certain responses to a first pair part being “preferred” and others “dispreferred”. Providing a preferred response can be understood as displaying a commitment to maintaining a perceivedly normal course of action, and the notion of preference can thus be seen as a normative organizational resource, a constitutive background expectancy, functioning in much the same way as the norms discussed as part of the documentary method of interpretation above.

While Jayyusi considers the insights into normative accountability that categorial and sequential studies can offer independently of one another, Fitzgerald and Housley have explicitly taken up the problem of integrating the categorial and sequential aspects of social organization in their analyses of moral-practical action (Fitzgerald & Housley, 2002). They draw on the work of Watson, who, as outlined in Chapter 4, had built upon Sacks’ notion of turn-generated categories as a means of integrating sequential and categorial aspects of interaction into a single analytic framework. At this point, it is worth returning to Watson’s argument in order to illustrate how it can be applied to the topic of moral order. Watson’s (1997) discussion of the “caller-called” category pair operative in a telephone conversation showed that sequentially embedded categories can be seen to function in a similar way to membership categories, in that such categories themselves allocate rights and obligations to their incumbents. Watson provides further examples of other interactional organizations in which turn-generated categories operate. Queues, for instance, are comprised of categories such as “head”, ‘second in line”, and so on, each possessing a set of category-bound predicates. It is clear from Watson’s example that he regards these predicates as morally implicative in the way described by Jayyusi above. For instance, the “head” of the queue must monitor the service transaction for its upcoming completion. These categories, which Watson describes as “integral” to the organization of the queue, do not preclude the relevance of what Watson terms “extrinsic” or “distal” membership categories (categories whose origin lies in circumstances external to the queue itself, such as “pregnant woman” and “fire-fighter”) in constituting the practico-moral order. Indeed, such categories may be intertwined with turn-generated categories, as when a pregnant woman is allowed to
join the queue at its head. For Watson, this feature illustrates “the intricate and inextricable interweaving of categorial and sequential aspects of the talk” (Watson, 1997, p. 69). Watson describes interlocutors’ orientation to categorial and sequential relevancies in producing and recognizing action as a “a reciprocal, back-and-forth elaboration of the categorial and sequential aspects of conversational order” (Watson, 1997, p. 55). He returns us here to Garfinkel’s notion of the documentary method of interpretation, arguing that categorial and sequential aspects of an interaction comprise indexical particulars, which both point to an underlying pattern and are in turn made intelligible by reference to the pattern. In this way, categorial and sequential particulars are each reflexively constitutive of the sense of the other and of the setting or interaction as a whole. Importantly, this reflexive process is normative through and through; the sequential sense made of actions is achieved against a background of categorially-given “normal forms” of conduct (Watson, 1997).

Fitzgerald and Housley (2002) develop Watson’s argument in important ways. In particular, they extend the notion of turn-generated categories to suggest that all sequential actions (for example, adjacency pairs such as “question” – “answer”), can be viewed as categorial phenomena, or what they term “categories-in-action”. By this they mean that not only are the speakers who produce such actions occupants of a sequentially provided-for position, but the occupants of such positions are also obligated to orient to the wider interactional environment in producing their action. In other words, occupying the sequential position of “questioner” requires not only orienting to the normative predicate of “knowing how to produce a question”, but also to the norm of producing “what is a recognizably relevant question for the person being addressed” (Fitzgerald & Housley, 2002, p. 582). In order to act competently, a questioner must thus orient not only to their sequential position in the interaction, but also to the membership categories of the parties to the setting. The upshot of this argument is that the categorial and sequential aspects of interaction are “two sides of the same coin” (Silverman, 1998), and both aspects are morally organized. From this perspective, analyzing how recognizable actions are accomplished requires attending to the “layered texture” of interaction, in which normativity, category and sequence mutually elaborate each other in participants’

This chapter seeks to continue this ethnomethodological project of investigating the moral-practical accountability of action as a situated members’ accomplishment in sequentially unfolding situated interaction. It examines members’ methods of practical moral reasoning as carried out in the course of accomplishing and making sense of situated courses of action in basketball training sessions. In the process, I hope to provide some insight into how norms are involved in the organization of ordinary action in the form of resources for producing and recognizing intelligible, morally accountable phenomena. The remainder of the chapter is structured as a series of investigations into how certain events on the court become produced, recognized, and formulated as morally sanctionable actions for which players are accountable. The analyses in this chapter take as their methodological starting point Garfinkel’s study policy that breaches of the “‘seen but unnoticed’, expected, background features of everyday scenes” (Garfinkel, 1964, p. 226) can make the background expectancies, including moral expectations, that members are oriented to in accomplishing the local social-moral order available for analysis. While Garfinkel’s investigations into these breaches involved “manufactured” disruptions of normal states of affairs, the breaches I analyze here, in line with more recent ethnomethodological work, comprise “disruptions that arise naturally and spontaneously within social situations” (Maynard & Clayman, 2003, p. 179). In the following section, I examine two excerpts in which the moral object of “unreasonable errors in performance” is recognized and dealt with in the course of conducting training activities. The selection of pertinent stretches of interaction for analysis was based upon the principle that when breaches of constitutive moral orders occur, “expression of feelings and displays of emotions… work to mark up the ‘breach’ and simultaneously warrant the display and invite a response (justification, explanation, etc.)” (Samra-Fredericks, 2010, p. 2148). I have thus sought out occasions of anger, indignation, and so on as indicative of breaches of the
moral order of the setting, and treated these occasions as instances where locally-relevant constitutive moral expectancies are made apparent in the production of a morally accountable object. At the same time, these occasions illustrate how morality, knowledge, perception, understanding, and competence intertwine as members establish the local sense of events.

8.4 **THE MORAL ORDERING OF ERRORS IN PERFORMANCE**

This section explores a members’ distinction between, on the one hand, errors as acceptable occurrences, that is, a “normal” part of basketball practice (and in fact, as shown in earlier chapters, as events essential for enabling the coach to identify areas requiring instruction) and, on the other hand, errors as morally problematic events. Certain errors of performance are understood and responded to as breaches of the background normative expectancies comprising the socio-moral order of the practice session. That is, there are morally right and wrong ways to perform during practice activities, and the distinction between appropriate and inappropriate errors in performance is an important boundary line for marking out “perceivedly normal” courses of action from (morally accountable) deviations. While it may be banal to suggest that there are reasonable and unreasonable errors made in situations of instruction and assessed performance, the objective here is to explicate just how such morally accountable phenomena are recognized and responded to by participants as aspects of basketball activities. The interaction analyzed below (Clip 8.1) occurred late during the “shell drill” that was discussed in Chapter 6. The problem of “not seeing the man and the ball” was thoroughly detailed in that chapter; this interaction is concerned with the same performance error, but by the time this event occurs, the problem has been noted and corrected by the coach on repeated occasions (including via the extended instructional sequence in Clip 6.7).

**Transcript of Clip 8.1**

1 Gregg: °Fuck° (n hell)
2
3 Gregg: Boys†
4 (1.1)
Gregg: I understand when I go to my sixteens and I tell them fifty times a session, (.) you must see your man and the ball, (0.3) but an eighteen nineteen twenty year old, (0.4) to talk about defensively making sure that we (.).

Gregg: see the floor, (. as well as when we dribble the ball down the f- it’s the same shit.

Gregg: Stop doing this, (0.3) or stop doing that. (0.5)

Gregg: It’s a bad defence we will get caught sooner or later. (1.8)

Gregg: You-ge-e- (0.4) He comes in, (0.3) we’re here. (. And we see both of them. (1.3)

Gregg: Alright? He’s out there, (0.3) I’m helping defense I’m deep enough so I can see; it he starts coming in, (. I match up on him I pick him up again. (0.3)

Gregg: But don’t fuckin watch him, or don’t fuck the- do- fuckin watch the ball. (0.8)

Gregg: Y’gotta see both of them that’s why we struggling defensively now. (0.7)

Gregg: We’ve said that six or seven times already. (1.0)

Gregg: The only reason why we struggle is because we ball watching or man watching.

As he walks into the play-space here, Gregg produces a lengthy utterance (lines 5-10) which is hearable as a complaint regarding the performance during the previous play. His use of expletives and his exasperated tone over the correction document his displeasure with the players’ performance. In producing his complaint, Gregg does not orient to the trouble source as a case of a single player committing a single error in a single prior play, which on its own is probably not an event that he would treat as unreasonable. His use of the collective term of address “Boys” (line 3) to initiate the correction indicates that it is directed to the team as a whole rather than a single responsible individual, as does his recurrent use of the collective pro-term “we”
throughout the interaction. Further, in a number of utterances (lines 5-10, 14, 26-27, 29) he makes it clear that the trouble source is not restricted to the immediately prior play. Rather, the reason for his displeasure lies in the fact that, despite his stopping to correct the same problem multiple times, the players as a group have failed to display that they have adequately incorporated the relevant defensive competency.

Gregg’s formulation of the trouble source as an object that has emerged temporally over multiple drill performances and correction sequences suggests the methodical process he has used to make sense of the action occurring in the immediately prior play. He embeds the performance in that play within a sequential context comprised of cumulative prior performances of this drill and the prior corrections of this particular error that have been made up to this point. In doing so, he finds the error on this occasion to be identical, for all practical purposes, to the errors that have occurred and been corrected over the course of the activity. The errors are treated as individual cases of a “class” of errors that could be glossed as “man-watching or ball-watching (but not seeing both)”. Further, in finding that the “same” error has occurred repeatedly, and that players have continued to make this error despite being corrected multiple times, Gregg appears to orient to the breach of a norm comprising a background constitutive expectancy of this team’s practice sessions: the normative obligation of players at this level\textsuperscript{88} to attend to correction sequences closely and to incorporate the object of the lesson into their bodily repertoires. The way in which this norm is used here seems similar to the employment of what Housley and Fitzgerald (2009) have described as a “moral discrepancy device”, a normative principle used to formulate the absence of one event, given the occurrence of some relevant prior event, as an accountable moral fact. Such devices are based on a conventional recognition that two sequential actions are normatively tied together, such that if the first part of the pair occurs, there is a normative expectation that the second will follow. For example, they argue that in the political news radio interviews they analyze, the readily available cultural pairing “intention-avowal \rightarrow action” is used as resource for making the failure of a government or political party to perform the “action”, given that party’s prior production of an “intention-avowal”.

\textsuperscript{88} The importance of this distinction will be made clear below.
accountable as a moral failure. In their words, “a discrepancy between such pairings (i.e., that in a specific case or set of cases, one part of the pairing has not or is not following the other) constitutes a normative breach” (p. 354). In the case of Gregg’s complaint here, it might be said that a discrepancy between the two parts of the normatively expectable pairing “reasonable number of corrections by the coach → players’ bodily incorporation of relevant competency” is being oriented to by the coach.

