

How gender and sexuality intersect to affect leadership in sport

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How gender and sexuality intersect to affect leadership in sport

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Master of Arts (Research)

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Statement of originality

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

The research for this thesis was authorised by the Griffith University Ethics Committee under the protocol number 2020/215.

Danielle Warby

Abstract

This thesis examines how sexuality and gender intersect to affect leadership in a sport context in Australia. Women's embodiment of leadership in predominantly masculine domains such as sport administration has been considered in previous research, but sexuality is often sidelined in these articulations.

My research explores the question of who it is possible to become in leadership roles in sport, in order to bring sexuality into direct relation with leadership to unsettle the masculine heteronormativity of sport.

I begin with the use of the 'traditional' method of oral history interviews before shifting towards thinking with theory. Informed by feminist post-structural and post-qualitative approaches, I explore alternative ways of thinking about leadership through the privileging of affect. I use critical-creative analytic assemblage thinking and consider the power struggles that haunt the sport leadership space.

I aim to contribute to the body of work on queering sport by focusing on and unpacking the complexities that arise through analysis of affective, disruptive moments and tensions that emerge through the construction of narrative. Drawing upon contemporary feminist thought, I plug-in theories of emotion and affect to explore how both leadership and the research process are enacted and performed to produce a multiplicity of knowledges.

My analysis gestures towards the complex affects and power relations that circulate through sport assemblages, and I problematise linear notions of progress towards 'success' or 'gender equity' outcomes. This research contributes to shifting the focus from women as individualised subjects who 'lack' leadership 'qualities' towards a conceptualisation of leading as relational.

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Introduction

This project examines how sexuality and gender intersect to affect leadership in a sport context in Australia. The ways in which women embody leadership in predominantly masculine domains such as sport administration have been considered in previous research (Adriaanse and Schofield 2013; Binns 2010; Lewis and Simpson 2010; Lott 2007; Stead 2013; Stead and Elliott 2019), but sexuality is often sidelined in these articulations. My research explores the question of who it is possible to become in leadership roles in sport, in order to bring sexuality into direct relation with leadership to unsettle the masculine heteronormativity of sport. I look at how leadership is enacted and performed with the goal of queering leadership identity and practices in order to open up more diverse ways of becoming-leader.

This thesis is not simply about capturing authentic human experience (Fullagar 2017); it does not aim to represent an essential Truth (Iisahunter and emerald, 2016, capitalisation used in original), but rather presents counter-narratives and contradicting stories, generating alternative possibilities to be read in conjunction with existing texts on sport leadership. My challenge has been learning to write-research, sitting in a position of not-knowing and writing my way through compelling ideas, tensions and dilemmas to think with theory. Probyn (2005, p. 41) says that 'writing is a corporeal activity. We work ideas through our bodies; we write through our bodies, hoping to get into the bodies of our readers'.

Context

According to Fullagar and Pavlidis (2018), women's empowerment through sport has become a feminist trope, and media – both mainstream and other forms – insists that we are currently experiencing a 'revolution' in women's sport (McLachlan, 2019). Whether or not this is the case, it is contributing to an increase in the visibility of women in sport who

claim a diverse sexuality, both in 'mainstream media' and on social media (Warby, 2018). We are in the middle of what Probyn (1996) calls a 'mutation of movements', especially at the point where gender, sexuality and sport intersect.

This raises the question of what this increased visibility does. Does it really challenge the status quo, as Lewis and Simpson (2010) claim? What effect does it have on individuals and systems, and is it really the end of the 'lesbian bogey woman' (Griffin, 1998) stereotype designed to keep women out of sport?

The women in sport movement seems to be coalescing in this moment into something advocates hope will see sustained change and make the 'revolution' rhetoric 'stick' this time around. For that to happen, we need a more nuanced analysis of women's sporting lives using theories of emotion and affect (Fullagar and Pavlidis, 2018).

Background

Like Brown (2015), I feel the 'queer pull of the past', and my desire to undertake this research has evolved over the past 15 years. It all began when I joined the Flying Bats Women's Football Club (the Bats) in 2004. Formed out of lesbian separatist movements in 1985, the Bats is now the oldest and largest lesbian soccer club in the world. In 2015, led by oral historian Dr Shirleene Robinson, a group of us worked to uncover and document the history of the club. From working on those oral histories, I began to ask questions: who gets to decide what constitutes history? What histories might we be missing from the narrative? Could some untold histories help contribute to the understanding of some of the questions we face today?

I chose to concentrate on the period 1970–99. This was a time of great social change in Australia and elsewhere, influenced by 'first wave' feminism and 'gay liberation'. It was also the beginning of the (gender) amalgamation process for sports organisations in Australia.