Gregg also treats this breach of moral expectancies as a resource for accomplishing further moral accounting work regarding the obligations of players at this level of experience and maturity. In lines 5-10, he creates a contrast between two membership categories: the players on this team, and the younger members of the under-sixteens team that he also coaches. Rather than employing the categories “members of team X” and “members of team Y” to make the contrast, however, Gregg uses an alternative category-pair based on the relevant age-based categories of the respective members of the two teams: “sixteens” and “eighteen nineteen twenty year olds” (lines 5 & 7). In doing so89, he makes skilful use of what Sacks (1995) termed the “positioned” properties of these age-based categories. Sacks defines “positioned” collections as those within which one member can be said to higher or lower than another. He provides the example of the “stage of life” device with the categories “baby”, “adolescent” and “adult”. By categorizing the players using their respective memberships of different “stage of life” categories (i.e., “sixteens” is “lower” than “eighteen nineteen twenty year olds” under the “stage of life” device) he positions the members of the “sixteens” team as “lower” than the members of the Pelicans team. The fact that activities are bound to certain membership categories, Sacks (1995) shows, provides us with a resource for complaining about certain activities performed by members of positioned categories:

89 In referring to age-categories here, the coach is not referring to any member of the categories “sixteen year olds”, “seventeen year olds”, and so on. By collecting these membership categories under the device “players of a certain age and experience level”, he provides a specific sense to what the categories mean, and who might legitimately be said to be an incumbent of them, for this occasion.
If there is an activity “bound” to some category of the positioned collection, then one thing that we may find about it is that if a person is a member of another such category and does that action which is bound to this category, then he can be said to be “acting like an X, that X being whatever category the activity is bound to… If the activity is bound to a category lower than the one the person is in, then the statement is a “degradation”… So that, say, in the case of an “adolescent” found to be crying, they can be said to be “acting like a baby” and that statement will be seen as a “degrading” remark. (p. 585)

Gregg attaches a predicate to members of the category “sixteens” (at least for the purposes of the work he is doing here, though possibly not when he is coaching the under-16s team!) of requiring to be corrected many times before adequately grasping a lesson. That is, failing to incorporate the object of a lesson into bodily repertoires after several corrections does not necessarily comprise an unreasonable error for members of this category. However, when the Pelicans players fail to learn a skill after multiple corrections, they are doing something bound to a “lower” category. Gregg’s moral characterization is thus hearable as a “degradation”. In this case, then, the moral device “reasonable number of corrections by the coach → players” bodily incorporation of relevant competency” provides sequential resources for orienting to an player’s error as a particular type of object, which is then further configured in relation to specific positioned membership categories. Through this process, the players’ actions over the course of the drill become configured as the “moral fact” of “repeatedly performing to a level beneath what is expected of them”.

In this sequence, then, Gregg orients to a background of multiple events over the course of a sequence of action in order to locate a particular moral object: a breach of normative expectations. Upon finding this object, he treats it as providing a context within which he can produce a moral characterization of the players’ action. A final point regarding this event is that Gregg’s complaint about the players’ performance is also methodically ordered. His moral characterization of the players’ actions is delivered in an unmitigated form, filled with expletives and accusations, but his methods for characterizing the players’ actions is not treated as an inappropriate way of going about this business. Nor is his version of ‘the moral facts of the matter”
contested by the players. There is no attempt to repair their moral breach via the production of an account by the players who, for their part, display an orientation to background normative expectancies of “deference” and “respect” for their coach. In this respect, repairing the breach can be understood to be achieved through the players’ displays of compliance with and understanding of the coach’s criticism. This collective orientation to the coach’s taken-for-granted entitlement to make unmitigated moral characterizations without being challenged on either their accuracy or their mode of delivery may be one way that the coach and the players make the power asymmetry between them interactivity visible and relevant. Similar to the way in which pauses after teacher’s reproaches to students functioned to produce and display the exercise of deference to authority in Macbeth’s (1991) classroom study, the players’ mutual silence after the Coach’s moral characterization may indicate an orientation to a structural ‘space” where their recognition of and orientation to the coach’s authority can be displayed. The next clip (first introduced in Chapter 7) supports the viability of this claim by illustrating what can occur in the event that the turn following a coach’s complaint is not oriented to as a position for “silence”, but is instead used to provide an account.

**Transcript of Clip 8.2**

1   ((Whistleblow x2))
2   (0.3)
3 Gregg:  ((Walking towards Luke, lifts up his own sweatshirt, looks at his t-shirt, and pulls sweatshirt back down. Picks up ball))
4   Gimme a fuckin black top I’ll play fuck off
5   (0.8)
6 Gregg: What’s this shit- (0.3) go past the centre line, (0.9)
7   What’s this?
8 Lance: I didn’t I (    )
9   (0.3)
10 Lance: I wasn’t gonna pick it up
11   (I know)
12 Lance: Let’s go let’s go=
13 ???: =We got three out of three where we make mistakes one
14 Gregg:  -> here one there one down there
15 Lance: [(I know)]
16 Lance: [and then] everyone’s got an excuse.
As in Clip 8.1 considered above, Gregg’s angry response to a player’s action (in this case, Lance picking up his dribble after crossing half-court) serves to constitute that player’s action as a normative breach. Again, this action is not treated as a stand-alone event, but is understood against a sequential backdrop of prior mistakes (both of which were committed by other players). In this case, unlike Clip 8.1, the successive mistakes were not treated as being of “the same” type; rather, they are oriented to as three consecutive but distinct mistakes which, when treated as a sequence of events, together constitute evidence for the coach that the players are not adequately focused on the task at hand. It is Lance’s misfortune to produce his mistake in this sequential position and consequently wear his coach’s built-up ire.

Following his demand for a team uniform and his directive to Lance to “fuck off” in line 6 (both of which, as noted in Chapter 7, are clearly hearable (and heard) as comprising a strong rebuke rather than as a literal intention on the coach’s behalf to replace Lance in the drill), Gregg produces a moral characterization of Lance’s performance in the syntactical form of a question (lines 8-9). This utterance, however, is not a question in the sense of seeking information; it is rather a method of making a negative assertion. As such, and given the suggestion made above that the sequential position after a moral characterization made by the coach may comprise a “slot” for displaying deference to authority, it can be expected that Lance’s production of an “answer” in this position might be treated as a failure to display appropriate deference. As we see here, this is exactly what happens. Lance responds to Gregg’s utterance as a “question”, and produces an account for picking

90 The structural properties of questions of this type (“reverse polarity questions”) will be considered in more detail in the next section.

91 Alternatively, it may be that Gregg’s utterance here “prefers” a response in alignment with its propositional content – which, in this case, could be paraphrased as “that was shit”. An aligned response would thus be constituted by some kind of acceptance of the proposition, such as “Yeah”. Again, see the next section’s discussion on reverse polarity questions for further elaboration on this point.
the ball up (lines 10-12). Gregg responds by not only treating this account as grounds to elaborate his moral characterization of Lance’s performance by describing it as one of three consecutive mistakes (lines 14-15), but by also upgrading his sanction by configuring Lance’s account as an “excuse” (line 17) and thus as itself comprising a normative breach. Lance’s account thus invokes further reproach, which possibly comes as a result of his failure to produce a “preferred” response\textsuperscript{92} of silent deference (or, alternatively, a response displaying alignment with the utterance’s propositional content).

The next excerpt, which takes up the remainder of the chapter, provides an illustration of the sort of trajectory of action that can unfold when the “moral facts of the matter” do become contested. It shows both the limits of the coach’s unilateral entitlements to define such moral facts, and how, when moral facts become “up for grabs”, the very constitutive moral expectancies of the practice session themselves become topics of members’ accounting and moral ordering practices. In the process, a range of other issues connected to the problem of how to go about appropriately repairing a breach may be navigated and worked through. In the following case, a particularly thorny problem of this kind is how a player might appropriately account for their own action by morally impugning the action of a teammate.

8.5 “IT’S TRAINING MAN”: PRACTICAL MORAL REASONING IN ACTION

While not comprising a correction sequence of the type that I have focused on in this thesis thus far, in that no technical aspect of performance is addressed, the following fragment consists of a case in which the coach attempts to achieve a moral correction of a player by holding him to account for his conduct. I include this example in my analysis because it provides a rich example of members’ moral ordering work in constituting the socially organized moral order of the practice session. Specifically, it provides an opportunity to explore a number of different procedures through which the moral responsibilities and entitlements that players have in relation to one

\textsuperscript{92} Preference organization, as understood in conversation analysis, is outlined below.
another are found, used, and disputed by participants in the process of establishing the local (moral) sense of actions and events. Some members’ practices for conducting this situated moral reasoning, and some resources used in the process, will be described in the following example, in which the participants attempt to reach a consensus over the “moral facts” of a controversy.

Clip 8.3, transcribed below, begins with an altercation between two players, Boris and Steve, during a sequence of a three-on-three game-style drill\textsuperscript{93}. Steve, on offense, receives the ball and Boris comes out to defend him. Steve backs Boris down and makes an aggressive move to the basket, making contact with Boris several times – first with his back, then with his shoulder, and finally with his elbow – before shooting the ball. After the shot is made, Boris responds angrily, catching the ball as it comes out of the net and throwing it at Steve’s shoulder, while saying something that is inaudible on the video. After he has thrown the ball at Steve, Boris continues to stare him down. Steve appears to treat Boris’ outburst as laughable, smiling and shaking his head as he says something (also inaudible on the video) back to Boris. Marco appears to react here to the possibility that Steve may retaliate to Boris’ outburst, walking between Steve and Boris and placing his hand preventatively on Steve’s chest. As he does so, Boris picks up the ball and resumes play, bringing the altercation to a close. Boris’ black team scores in the following play, and this concludes the game. As the players reassemble in their team groups, Gregg calls for all the players to come together at centre court (Figure 8.1) and initiates the interaction.

\textsuperscript{93} That is, the drill is comprised of a full-speed game with players’ options restricted only by the reduction in the number of players on each team from five to three.
Transcript of Clip 8.3

1  Gregg:  Boris why do we need that shit.
2       (1.1)
3  Gregg:  Head up.
4       (0.5)
5  Boris:  It’s training man.
6  Keith:  It’s training man [fuck. (.). It’s practice man]
7  Gregg:  [Exactly ] [What else is he gonna fuckin do?]
8       (0.5)
9  Gregg:  How is he gonna train↓ soft?
10  Boris:  =>No no< we’re on the same team.
11       (.).
12  Gregg:  No [you’re not↑]
13  Boris:  [ I understand he turns but he’s going like this=]
14  Gregg:  =No he’s [not he’s (getting) into your body]
15  Keith:  [ Ay come on man ] (0.2) He’s a big man
16  Gregg:  Listen to me=
17  Keith:  =F*uck
18  Gregg:  Ay. (0.3) In the game on Saturday you would be up on the on-o-o-o- an off your seat saying fuckin well done Steve

Figure 8-1: Gregg, the assistant coaches, and the players assemble together at Centre Court
for doing that, (0.5) today,
(0.5)
[ he’s taking it at you ]
Boris: [I know I’m (.). I know that’s (.). that’s that’s] another
team.
(0.4)
Boris: We’re teammates here we play hard but we don’t injure
each [other.]
Gregg: [He= ] he didn’t↑ he didn’t↑ have his elbow up
that’s what (ev-everyone’s) saying=
Boris: =I copped an elbow right here=
Gregg: =That’s a shoulder.
(0.3)
????: Let’s go
(0.2)
????: [ Come on man= ]
Boris: [= (Alright alright)]
Gregg: [That’s what I’m sayi][ng I-I didn’t thi]nk he went
hard, he did go hard [(.). but he didn’t go
i:illegal]
Boris: [I felt an elbow right there so I]
mi- I might be wrong
????: (Who gives a sh[it] let’s go.)
Boris: [Might be wrong.]
(.)
Gregg: Ay. Just make su:re we on the same page I understand
what you were saying and I understand what you trying to
do I↑ don’t mind↑ us being tough sometimes fuck
sometimes
(Clip ends)

PREFERENCE ORGANIZATION, MORAL CHARACTERIZATION, AND MITIGATION

Once the players and coaches have assembled together in a huddle, Gregg initiates
the stretch of interaction with the utterance “Boris why do we need that shit” (line 1).
Although this utterance has the syntactic form of a question, it does not function as a
question in that it is not asked primarily to seek new information, and nor is it
responded to as such. Rather, it is designed to make an assertion about what Boris did during his altercation with Steve. This type of utterance is commonly vernacularly referred to as a rhetorical question, but Koshik (2005) uses the term reverse polarity question (RPQ) better to specify the nature of such questions: in particular, the fact that they convey “an assertion of the opposite polarity to that of the question” (p. 2). The question “Boris why do we need that shit”, as an RPQ, is hearable as asserting the opposite, that is, “Boris we don’t need that shit”. Koshik shows that RPQs are most commonly used to convey opinions challenging prior actions performed by the question’s recipient – actions produced either in the setting at large, or in prior turns-at-talk. In this case, Gregg’s RPQ calls into question Boris’ prior act of throwing the ball at Steve, doing so by conveying Gregg’s stance toward this act as an inappropriate one. The coach thus uses the strongly negative assertive capacity of RPQs to do moral ordering work with regard to Boris’ prior action – characterizing it as an accountable breach of setting-relevant normative expectations.

Koshik (2005) further observes that in cases where why-questions are employed to challenge the appropriateness of an action, they ask the recipient to provide an account of their action, but at the same time imply that no adequate account is available: that the action is not justifiable. In this way, why-RPQs acquire their force as negative assertions. In asking Boris why we need “that shit”, Gregg implies that there is no explanation that could adequately account for Boris’ behaviour. By responding with “It’s training man”, Boris displays that he has understood Gregg’s question as a complaint, rather than an information-seeking question – his utterance “It’s training man” does not provide an intelligible response to Gregg’s question qua request for information. Further, Boris’ response displays an understanding that Gregg’s complaint, as the first pair part (FPP) of an adjacency pair, makes relevant a preferred second pair part (SPP). Schegloff (2007a) describes the organization of preference in sequential action as follows:

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94 There are several factors that contribute to this utterance being hearable as an assertion. A first is the sequential context in which Gregg’s question occurs: after a controversial piece of conduct to which a challenge by the coach might be an expectable response. A second is Gregg’s incumbency of the category of coach, which provides him with the epistemic rights to assess the validity of players’ actions. And a third is the design of the utterance itself, with the clear indication of the undesirability of the referenced action provided by the expression “that shit” (cf. Koshik, 2005).
Sequences are the vehicle for getting some activity accomplished, and that response to the first pair part which embodies or favours furthering or the accomplishment of the activity is the favoured – or, as we shall term it, the preferred – second pair part. (p. 59)

Schegloff notes that as a very general rule, interactional projects tend to be implemented through sequences in such a way that what he terms “+ responses”, such as acceptances and agreements, are the preferred responses to first pair parts, while “– responses”, such as rejections and disagreements, are dispreferred. Gregg’s RPQ in line 1 displays a preference for a response that will indicate a stance in alignment with Gregg’s negative assessment of Boris’ conduct. This preference is grounded in several features of the organization of the interaction. Firstly, it is an outcome of “the character of the course of action, and the directionality of its trajectory towards realization or ‘success’” (Schegloff, 2007a, p. 62). The sequence of action launched by Gregg’s utterance in line 1 is designed to remedy the prior controversy by establishing a mutual moral understanding amongst the team of what had occurred. This shared orientation can most easily be achieved by gaining an acknowledgement by the perpetrator of the moral breach that his behaviour was inappropriate. In this regard, a negative assessment by Boris is preferred as a feature of the sequence, as it will demonstrate agreement regarding the nature of his action, and thereby advance the sequence toward its resolution. Secondly, the preference for agreement is grounded in the syntactic design of Gregg’s turn as a why-RPQ. Its structure projects an expected answer opposite in polarity to that of the question: that is, the preferred response is a negative assessment. These groundings are, then, both in alignment – Boris’ production of the negative assessment projected by the design of Gregg’s RPQ will work as an agreement with Gregg’s implied assessment, and will therefore forward the sequence’s project of achieving a mutual moral alignment towards the prior event. In producing his RPQ utterance, then, Gregg not only challenges Boris’ action, but also performs the work of his profession by seeking to accomplish the coaching-specific goal of remedying misconduct by his players.
In responding to Gregg’s utterance with “It’s training man” (line 5), Boris does not produce a hearable negative assessment of his action, and as such does not produce a preferred SPP. Rather, Boris’ response is hearable as an account. It was noted above that a) Gregg’s RPQ asked for an account of Boris’ behaviour while simultaneously implying than none was available, and b) the preference organization of Gregg’s utterance made agreement with this negative assertion relevant as a response. However, the preference organization operating here does not only provide for the recognizability of a preferred response; it provides a “grid” by reference to which whatever happens next will become visible and assessable (Heritage, 1984, p. 117, emphasis in original). Since Boris’ response is not hearable as a preferred SPP, then the preference organization set in place provides for the utterance’s possible hearability as the dispreferred response projected by Gregg’s question: an answer of the same polarity as the question, in this case an account of why Boris’ action might have been justified. As such, it is also hearable as comprising a disagreement with Gregg’s assertion. It is by reference to the “grid of accountability” set in place by the preference organization invoked by Gregg’s question, then, that Boris’ utterance “It’s training man” is hearable (and is produced to be hearable) as an attempt to account for his action, and to thereby contest the moral status that Gregg has accorded his outburst.

Boris’ attempt to account for his action here takes the shape of a formulation of the current setting: he explicitly describes “what we are doing here”. It is notable that he does not attempt to justify his action by providing a causal explanation in terms of the events that triggered his response, as he could have by saying something like “I threw the ball at Steve because he elbowed me in the face”. This raises the question of which organizational phenomena Boris is displaying an orientation to in formulating his account in just this way. An answer may be that in structuring his

95 Along with the lexical structure of Boris’ utterance, its positioning relative to the first pair part of the adjacency pair in which it occurs provides further evidence that it is produced as a dispreferred second pair part. As Schegloff (2007a) notes, while preferred SPPs are routinely produced without delay after a FPP, that is, after a “normal-length” transition space, the transition space between an FPP and a dispreferred SPP is regularly extended. In the case under consideration, Gregg’s FPP is followed by a 1.1 second gap, after which Gregg speaks again (producing what appears to be an instruction telling Boris not to sulk (line 3)), and this is followed by a further 0.5 second gap before Boris finally produces his SPP.
account as a “setting-formulation”, Boris is again displaying his attendance to the structure of Gregg’s utterance and its preferred response. As noted above, Gregg orients to and builds a structure of preference organization that projects a preferred response aligning with his moral characterization of Boris’ action and a dispreferred response disaligning with this assessment. Schegloff (2007a) shows that turns embodying dispreferred responses may involve steps to mitigate this dispreferred response in order to avoid displaying too overt a disalignment with the prior utterance. On some occasions, he notes, a dispreferred response may be attenuated “to the vanishing point, i.e., where the dispreferred response is not in fact articulated at all” (p. 64). By designing his utterance as a setting-formulation, Boris does not have to explicitly articulate his dispreferred response, and by expressing himself in this mitigated form he avoids overtly disagreeing with his coach.

The analysis so far has shown that sequence organization (including the organization of preference within sequences) is important to the sense of Boris’ utterance as an account, and, in particular, as a mitigated account. However, sequence organization alone does not provide for the specific sense that Boris’ utterance has here, the specific way in which it is intended to work as a justification of his action. In speaking of method, Sacks (1995) makes it clear that multiple organizations may be operative in building the sense of any “fragment” of talk or conduct in interaction, and that analysis should attempt to explicate “a collection of different types of organization that may operate, in detail, in it” (p. 562). In order to flesh out the sense of Boris’ utterance further, I now turn to exploring how its specificity as an account depends on the participants’ orientation to categorial forms of organization.

Membership Categorization: Training, Teammates, and Moral Responsibility

In naming “what we are doing here”, Boris’ utterance “It’s training man” not only explicitly formulates the current activity, but also works to “proffer an identification” (Sacks, 1995, p. 306) of the parties to that activity. That naming a setting or activity can work in this way, as offering an identification of (at least some of) the parties to that activity, turns, firstly, on the nature of the activity so named: ‘training” can be heard here as an activity bound to the category “Pelicans players”. Secondly, its sense turns on the availability of what Sacks (1995) called a “relevance rule”
regarding category-bound activities: “If someone names – as, for example, what they were doing – a category-bound activity, that provides, first, for the relevance of the category to which the activity is bound” (p. 301). By the operation of this rule, then, Boris’ utterance can be heard as identifying himself as, relevantly here and now, a member of the “Pelicans players’’ category. Boris does not only identify himself with this naming procedure. Via the operation of a second maxim, the “consistency rule” for applying membership categories, his utterance also categorizes Steve. According to Sacks (1974), the consistency rule functions as follows:

if some population of persons is being categorized, and if a category from some device’s collection has been used to categorize a first member of the population, then that category or other categories of the same collection may be used to categorize further members of the population. (p. 219, emphasis in original)

Via the application of this rule, Boris’ utterance makes relevant the collection of which the category “Pelicans player” is a member. As outlined in earlier chapters, “Pelicans player” is one of the two categories comprising the membership categorization device “parties to a Pelicans practice”, the other being “Pelicans coach”. Since the category of coach is closed to Steve, the only category available with which to categorize him within this collection is “Pelicans player”. Thus, once the “parties to a Pelicans practice” device has been made relevant, the application of the consistency rule generates, for Boris and Steve, the category memberships “Pelicans player” – “Pelicans player”. And where you have two Pelicans players, you have teammates. To paraphrase Sacks96, by formulating the setting as “training”, Boris says, “It is relevant that we are teammates; consider us teammates”.

96 In his investigation of the utterance “We were in an automobile discussion” during a group-therapy session for teenagers, Sacks notes: “And an automobile discussion is, I think, a category-bound activity, with ‘teenage boys’ as the category it’s bound to. By naming the activity, one thing that we can say is being done is that an identification is being offered, of at least the speaker. That is, that with this formulation he says, “It is relevant that we are teenagers; consider us teenagers” (Sacks, 1995, p. 301, emphasis in original).
Boris’ categorization of himself and Steve as a pair of teammates is consequential for the interaction in that it carries with it deep moral implications. The pairing “teammate” – “teammate” comprises a standardized relational pair (SRP) of categories, and, as is the case with such pairs, “it is known what the typical category-bound rights, obligations, activities, attributes and so forth are of the one part of the pair with respect to the other” (Stephen Hester & Francis, 2004, p. 40). Further, the relation between the two parts of this particular pair is one of symmetry: what is appropriate for one also holds for the other. Presumably, an incumbent of the category of “teammate” can be expected to orient to a moral obligation toward other teammates not to play “dirty” during training, that is, not to do things so aggressively that they appear designed to deliberately threaten or hurt another teammate. In return, that player can expect the same consideration from their teammates. By making relevant the category-pair “teammates” and its associated moral responsibilities with regard to aggressive play, Boris’ invokes a set of norms of conduct that may now be retrospectively applied to the players’ respective actions during the play-sequence in order to make them intelligible in a particular way. In characterizing the events in question as “things done by teammates to teammates”, Boris invites his interlocutors to see Steve’s move to the basket, which was observably physical, as being overly aggressive, and as such, as constituting a breach of the normative expectations of “teammate” – “teammate” behaviour. In his response to a request for an account for his own, blameworthy action, then, Boris’ utterance “It’s training man” comprises an attempt to characterize the action preceding his action as blameworthy, without directly accusing his teammate of rough play.

At this point we reach the crux of the matter. Characterizing Steve’s aggressive move to the basket as a violation of “teammate” – “teammate” moral responsibilities works as a moral justification for Boris’ angry outburst. That Boris’ utterance can function in this way turns on its invocation of a norm linking Boris’ outburst to Steve’s preceding move. As Sacks (1974) has illustrated, members may use norms as a

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97 This is not meant as a claim to have captured the extent of the category-bound attributes of teammates, merely to point out one feature of this pairing relevant to the interaction under consideration.
resource to provide for the recognizable orderliness of pairs of activities that they observe:

Via some norm two activities may be made observable as a sequentially ordered pair. That is, viewers use norms to explain both the occurrence of some activity given the occurrence of another and also its sequential position with regard to the other, e.g., that it follows the other, or precedes it. (p. 226)

Sacks initially developed this argument through an observation he made about the intelligibility of the first two sentences of a “story” told by a child: “the baby cried. The mommy picked it up.” His observation was that he heard, and anyone would hear, that it was the mother of the baby mentioned in the previous sentence that picked the baby up. The analytic task he set himself in response to this observation was ‘to construct an apparatus which will… show how it is that we come to hear the fragment as we do” (Sacks, 1974, p. 217). He observed that as members, we are aware of a norm to the effect that “a mother ought to soothe her crying baby”, and suggested that the fact that a baby’s mother is normatively expected to respond to her child’s action in such a way provides for our hearing that it was she who picked it up. From this observation, he developed a members’ rule for using norms to link categories and sequences of action that he calls the “second viewer’s maxim”:

If one sees a pair of actions which can be related via the operation of a norm that provides for the second given the first, where the doers can be seen as members of the categories the norm provides as proper for that pair of actions, then: (a) See that the doers are such members and (b) see the second as done in conformity with the norm. (Sacks, 1974, p. 225)

Category pairs and their associated relational norms of conduct, then, can function as a members’ resource for seeing and describing the components of temporally unfolding courses of action as being sequentially and normatively related. We have already ascertained that Boris’ utterance has characterized Steve’s action as a breach of proper teammate behaviour. In producing this characterization, Boris displays an understanding of the availability of the second viewer’s maxim and its implications
for the characterization of his action: that if a norm exists that can provide for his second action (the angry outburst) given Steve’s first action (the aggressive move to the basket), then Boris’ action will be understood as done in accordance with that norm, and as a result he will be off the hook. I would like to suggest that the relevant norm in this case is one of the generation of understandable emotion. By this I mean that it is understood that if one is the victim of a breach of normatively expected “teammate” – “teammate” conduct, then one may, quite understandably, be led to experience emotions such as anger and outrage as a response.

Further, we know as societal members that such affective states can trigger “outbursts”: even people who normally exercise control over their behaviour can, if sufficiently provoked, be thrown into emotional states wherein their behavioural control is greatly reduced, and as a result they “explode”, “blow up” or “lash out”. That is, an affective state can, on occasion, be treated as an adequate causal explanation for someone doing something rash. Boris thus draws on this knowledge regarding the relations between category-based moral expectations, breaches of these expectations, resulting emotional states, and such states’ consequences for behaviour in attempting to reconfigure the sense of his action from “blameworthy” to “expression of understandable (because provoked) anger”.

This analysis of the situated sense of Boris’ utterance illustrates members’ simultaneous orientations to layers of interrelated sequential and categorial organization in producing the sense of action (Fitzgerald, 1999). The identity of Boris’ utterance as constituting a mitigated account for his behaviour depends upon its sequential position following Gregg’s reverse polarity question, and the preference organization that this question set in place; but how that utterance works to provide a mitigated account relies upon the setting-specific categories, predicates and norms of conduct that it calls into being. In turn, the sense of these categories, and the predicates and norms tied to them, for this moment, is constituted by the sequential environment within which they are invoked. Category, sequence, and normativity mutually elaborate one another in the production of intelligible action here.
Unfortunately for Boris, however, his formulation of the setting in line 5 does not succeed in absolving him from guilt. In the overlapping responses produced by a player (Keith) and the coach, it is treated as an inadequate account for his outburst. It is the matter of the ways in which these responses go about rejecting Boris’ account that I take up next.

**REJECTING AN ACCOUNT: ORIENTING TO ALTERNATIVE MORAL RELEVANCES**

It is interesting that, in rejecting Boris’ account, both Keith’s and Gregg’s responses explicitly affirm Boris’ formulation of “who we are and what are doing” – Keith says “It is training man” (line 6), and Gregg simultaneously says “Exactly” (line 8). Neither Gregg nor Keith, that is, contest Boris’ account by calling into question the **veracity** of his observation, as they might have done via, for instance, elaborating his depiction of the circumstances to introduce important details left out of his account (e.g., “Yes, but…”). Rather, they treat his formulation as an accurate and adequate description of the context. Moreover, their responses refrain from calling into question the relevance of Boris’ depiction for understanding the events in question, in the way that an utterance like “so what?” would have done. Rather, Keith’s and Gregg’s respective utterances affirm that this characterization of “who we are and what we are doing” is indeed pertinent to establishing the sense of the events in question.

Keith’s confirmation (line 6) of Boris’ formulation of the setting is explicit and forceful. Moreover, he orients to the syntactic structure of Boris’ utterance, re-using Boris’ original phrase “It’s training man”, but modifying it by drawing out and stressing the copula verb “is”. Keith’s stress on the word helps to shape his talk as not being (for instance) a mocking repetition of Boris. Instead, his comment displays that he, too, has used this context to find the sense of what happened, but that he has not drawn the same conclusion. That is, Keith confirms the accuracy and relevance of Boris’ characterization of the setting, but rejects this characterization as providing an adequate justification for Boris’ action. Keith’s reuse of Boris’ syntactic frame, followed by an expletive showing his exasperation at Boris, displays that he has employed the exact characterization of context offered by Boris, not to get Boris off the hook, as it were, but instead to find Boris’ actions to be blameworthy. Further,
the indignant tone of Keith’s utterance displays his stance toward Boris’ attempted justification: rather than arguing against it, he flatly rejects it, indicating both that he sees Boris’ account as irredeemably faulty, and that he does not see this as a case warranting further investigation or debate.

Gregg’s response to Boris’ accounting attempt provides greater analytic access to the methods by which Gregg and Keith use Boris’ characterization of the setting to find a moral sense of the events in question different to the one Boris has proposed. After affirming Boris’ description of the setting, Gregg asks Boris two questions which display Gregg’s understanding of the relevance of the setting “training” for making sense of what had happened on the court: “What else is he gonna fucking do?” (line 7) and “How is he gonna train soft?” (line 9). Both questions refer to Steve’s action, and both contest Boris’ attempt to render his teammate’s move to the basket as constituting a blameworthy deed. They function in this way via linking an alternative predicate to the membership category “Pelicans players” to that invoked by Boris. Recall that Boris had used the context of training to make relevant a norm of conduct regarding teammates’ mutual obligations to refrain from overt aggression toward one another. In contrast to this, Keith and Gregg treat the setting as making a different obligation relevant for Pelicans players: that of “training hard”. This orientation is explicitly displayed in Gregg’s second question to Boris: “How is he gonna train soft?” (line 9). This utterance, like that produced by Gregg in line 1, is a reverse polarity question. As mentioned above, the assertions made by RPQs commonly challenge prior actions performed by the question’s recipient. While the RPQ in line 1 challenged an action produced in the “exogenous” setting, however, the one in line 9 calls into question Boris’ rendering of what took place on the court through his utterance “It’s training man”. The utterance “How is he gonna train soft?” is hearable as asserting its opposite, that is, that Steve should not train soft. It invokes the undesirability of “training soft” (and, by contrast, the desirability of good, hard play) as predicates of “Pelicans players”, and it makes these predicates relevant to establishing the moral sense of Steve’s play. Gregg’s RPQ thus displays the methodical use of the setting, “training”, proffered by Boris, to configure Steve’s action as a morally acceptable case of “hard”, physical play.
In asserting that Steve should not train “soft” in the sequential position following Boris’ account, Gregg’s utterance also accuses Boris of implicitly claiming in his account that Steve should train soft. What is interesting here is that Boris’ utterance “It’s training man”, did not make any explicit or general claim about how Steve ought to train. However, in building his utterance as an RPQ, and using it to take a negative stance toward any claim that Steve should train soft, Gregg alleges that Boris’ utterance includes this claim as an unspoken presupposition. Rendering Boris’ utterance as a claim that Steve should train soft functions to damage its plausibility. In fact, by characterizing Boris’ attempted justification as a complaint against normatively valued good, hard play, Gregg’s utterance in line 9 may serve to reconfigure it as “whinging”, that is, as constituting an unwarranted and petulant complaint. Gregg’s RPQ thus works both to challenge Boris’ account, and retrospectively redefine it as a certain type of (problematic) action.

Boris’ first attempt to justify his action by formulating the setting has been met with strong resistance, both by the coach and by another player (Keith). In his next utterance (line 10), Boris makes a second attempt. The design of this turn and the response it provokes provide an opportunity to explore another of the procedures described by Sacks (1995) – that of “partitioning a population”. The following section explores how partitioning may be involved in establishing the moral accountability of conduct.

**PARTITIONING A POPULATION AS MORAL ORDERING WORK**

As a reverse polarity question, Gregg’s utterance in line 9 does not require an “answer” in the sense of information sought, but rather projects agreement with the assertion. In this case, then, the preference is for a response in the negative, since such a response would constitute an answer opposite in polarity to that of the question, thereby agreeing with the implied assertion of the question (i.e., that Steve should not train soft). However, Boris’ response in line 10, though prefaced by “no” (twice in rapid succession), does not constitute a display of alignment with Gregg’s assertion. As I will attempt to show, Boris’ “no no” here is performing an altogether different action than agreeing with the proposition embedded in Gregg’s RPQ.
To support this claim, I draw here on work which has shown that “no” is not only used as a means of negating the propositional content of a question or statement (Lee-Goldman, 2011; Schegloff, 1992b, 2001). This research has demonstrated that in some cases where “no” appears, there is no question being answered, nor any assertion being denied. In the most recent discussion of this phenomenon, Lee-Goldman (2011) proposes that a turn-initial “no” can function as a discourse marker, specifying to its recipient how prior or subsequent utterances should be understood by indicating relationships between the utterance and the linguistic or non-linguistic context. He proposes several functions of “no” as discourse marker, one of which is to do what he calls “misunderstanding management”; that is, “no” can operate as “a general way to reject implicit assumptions or stances taken up by an interlocutor or interlocutors” (Lee-Goldman, 2011, p. 2627). Lee-Goldman describes this function of “no” in more detail as follows:

This sense is found in contexts where a speaker finds that one of his or her interlocutors has misunderstood or misconstrued some aspect of the situation, such as a prior utterance, or even the basic background assumptions of the interactants. No serves to specifically reject that mistaken conception, and is always followed by a statement that makes clearer what the speaker’s view on the situation is. (Lee-Goldman, 2011, p. 2634)

Boris’ utterance, comprised of a “no”-preface and a subsequent clarifying statement, works precisely in this fashion. The “No no” portion of his utterance treats Gregg’s and Keith’s responses as having misunderstood (rather than countered) the point that he was trying to make in his previous utterance. The remainder of his utterance, “we’re on the same team” clarifies and makes explicit what he was actually implying in his reference to “training” – that is, his and Steve’s co-incumbency of the “teammates” standardized relational pair. In producing this clarification, Boris displays his recognition of the normative rule that Gregg and Keith have taken to follow from his formulation of the activity – “Pelicans players should train hard” – but rejects it as the relevant rule for understanding the events in question. His “no”-prefaced utterance, then, rather than functioning to agree (negatively) with Gregg’s
RPQ, rejects the moral relevance of the setting that has been proffered by Gregg and Keith.

This second, more explicit attempt by Boris to categorize himself and Steve as teammates at the time the controversial actions occurred is flatly rejected by Gregg in line 12. Since Boris’ moral justification of his action depends upon his claim that he and Steve were co-incumbents of a “teammate” – “teammate” SRP, Gregg’s rejection of this assertion deals a serious blow to Boris’ cause. In rejecting Boris’ claim, Gregg displays an orientation to organizing the players via a different membership categorization device, one which I described in Chapter 6 as “colour teams” (e.g., “red team” and “black team”). Crucially for the moral work being done here, there exists what Sacks (1995) terms “partitioning inconstancy” between the devices “Parties to a Pelicans training” and “colour teams”. By partitioning inconstancy, I mean that those members partitioned together into some category using one of these devices do not necessarily remain together when using the other. While Boris and Steve are partitioned into the same category – “Pelicans players” – by reference to the “parties to a Pelicans training” device, and may under those circumstances be legitimately seen as “teammates”, when categorized under the “colour teams” device they are split into separate categories. In the activity in question, the “red team” and the “black team” were playing against one another. Under these circumstances, the relationship between Boris and Steve can be understood by the standardized relational pair “opponent” – “opponent”, a pairing which invokes a vastly different set of moral rights and obligations between the two members than that made relevant by the “teammate” – “teammate” pairing. That Keith and Gregg have extracted a different moral inference from Boris’ formulation of the setting than that intended by Boris can thus be accounted for by their orientation to this alternative device for categorizing Boris and Steve. The two players were opponents when Steve made his move to the basket, and facing an opponent provides a Pelicans player with an opportunity to display normatively valued hard physical play. The selection of an alternative categorization device thus results in a very different normative orientation to Steve’s performance, and undercuts the legitimacy of Boris’ angry response.
Although hard physical play is clearly normatively valued in this setting, its status is not unambiguous. The next section demonstrates how this norm may itself be subjected to participants’ analysis.

**THE LIMITS OF HARD PHYSICAL PLAY AS A VIRTUE**

At line 13, Boris launches what appears to be a new line of argumentation. He produces a description of Steve’s action that is understandable as a counter-complaint (the utterance “I understand he turns but he’s going like this”, combined with a gesture that demonstrates Steve’s elbow-throw timed to coincide with the word “this”). This new approach is notable in two respects. Firstly, Boris’ utterance explicitly characterizes Steve’s play as blameworthy. This description displays Boris’ recognition that his prior, mitigated account was a failure, and his treatment of this failure as fair grounds for producing an upgraded, unmitigated account. Secondly, rather than continuing to attempt to assert the relevance of the “teammates” device over the “opponents” device that Gregg and Keith have proposed as a more relevant one for making sense of what happened, Boris instead produces an account of Steve’s action that draws upon the very norm of physical play invoked by the “opponents” device. Boris displays his attendance to, and alignment with, this norm by prefacing his complaint with an expression showing his appreciation that physical play is an inevitable and acceptable part of the game (“I understand he turns but…”, line 13). Aligning with this pro-physical contact position also serves to counter the impression previously cast of him as a “whinger”. As such, Boris’ election to take up the norm of physicality in order to make his argument might be seen as a strategic attempt to boost his credibility, that is, a technique of “impression management” (Goffman, 1973).

In order to produce a complaint about Steve’s play that is in accordance with this norm, Boris orients to a distinction between “clean” and “dirty” forms of physicality, and, via the syntactic structure of his utterance (“I understand doing X, but Steve did Y”), seeks to characterize Steve’s action as having breached the boundaries constituting “clean physical play”. Gregg’s response to this counter-complaint disputes the facticity of the grounds upon which it is based, the alleged elbow-throw. He produces a competing description of Steve’s action as “getting into your body”,
which is hearable as a description of legitimate offensive contact. In disputing the factual grounds of Boris’ complaint, rather than its logic, Gregg displays an agreement with the premise that if an elbow had been thrown, it would indeed provide reasonable grounds for Boris’ response. The disagreement at this point thus comes to turn on the factual status of the alleged breach: whether or not Steve did actually throw an elbow.

Keith responds to Boris’ complaint in a way that displays an entirely different stance toward it than that taken up by Gregg. He first expresses his exasperation at Boris’ account (“Ay come on man” (line 15)), and follows this with a description of Steve using the membership categorization device “player positions” (outlined in Chapter 7). Describing Steve as a “big man”, in this sequential position (after a complaint about Steve’s play being “dirty”), functions as a justification of Steve’s conduct based on his incumbency of this category. It invokes “hard physical play” as a predicate especially bound to “big men”: as such, Steve was only doing what is expected of a player at his position. Keith, then, does not engage in the dispute over the factual status of the elbow. Rather, he dismisses the very premise as reasonable grounds for complaint.

This section has illustrated the participants’ use of the norm of hard physical play in the course of conducting their affairs. In explicating how this norm may be applied in alternative ways to characterize an action, it depicts the norm as a members’ resource, rather than an internalized determinant of people’s conduct. The importance of this insight to the thesis’ overall argument will be discussed in the conclusion to this chapter.

At this point in the interaction, Gregg calls for the players’ attention (line 19), and begins a fresh attempt at resolving the ultimate issue of Boris’ outburst (lines 21-25). He abandons the strand of the dispute that he had been pursuing in his last utterance, the issue of the facticity of Steve’s elbow throw, and returns to his earlier strategy of attempting to characterize Steve’s performance as good, hard physical play. Interestingly, however, rather than returning to the “opponents” SRP and its associated norm of hard play to constitute the moral sense of Steve’s action, Gregg
instead produces an utterance that draws upon the very category membership that he had disputed when used by Boris: Steve’s and Boris’ co-incumbency of the “Pelicans players” category and their corresponding “teammates” relationship. The next section explores how Gregg is able to reconfigure this SRP, which Boris had used to imply that Steve had breached his moral responsibilities, in order to show that it was Boris who had failed to act in accordance with normative expectations.

**MORAL DISCREPANCIES AND SITUATED RESPONSIBILITIES**

The form of Gregg’s utterance to Boris in lines 21-25 (to paraphrase, “If Steve had done something like that on Saturday (i.e., during a competitive league game against an opposing team member), you would have congratulated him, but today he is doing it against you and you are responding angrily”) draws upon the moral discrepancy device outlined earlier in this chapter. Recall that this kind of device is used to find that the absence of one event, given the occurrence of some prior event, is a morally accountable affair. The sequential pair of normatively-tied categories which function as sense-making resources in this case could be phrased “performance of hard physical play by one player → appreciative response by that player’s teammates”. By invoking this device, then, Gregg employs the “teammates” SRP suggested by Boris to find not Steve’s action, but Boris’ subsequent response, as the morally accountable one. What is interesting about Gregg’s move here is not that it applies a moral discrepancy device, however, but that the application of the device on this occasion involves an attempt to transpose a set of normatively paired categories from one setting to another. By referring to a particular time (“Saturday”), Gregg’s utterance invokes a specific social scene, “league games”, which in turn implies a host of categories, predicates and standardized relationships. In effect, the word serves to cue up a whole “relevant category environment” (Jayyusi, 1984). The sequential pair of events “performance of hard physical play by one player → appreciative response by teammates” is obviously relevant to such a setting: there, the Pelicans team is playing a “serious” game against a league opponent. Gregg’s utterance, then, attempts to draw upon the obviousness of this normatively tied pair in “league game” settings to render the absence of the second part of the pair (and the presence of a different second part, Boris’ angry outburst, that expresses the opposite
stance toward the first pair part to that specified by the rule), as comprising, on this occasion, a morally problematic event.

Boris’ response (lines 26-27) displays his acceptance of the accuracy of the normative pairing formulated in Gregg’s utterance, but only as applicable to the original setting from which it was drawn. In pointing out the difference between a league game and a training session – that a game involves “another team” (line 26) – Boris disputes the logic of transposing this rule of conduct drawn from one setting, unmodified, to another. In effect, he implies that by attempting to invoke the rule of conduct here, Gregg misunderstands the reason why Boris would celebrate Steve’s aggressive play during the game on Saturday: the reason being that, given the setting, Steve’s aggressive play would necessarily be directed toward a member of another team. In a training session, where that aggression is aimed at a teammate, it is not the same thing, and therefore the sequential norm drawn from the game-context simply does not apply.

Further, since Gregg’s point depends upon recognizing Boris and Steve as “teammates” (a categorial co-incumbency that he had rejected when Boris proffered it earlier), Boris is now able to exploit this move in order to return to his original line of argumentation. After a pause (line 28), which perhaps indicates that Boris’ rejection of Gregg’s argument is not going to be contested, Boris follows his prior turn by producing the most explicit formulation of his point yet (“We’re teammates here we play hard but we don’t injure each other” (lines 29-30)), which not only restates his position, but accommodates the counter-arguments made by Gregg and Keith. He phrases his reiteration as a general maxim of moral conduct that defines the relationship that holds between co-incumbents of the “Pelicans players” category during practice sessions (“We’re teammates here”) and the normative expectations and responsibilities predicated to members of this category (“we play hard but we don’t injure each other”) in a way designed to accommodate both the norm of hard physical play and the distinction between “clean” and “dirty” play.

Perhaps realizing that he has hit tricky terrain, Gregg (line 31) abandons this line of attack and returns to his earlier denial of the facticity of Steve’s elbow throw. At this
point, the dispute devolves into flat contradiction – Gregg asserting that Steve did not throw an elbow, Boris counter-asserting that he did – and the argument appears irresolvable (it is interesting that the question of whether the elbow was thrown is never put to Steve to answer). The fundamentally irreconcilable nature of the argument at this point appears to be indexed in comments made by various players displaying their rising frustration and encouraging the participants to wrap the dispute up (lines 36 and 38). At this point, possibly responding to peer sentiment, Boris makes an “epistemic downgrade” (Heritage, 2012b) of his assertion that Steve had thrown an elbow, conceding the possibility that his understanding of Steve’s action was mistaken. By accepting some responsibility for the trouble but limiting this responsibility to a possible error of recognition, Boris is able to signal that he wants to move toward assent, but do so without losing “face” (Goffman, 1967/2005). His justification for his behaviour – that he thought he got elbowed, and that he was as such entitled to express his outrage – still stands, and his concession that he may have been wrong regarding the factual grounds for his outrage does not alter the validity of his motivation. Thus, by admitting possible epistemic fallibility he positions himself as potentially factually mistaken, rather than morally culpable.

Boris’ epistemic downgrade is accepted as an adequate concession for the purposes of moving toward a resolution by Gregg, who responds by producing a concession himself. Gregg’s concession is built around a formulation of common ground, indicating his understanding that both Steve and Boris had some kind of legitimate motivational foundation for their actions. In effect, Boris’ concession allows Gregg to accomplish something of a role-change: having secured adequate assent, Gregg can move from disputant to arbitrator, with both roles evidently being provided for by the “coach” category. Though the video clip ends here, making it impossible to see exactly how the interaction concludes, Gregg’s utterance clearly indicates that the controversy has come to an end and that no further disagreement on this issue will follow.

This section has involved an extended analysis of a single interactional event. By showing how a particular controversial stretch of action is dealt with in its aftermath, it has illustrated how the moral sense of the event was progressively defined,
challenged, and clarified. In both establishing the sense of the event and managing the moral implications of their accounts of the event, the members were shown to possess a fine-grained awareness of the moral order of the setting. The following section brings the findings of this chapter together and puts them into the context of the thesis as a whole.

8.6 **CONCLUSION: BASKETBALL TRAINING AND THE REFLEXIVE APPLICATION OF NORMS**

The analysis in this chapter constitutes a detailed description of members’ situated practices of moral reasoning. I have attempted, through empirical analysis of the interactional details of “breaches” of normatively expectable conduct, to describe some of the practices through which moral objects are accomplished in and as sequentially organized action in basketball practice sessions. In doing so, I have shed some light on both the sets of moral expectations that comprise a background for constituting the intelligibility of activities occurring in this setting, and some of the highly organized, methodical ways in which these moral expectancies are reflexively constituted as occasioned matters in and through sequentially organized interaction. The overarching objective of the chapter has been to explicate how “the practical, the conceptual and the moral are laminated together in the organization of situated action and discourse, in their very intelligibility” (Jayyusi, 1991, p. 242).

The analysis of the excerpts above was intended to illustrate some of “the work of [moral] fact production in flight” (Garfinkel, 1967, p. 79). The coach’s work of finding a performance error to be unreasonable because it is “the same” as previously corrected errors; finding an action to be unacceptable because it is part of a sequence of mistakes; describing the players’ conduct as beneath their experience level; and finding a player’s account for his performance to be an “excuse”, were described as methodical accomplishments made in the midst of real-time, unfolding trajectories of action. Further, the coach’s methods for producing moral characterizations were explored for the ways in which they are themselves morally ordered: it was suggested that the production and reception of moral characterizations may be one site where asymmetries of power between coaches and players are interactionally
accomplished. In this respect, the “power relationship” between players and coaches was treated not as an explanation for what happens in practice sessions\(^98\), but instead as the interactional accomplishment of the participants.

Additionally, as was demonstrated in the analysis of the interaction following Boris and Steve’s altercation, this moral ordering work is not confined to the coach. The players, too, are deeply involved, displaying a detailed knowledge of their moral entitlements and responsibilities. Navigating the moral, practical and conceptual issues that arise in the process of contesting the “moral facts” of a piece of problematic behaviour requires that all parties possess and display a fine-grained understanding of their situation of action, of the setting’s available identities, relations and norms of conduct, of morally appropriate methods of characterizing their actions and those of others, and of how to integrate these orientations in the production of sequentially organized action, for instance through the skilful employment of preference structures. Further, this final excerpt displayed some limits to the coach’s unilateral entitlement to define the “moral facts of the matter”. While the coach clearly possesses significant moral authority, his category-bound moral entitlements do not always extend to the right to define the situation and have it stand unchallenged. His procedures for making normative judgments are, on occasion, treated as contestable and subject to scrutiny in certain situations. In this case, we see players, in sequential talk, formulating their own setting-bound obligations as a means of challenging the moral status accorded their actions by the coach. It is not being claimed here that the coach does not possess power over the players, but rather that “the availability and efficacy of power is no more and no less subject to the vagaries of practical circumstance than any other matter” (Sharrock & Button, 2007, p. 35).

The parties to the setting were shown to be involved in using a range of organizational resources (categorial identities, rules of conduct, the institutional

\(^{98}\) In contrast to some of the studies of coaching considered in Chapter 1, such as Cushion and Jones (2006), Johns and Johns (2000), Potrac and Jones (2009b, 2011), and Taylor and Garratt (2010). At the risk of becoming repetitive, this is not to say that such studies are wrong in their use of underlying power structures as an explanation for conduct. Rather, the approach taken by my study is simply incommensurate with that informing these other investigations.
setting, syntactic structures, preference organization) in understanding, describing, justifying and contesting the moral accountability of stretches of conduct in and as sequentially organized conduct. In the process, those parties reflexively constituted the local moral order, rendering certain identities, norms and conventions relevant and consequential for the understanding the actions in question. This analysis can thus be seen as an explication of ways in which “common-sense understandings of social structures figure in the organization of routine everyday conduct” (Sharrock & Button, 2007, p. 50).

More specifically, this description of how parties to a setting conduct in-situ practical analyzes of the relevance and applicability of norms and “moral-social” categories (Baker, 1997) to the current circumstances addresses a classic problem of normative explanation originally formulated by Sacks (1995). Sacks raises the problem in his discussion of a paper by Albert (1964) on the ways in which the Burundi people organize participation in conversation. Albert asserts that, for the Burundi, the order in which parties to an interaction speak is determined by their social status: the party ranked highest speaks first. Sacks (1995) points out that the problem with seeking to explain people’s conduct by use of a system comprised of norms of conduct formulated in terms of categories, is that it does not provide for the ways in which people decide which of those categories is relevant at any concrete moment: “the rules are formulated in terms of categories. But the rules don’t tell you when those categories are appropriately to be used” (p. 629, emphasis added). This kind of normative explanation of action in terms of categorial identity, for Sacks, avoids addressing the problem of just who a person is (understood to be) when he or she acts. Treating norms as internalized motivational phenomena is thus problematic in that it does not provide insight into how members of society “practically analyze situations in terms of the relevance of such norms and rules… for what they should do ‘here and now in this particular context’” (Stephen Hester & Francis, 2004, p. 206).

In the above analysis, we see the parties grappling with precisely these issues in the process of organising their activities. In the course of trying to achieve a consensus regarding the moral accountability of the actions comprising the controversy, the
parties propose alternative categories as appropriate for defining who the participants were (and who they were to one another) during the exchange. As we saw, the process of proffering categories is of great moral import, as different categories make relevant alternative norms of conduct, which in turn serve to constitute actions as different moral objects (e.g., as being in accordance with some rule, or, alternatively, a breach of some rule). Through selecting, proffering, and disputing the relevance of categories, the parties to the training session display their practical understanding of such “sociological” phenomena as norms and moral-social categories as practical matters, relevant to the setting, the current activity and the sequential context.

In demonstrating that, and how, parties to these practice sessions organize their actions to be morally accountable, this chapter has added an important dimension to the thesis” overall project of respecifying sporting activity as a practical production. While Chapters 6 and 7 were more concerned with explicating the methodical procedures and organizational resources that members use to produce and recognize basketball activities, this chapter has emphasized that such activities are also oriented to by members as intrinsically moral affairs. By attending to this normative aspect of the practical organization of sporting activities, this chapter brings the thesis into accord with Garfinkel’s original insight that members analyze one another’s actions for both their intelligibility and their moral import, treating them as “the product of accountable moral choice” (Heritage, 1984, p. 76).

The most important upshot of this chapter for the thesis as a whole is that the methods and procedures for organizing action identified in this study are not merely productive of order, but their deployment by members during basketball activities is also subject to the ongoing and detailed moral scrutiny of the other parties to the setting. Parties to interaction investigate others’ actions for how they either maintain, elaborate, or alter the contextually situated, temporally unfolding courses of action within which they are embedded, and they design their own actions with the knowledge that they will be subject to the same scrutiny. Norms thus comprise a key aspect of the background expectancies methodically oriented to in the production and recognition of action. The recognition of the central importance of norms in everyday life is crucial to the identity of this thesis; fundamentally, it is what makes
it a work of sociological analysis. The next chapter concludes the thesis and returns to the issue of the study’s relation to sociological studies of sport.
Conclusion

Here we come up against a remarkable and characteristic phenomenon in philosophical investigation. The difficulty – I might say – is not that of finding the solution but rather that of recognizing as the solution something that looks as if it were only a preliminary to it. “We have already said everything. – Not anything that follows from this, no, this itself is the solution!”

This is connected, I believe, with our wrongly expecting an explanation, whereas the solution of the difficulty is a description, if we give it the right place in our considerations. If we dwell upon it, and do not try to get beyond it.

The difficulty here is: to stop. (Wittgenstein, 1967, sec. 314)

I conclude this thesis with a brief return to a topic I touched on in the introduction to this thesis – my own personal intellectual trajectory. In that discussion, I confessed that I had finished my MA thesis on America’s Cup yachting far better informed than I had been at the outset about the political and economic organization and the ideological functions of the sport, but I felt that I possessed little more insight than when I had begun into what yachting actually was. The sense of dissatisfaction with which I had been left at the end of that project propelled me on a search for an analytic approach that would provide me with a more adequate account of whatever topic I chose to study next. Ethnomethodology, with its eschewal of theoretical conceptions of power and social structure in favour of a principled methodological investigation of members’ situated accomplishment of the appearances of social order, struck me as a unique and refreshing perspective on social phenomena almost from the moment I first came across Silverman’s (1998) book on Sacks. The book captured my imagination, and I have spent the five years since I encountered it attempting to become acquainted with the large and difficult corpus of empirical research and methodological and theoretical discussion comprising the field of ethnomethodological and conversation analytic work (while also collecting and analyzing the data for, and writing up, this thesis). Though I certainly would not claim to have mastered the approach, I feel pleased, at the end of this process, with
the humble results of my endeavours. Studying basketball ethnomethodologically has not taught me substantive things about the sport that I did not know when I began this study: but then, that it not its purpose. Rather, ethnomethodology has given me the opportunity to explore how I was doing it when I practiced basketball seriously as a youth. Perhaps more importantly, it has staved off any attempt I might have made to theorize basketball team practice sessions as just another site where capitalist ideology, hegemonic masculinity, struggles over power relations, or whatever other theoretical construct can be observed, and instead encouraged me to investigate them on their own terms – as the concerted, methodical productions of their participants. For me, taking this route has been a deeply satisfying process. However, as my supervisors have advised me, a thesis ought not to conclude on such a personal note. As such, the remainder of this conclusion is concerned with specifying the original contribution to knowledge provided by my study.

In the introduction, I specified that this study, in investigating the situated organization of basketball practice activities, aimed to provide a contribution to the existing bodies of knowledge of two distinct fields of inquiry. Firstly, with regard to the field of sport studies, my objective was to outline a \textit{radically alternate} form of inquiry into sport to that of conventional sociological investigations of the subject, and to demonstrate the analytic payoff of taking up such an approach. Secondly, I aimed to contribute to the field of ethnomethodology and conversation analysis in both an empirical sense, by inquiring into a setting of social interaction that has received little attention, and a methodological one, by demonstrating the analytic utility of combining methods from ethnomethodology, conversation analysis and workplace studies that are sometimes seen as incompatible. These three objectives organize the theoretical, methodological, and empirical chapters of this thesis. I shall consider each of these aims in turn, and reflect upon how successful the study has been in accomplishing them.

Firstly, this study aimed to illuminate some of the “missing whatness” of sporting activity that, it was argued, characterizes the corpus of existing literature in the field of sport sociology. This objective was approached by way of treating sport as a purely practical production. The empirical analysis illustrates some of the detailed
interactional “work” in which the parties to basketball practice sessions engage in co-producing their activities as recognizable events. In approaching sport ethnomethodologically, that is, as a members’ practical accomplishment, this study of sport diverges in important, fundamental ways from conventional sociological investigations. As I mentioned in the review of the sport studies literature, standard sociological studies of sport are premised upon the mundane availability and intelligibility of sporting activities in the first place (Stephen Hester & Francis, 2007). In such studies, this recognizable orderliness of sporting activities is relied upon as a resource for conducting sociological investigations, but this orderliness is systematically ignored as a topic in its own right (cf. Zimmerman & Pollner, 1971). By contrast, as a result of ethnomethodology’s operationalization of distinctive decisions made at a fundamental, pre-theoretical level (i.e., the choice to operationalize Schutzian phenomenological commitments (Anderson, et al., 1985)), ethnomethodological analyses treat the recognizable orderliness of activities to those involved in their practical accomplishment as their sole concern. In this sense, the difference between conventional sociological investigations and ethnomethodological studies is stark: in order theoretically to explain social phenomena, sociology requires systematic disregard of the very features of activities that ethnomethodology seeks to investigate (Sharrock & Watson, 1988).

As noted on several occasions throughout this thesis, the claim that conventional sociology presupposes the recognizability of activities as an essential requirement of its work does not necessarily amount to a criticism of sociological theorizing for not doing something that it ought to do. Nor does it constitute an assertion that all sociologists should take up ethnomethodology instead. In Sharrock and Anderson’s (1986) words:

The failure to examine the foundations of one’s own undertakings is by no means to be thought necessarily as a failing. If one is to engage in an undertaking, then things must be taken as given, and one cannot both carry on the undertaking and step back from it to reflect upon it. Thus, the things which constructivist sociology does not reflect upon are things that it cannot reflect upon, not as long as it retains a commitment to its project: reflection
on its own foundations would require it to distance itself from just those commitments. (pp. 101-102)

However, it is crucial to recognize that while this study is not intended as a criticism of conventional sociological studies of sport, neither is it offered as a supplement to the projects informing other sociological investigations. The idea that ethnomethodology can be supplementary to other sociological inquiries depends upon the belief that ethnomethodological inquiries provide a “partial” view of social phenomena. This belief in turn rests upon the prevailing sociological assumption that social reality is comprised of a duality of structure and agency. Under this view, ethnomethodology’s focus is allegedly directed solely toward the agency side of this dichotomy (Stephen Hester & Francis, 2004). Ethnomethodological studies, it is alleged from this perspective, can provide insight into the “local”, “micro”, or “interactional” structures shaping action, but, in order to provide a “rounded” picture of social phenomena, such descriptions must be supplemented with the insights of other sociologies better equipped to uncover the “macrostructural” determinants of conduct (Hilbert, 1990).

The alternative perspective argued in this thesis is that ethnomethodology and conventional sociology fundamentally differ at the level of pre-sociological philosophical commitments. From this viewpoint, ethnomethodology simply does not subscribe to the theoretical presupposition upon which the structure/agency dichotomy is based, that is, the assumption that investigating the underlying structural determinants of action (whether they be macro or micro in scale) is the only way of doing sociology (Sharrock & Watson, 1988). In giving up the pursuit of the “real”, structural orderliness purportedly underlying action in favour of studying members’ constitution of the appearances of order from within their activities, ethnomethodology’s interests are thus at a tangent from, and incommensurate with, those of conventional sociologists (Sharrock & Anderson, 1986). The distinction between ethnomethodological and sociological perspectives on some object of interest can be seen as having the character of a gestalt switch: “one can look at things one way or the other, but they are discrete and alternate, not additive, ways of
seeing things, such that what is seen from one point of view ‘disappears’ when seen from the other” (Sharrock & Watson, 1988, p. 60).

Given this basic distinction between the interests of ethnomethodological and other sociological inquiries, the current study, rather than critiquing or complementing the existing sport studies literature, is intended as a radical alternative to this corpus of knowledge. In respecifying sporting activity as a members’ practical production, the matters with which this study concerns itself can be seen as “foundational” (Sharrock & Anderson, 1986) to sociological studies of sport: that is, this study has presented aspects of a domain of phenomena – the reflexive, situated organization of sporting activities – upon which the very possibility of theorizing sport sociologically depends. What that domain actually consists of was drawn out in the empirical analysis, where several dimensions of the organizational features of basketball practice activities were explicated. I briefly summarize these findings here.

A first aspect comprises the embodied practices of vision through which a coach makes sense of the observable scenes of basketball activity. In order effectively to engage in instruction and correction activities, the coach must be able visually to identify specific problematic aspects of player performance. The analysis demonstrated that the coach’s ability to locate correctable events within a complex and dynamic perceptual field of players’ bodies and court markings rests on an ongoing orientation to mutually elaborative layers of sequential, categorial and material organization. A second aspect illuminated by this research is the methods by which the coach and players practically accomplish correction events. The analysis identified and described several embodied practices employed by participants to make correctable basketball actions and objects, and their correct replacements, visually available to all parties. Further, it demonstrated how such practices constituted responses to practical problems for instruction and correction that arose from specific features of basketball training activities. Finally, it was shown that participants possess a fine-grained awareness of the normative order of the setting, and that this awareness was employed in constituting and contesting the moral sense of particular occurrences. In terms of correction activities, the analysis showed that the coach oriented to a distinction between “reasonable” and “unreasonable” player
errors in performance, and pointed to some ways in which certain performances were found to be morally accountable.

In sum, through the detailed interrogation of recordings of naturally-occurring basketball activities, some of the skilful procedures used by members in order to see relevant errors in performance, to create perceptual environments within which errors can be effectively corrected, and to establish the moral status of controversial events were revealed. It was argued that the situated use of the methods identified in this thesis is a necessary condition for the identification and correction of player errors during basketball practice sessions. Further, error identification and correction is a crucial part of what constitutes these training sessions as instructional settings, and, as such, the methods explicated here are necessary for the very possibility of the practice sessions themselves. The analysis has thus exposed a set of practices constitutive of basketball practice as an interactional activity.

In exposing these practices, this research illuminates some of the domain of phenomena that I have characterized as the “missing whatness” of sport studies. The original contribution of this thesis with regard to the field of sport sociology thus lies in its depiction of constitutive features of the social organization of sporting activity, features which are unavailable to studies adopting conventional sociological approaches. In explicating these details of the methodical accomplishment of basketball practice sessions, this research provides a useful glimpse into a vast domain of phenomena that has been left unexplored by the sociological tradition of inquiry into sport. Whilst no claim is made that this thesis provides an exhaustive account of the methods by which members organize their basketball practice activities and make them accountable to one another, the analysis has illustrated, in a limited way, at least some of the skilful interactional “work” through which such activities are accomplished. As such, it is my contention that this study has achieved the stated aim of providing a demonstration of the analytic payoff of adopting an ethnomethodological perspective on sport. Such insights might be disappointing to those who expect sociological inquiries to reveal the “hidden”, and possibly power-laden, orderliness underlying the surface appearances of social phenomena. However, for those who are interested in just how the “witnessable” (Livingston,
orderliness of society is accomplished in real-time by those responsible for its production, the analysis provided by this thesis offers something of interest.

The thesis has also aimed to contribute to the corpus of ethnomethodological and conversation analytic literature on social interaction. The contribution that this study makes to this field of knowledge is of a different nature to the one provided to sport sociology: it has the character of an incremental addition rather than a radical alternate. As noted above, the intended contribution to this field is twofold, comprising both an empirical and a methodological component. The empirical facet of this contribution consists of the extension of ethnomethodological interests in the situated organization of practical action into the domain of sporting activity, an area that has received little attention from ethnomethodologists. More specifically, prior to this study the substantive topic of team sport training and coaching has not (as far as I have been able to ascertain) been investigated intensively from an ethnomethodological perspective. By explicating some of the methods through which team sport training and coaching is “done” as a recognizable activity (discussed above), this study makes an original empirical contribution to the body of ethnomethodological knowledge regarding the organization of social action.

It was also pointed out in earlier chapters that this research shares topical interests with other ethnomethodological studies not specifically concerned with sport. Previous ethnomethodological research was outlined which had respecified the longstanding social scientific themes of embodied action, instruction, visual perception, and moral order as local practical action, and which had sought to explicate the situated practices involved in the organization of singular cases of the activities “glossed” by these terms. This thesis contributes in an indirect way to the ethnomethodological literature on these four topics. I consider each of these in turn.

With regard to the first topic, embodied action, the analysis illuminates some of the ways in which bodies are oriented to by participants in their organization of basketball correction activities. Several practices in particular are explicated in this respect. It is shown that members orient to the production of embodied structures of joint attention at the outset of correction sequences. Additionally, it is demonstrated
that, and how, participants utilize bodies in assembling reconstructed fields within which visible errors and corrections can be produced. Further, the pedagogical importance of gestures that linked bodily movements, talk, and environmental structure is highlighted, as is the coach’s embodied procedure for mapping himself onto different player-categories. Embodied conduct is thus shown to constitute a core resource for the accomplishment of correction activities, and the specific configurations of embodied practices described in this thesis constitute original additions to the ethnomethodological corpus of studies on embodiment.

The second theme, instruction, also runs as a thread through the analysis, informing the nature of the findings that are developed. In a first example of discoveries relevant to this topic, one method by which the coach could assess players’ “knowledge”, is described. This procedure involves the coach’s visual observation of recognizably “absent” player actions through the employment of sequential, categorial and spatial resources, and the interrogation of the player’s bodily position and gaze direction. The analysis illustrates that a player’s bodily conduct, when set against a relevant background context, comprises a resource through which players’ competencies and knowledge can be made visibly and publicly available for scrutiny. It also demonstrates that the visual availability of absences of relevant knowledge or skill provides a warrant for the initiation of corrections. It was argued that this method is more suited to the activities taking place in basketball practice than the IRE sequence which is characteristic of classroom settings, due to the embodied nature of basketball competencies. In identifying an alternative to the IRE sequence, this thesis contributes to discussions of how instructional activities in non-classroom settings become organized.

In addition, the analysis considers some of the understandings and competencies that participants draw upon in accomplishing instructional activities as orchestrated events. It describes some of the complexities that arise for instruction and correction due to the nature of the activities being performed in this setting. Two particular features of activities that create problems for instruction are that during drill performances, different players tend to be visually attending to different things, and that the objects to be corrected consist of fleeting embodied performances which
frequently depend for their sense on being situated within complex interactional structures. In elaborating some of the methods participants used to deal with these problems – in particular, the recreation of spatial/sequential/categorial fields, the use of environmentally-coupled enactments, and the spatial mapping procedure – this thesis provides original insights into the organization of intelligible instructional activities in the sports setting. Indeed, these insights may carry over to a range of other settings where the objective is to organize the coordinated embodied actions of multiple parties (e.g., dance classes, theatre and orchestral rehearsals, military training, and so on).

The topic of visual perception is also touched on at various points in the analysis. Firstly, an aspect of the professional vision (C. Goodwin, 1994) of the basketball coach – the ability to see relevant player errors within the perceptual environment of the practice activity – is shown to be central to the instructional process. The analysis demonstrates that locating correctable player performances depends upon the coach seeing a player’s embodied movements against a complex background context comprised of the current activity in which the team is involved, the sequential position in the activity at which the performance occurred, and the categorial membership of the player in question. Further, the analysis adds some details on the embodied procedures through which, in the course of correcting errors, the reconstructed visual field is shaped into basketball-relevant objects through the employment of embodied practices of highlighting features of the field, such as pointing. These reconstructed embodied fields are shown to comprise visual environments within which such highlighting practices can be deployed by the coach in the process of moving through and operating on the scene. Via this process, players can be trained to recognize and respond to basketball-relevant phenomena.

This thesis adds to the corpus of ethnomethodological literature on visual perception by showing the central role practices of seeing play in the accomplishment of basketball practice activities, explicating some specific visual practices involved in seeing competently in basketball, and describing some key procedures through which competent seeing is taught.
The theme of moral order comprises the fourth substantive topic. In describing members’ concerns with determining the moral sense of their activities, and explicating some of the procedures through which the “moral facts of the matter” are characterized and contested in basketball activities, this thesis contributes to ethnomethodology’s long-standing interest in respecifying norms of conduct as constitutive, rather than regulative, phenomena. Following Garfinkel’s contention that “common norms, rather than regulating conduct in pre-defined scenes of action, are instead reflexively constitutive of the activities and unfolding circumstances to which they are applied” (Heritage, 1984, p. 109, emphasis in original), the analysis sought to examine how participants employ norms as sense-making resources within sequentially unfolding stretches of interaction. Further, it draws upon work by Watson (1997) and Housley and Fitzgerald (2009) that has attempted to develop ways of integrating sequential and categorial aspects of social interaction in analyzing members’ production of normatively accountable conduct. In describing some of the procedures by which members seek to characterize, justify, and contest the moral identity of their actions, this thesis not only demonstrates that participants possess a fine-grained knowledge of the moral order of the setting, but also illustrates that the use of this knowledge in accounting for conduct involves their orientation to both sequential and categorial aspects of social organization. As such, it provides empirical support for Housley and Fitzgerald’s (2002) assertion that it is “demonstrably not the case that the sequential organization of interaction operates independently from the categorial organization of talk-in-interaction” but rather “the two sides of the coin are realized in a reflexive space and are mutually constitutive” (p. 73).

This point regarding the reflexivity of sequence and category provides an opportunity to address the final aim of this study, that of making a contribution to methodological debates internal to the broad field of ethnomethodological research. In Chapter 4, I outlined a methodological approach that would build upon recent attempts to construct a research program that attends to the sequential and categorial aspects of the organization of interaction as reflexively related phenomena, in contrast to prevailing approaches which tend to restrict analytic attention to one or the other aspect. It was argued that, while ethnomethodological and conversation
analytic approaches to the analysis of social action are characterized by differences in analytic interest and methodological preference, there is no in-principle reason why methods drawn from both could not be combined into a coherent research strategy for analyzing the situated organization of interaction. Drawing on Watson’s (1997) discussion of turn-generated categories, Fitzgerald’s (1999) ideas about sequentially organized category flows, and Robinson’s (2012) argument that sequences of action may themselves be embedded in larger activities consisting of supra-sequential organized units, a methodological approach was proposed. This framework treats interaction as a complex flow of sequential actions in which multiple layers of categorization become relevant as the action unfolds, some lasting for single turns and others persisting over longer stretches of interaction. Further, since the activities under scrutiny in this research are strongly embodied, it was proposed that the analysis would also draw upon methods from workplace studies in order to incorporate visible conduct into the analytic framework.

The application of this methodological approach to recordings of interactional events occurring during Pelicans’ practice sessions generated the empirical chapters of this thesis. Whether or not this method was successful depends upon how convincing the reader finds the empirical analysis produced via its use. It seems clear that the approach enabled access to members’ reflexive use of multiple organizational resources in their accomplishment of basketball activities. For instance, the exercise, in Chapter 6, of working through the methods used by the coach to observe an accountable performance error relied on directing analytic attention to his use of membership categorization devices, sequential structures, and spatial configurations. The reflexive deployment of all three types of resources is most clearly evident in his use of what I have termed ball-relative categories to make sense of, and assess, players’ conduct. Ball-relative categories, like other membership categories, function as “storehouses” of members’ knowledge – they come with predicates attached which specify appropriate courses of action for their incumbents in various circumstances. These categories are sequentially and spatially activated, and work to generate further sequentially-relevant actions for their incumbents. The analysis of the workings of ball-relative categories, in its depiction of the reflexive, mutually-elaborative operation of categorial, sequential and spatial resources, serves to
demonstrate the utility of the outlined methodological approach for studying the organization of embodied activities such as sport practice sessions.

Overall, my thesis has made an original contribution to knowledge in three different but significant respects. First, it has provided some of the “missing whatness” of sporting activity that has been substantially neglected by sport sociology. Sport is not merely a site where “wider” or “deeper” social forces are played out, and is not only of intellectual significance for the insights into theorized, sociological categories and structures that can be seen to be working “behind the scenes” of visible sporting activities. Rather, as has been demonstrated, sport as a recognizable mundane affair is a domain of complex coordinated practical activity that is finely organized by participants. The vast domain of situated methods by which members produce accountable sporting activities and events have been largely ignored by scholarly inquiry; this findings of this thesis represents some of the practices that comprise this domain. Second, the study has offered some empirical insights into the topics of sporting activity, embodied action, instruction, visual perception, and moral order that add to the ethnomethodological corpus of studies on these themes. Third, it has outlined, and demonstrated the utility of, a methodological approach that attempts to integrate sequential, categorial, and visual aspects of interaction in a single analysis. It is suggested that, in making these contributions, the aims outlined at the beginning of this thesis have been achieved.

Because this thesis has been designed to address gaps within two highly divergent fields of inquiry, it is difficult to conclude with a succinct statement that adequately encapsulates its accomplishments. More than anything else, I believe that what characterizes the contribution of my thesis to wider scholarship is the effort that I have made to be resolutely original. In addressing sport ethnomethodologically, I have taken a unique approach to the subject, one that did not offer familiar themes and easy answers. Investigating sporting activities through the relentless application of ethnomethodological principles required the resolution of difficult theoretical and methodological problems and, in the end, the development of both a specific methodological framework and set of analytic themes. The outcome, I believe, is a
piece of work that stands as both an innovative example of ethnomethodological research and an important contribution to the sociology of sport.


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Appendix A: Transcription Conventions

The transcription symbols used in this thesis for rendering the vocal production of utterances are based upon the conventions developed by Gail Jefferson, and now employed by most practitioners of conversation analysis. In producing this outline of CA conventions I have drawn upon Have (2007).

Sequencing

[     A left bracket indicates the point of overlap onset.  
]    A right bracket indicates the point at which two overlapping utterances end, if they end simultaneously, or the point at which one of them ends in the course of another.

=    Equal signs at the end of one line and the beginning of a next, indicate no break between the two lines. Also known as latching.

Timed intervals

(0.0) Numbers in parentheses indicate elapsed time by tenths of seconds.

(.)  A dot in parentheses indicates a brief interval (a tenth of a second or less) within or between utterances.

Characteristics of speech production

Word  Underscoring indicates some form of stress, via pitch and/or amplitude. A shorter underscore indicates lighter stress than does a long underscore.

::   Colons indicate prolongation of the immediately prior sound. The longer the colon row, the longer the prolongation.

-    A dash indicates a cut-off.

.    A full stop indicates a stopping fall in tone.

,    A comma indicates a continuing intonation.

?    A question mark indicates a rising intonation.

↑↓   Arrows indicate marked shifts into higher or lower pitch in the utterance-part immediately following the arrow.
WORD  *Upper case* indicates especially loud sounds relative to the surrounding talk.

°  Utterances or utterance parts surrounded by *degree signs* are relatively quieter than the surrounding talk.

< >  Right/left carets bracketing an utterance or utterance-part indicate speeding up.

**Transcriber’s doubts and comments**

( )  *Empty parentheses* indicate the transcriber’s inability to hear what was said.

(word)  *Parenthesized words* are especially dubious hearings.

(( ))  *Double parentheses* contain transcriber’s descriptions rather than, or in addition to, transcriptions.
Appendix B: Gaining access and consent to study the Pelicans

My initial access to the Pelicans was facilitated by the state basketball association. I telephoned the state organization in December 2009 and outlined my PhD project to a representative, explaining to her that I was hoping to connect with an elite youth team and film their practice sessions. She informed me of the existence of the state Under 23 development league, and explained that the Under 23 league is comprised of athletes who were regarded as being potential future senior state and/or National Basketball League players. She put me in touch with the general manager of the state men’s basketball league (with which the Under 23 league is affiliated) who then recommended that I speak with the manager of the MJBC, since the club had a team in the Under 23 league (the Pelicans) which was very highly regarded, and which practised at a facility not far from where I lived (which was a very important factor since the city was a large one and I was without a car). The state league GM offered to email the club administrator for me and make an introduction.

A couple of days later, I received a call from Larry, the MJBC administrator. After I detailed my project to him, Larry said that filming the Pelicans’ practices sounded fine to him, and that the next step would be to talk it over with the team’s head coach, Gregg. Larry suggested he and I meet at the next Pelicans practice, where he could introduce me to Gregg and the three of us could discuss the project together. The following Monday, I went to the Pelicans practice facility, a single-court basketball stadium on a suburban university campus. I met Larry there, and after we had spoken for a while, he introduced me to Gregg and explained who I was and what I wanted to do. Gregg told me that that night’s training probably wouldn’t be the best example of a Pelicans practice, since he only expected to have eight players, and I explained that I was just there to introduce myself and my project that night, and that if he agreed I would like to record a number of practices over an extended period of time – preferably the entire season. We discussed exactly what the team’s participation in the project would involve – me bringing a camera to their practices and attaching a wireless microphone to the coach’s arm – and Gregg agreed to participate on the condition that I make the video footage available to him. Larry
added the proviso that any team strategy to which I became privy, or any video recordings I collected that contained material pertaining to strategic matters, would remain confidential. I agreed to their conditions, and Gregg introduced me to his two assistant coaches.

As it turned out, the practice I attended was the second to last session before the team broke up for the summer holidays. Gregg and I agreed that I would attend team’s first practice session after the holidays, at the end of January 2010, at which point he would introduce me to the players and I would be given a chance to discuss the study with them. At this session, I provided the players with information sheets, explained that the data would be confidential and anonymized, and made it clear that there was no obligation to participate and that they may withdraw from the study at any time. All of the players and coaches agreed to participate and signed consent forms.