‘We had time’

Through my immersion in the sport space, I came to realise just how many lesbian women are involved in sport who were/are leaders of sport – particularly women’s sport. I went to a conference of sport historians and I met a woman who was writing the history of a particular sport organisation. She told me that she was only given access to women who had been made life members of the organisation. A life member is someone who has made a significant contribution. Despite the significant contributions of many members, both heterosexual and homosexual, it was only the straight women who were given life membership, thus continuing the erasure of non-heterosexual women in sport to this day. This, as you might imagine, made me mad.

Anecdotally, I knew there were plenty of lesbian leaders in the history of sport in Australia. One of my participants reiterated a previous conversation we had that was a catalyst for this project:

One of the reasons I think there's a lot of gay women or lesbians in sport and senior administration ... in those days was because they had the time – they weren't burdened, dare I say, by husbands or kids that they had to go home to make sure there was a meal on the table or get to school and shuffle all those other things that, you know, heterosexual mums ... with husbands who are in very traditional relationships are laden with so there's the business side, but the other thing is the personal side. (Hazel)

What perspectives, I wondered, could lesbian leaders bring to ‘the problem of leadership’ in sport?

As a woman who has worked in and around sport and identifies as lesbian and queer, I am what Taylor (2011) calls an ‘intimate insider’. Taylor draws on Thornton’s (1995) concept of ‘subcultural capital’ to highlight the positive aspects of doing insider research. My previous work as an advocate positioned me in a leadership capacity of sorts, outside mainstream

sport organisations but contributing to a pressure for change. This has developed my own subcultural capital within this field, which I felt may encourage wary informants to open up and an awareness that my 'self-knowledge can lead to social insight' (Taylor, 2011). I also consider some of these women as my cultural elders. However, as I progressed through my research, I realised the limitations of the insider/outsider binary: it is more a moving border or threshold, depending on the topic being covered, and I felt the surfaces moving. I also became aware that I had romanticised the notion of being an 'insider' and realised it was trust, not my 'insider' position, between myself and my participants that made entanglements possible and productive (Johansson, Moe and Nissen, 2021).

As a white, queer woman writing from the Global South, in unceded so-called Australia on the lands of the Galibal people of the Bundjalung Nation, I acknowledge the effects of privilege and power, and how they have shaped my research interests, the problems towards which I am turned and the knowledges with which I have engaged in the process of writing my master's thesis. This was an opportunity I was able to create for myself through an understanding of the university system gained through working within the sector. This knowledge, tied to my whiteness, resulted in confidence in knowing that I should be able to make my way, without the 'usual' prerequisites, into a fully funded postgraduate research degree.

Aim of the research

The aim of this research, as McLachlan (2019, p. 9) states, is to 'illuminate blind spots that keep social systems intact and make seeing how to change them so difficult'. My goal was to contribute to the understanding of the entanglement of gender and sexuality in sport management and help advance conceptualisations of sport leadership. This study explores the tensions, shifts and openings in the current celebratory environment around women in sport in dialogue with the past, to utilise the current environment as a lens to look back on the past and 'interrogate normative gender representations that sustain leadership as a heroic, masculine site of activity' (Stead and Elliott, 2019, p. 2).

Assumptions

The initial assumption that underpinned this research was the notion that I would find answers to my research questions. I had lofty visions of solving the problem of inequality in sport leadership once and for all. I thought these women would hint at least to an easy answer – but of course, there isn't one. And there's no solving 'the problem of leadership' except to ask better questions and to look at the problem differently. Even as my intent is to open up, to give voice and produce transformative research, I find myself gravitating towards what I recognise and coming in with preconceived ideas of what I thought I might find. It is an ongoing process to work with this tension, writing through to show what I learn by returning to ideas and moving elsewhere.

Research questions

I formulated the following questions to pursue the goals of this research.

Main question

What strategies and practices are enacted by lesbian women while performing leadership and becoming leaders in a sport context in Australia?

Sub-questions

I was interested in exploring how these women, in a sport context, balance this 'self-production' and 'and self-observation' that Grosz (1994) talks about to hide or display their non-heteronormative identity. That is, how did these women move through these male dominated spaces? How is the enactment of feminist leadership rendered (in)visible and what are the implications for understanding women's influence on sport history? Gendered performativity shapes 'self-production' in complex ways and I am particularly interested in individuals who are also motivated to advocate for change, whether that is gender equality in sport or diversity more broadly. How does this affect their performance, the decisions they make and how they embody leadership, and what can it tell us about their present and future identities – about who they are becoming?

Significance

This research contributes to the development of feminist thinking about leadership as a negotiated space by considering how the stories of leadership are told and undertaking a remaking of leadership subjectivities. Currently there is no research into how gender and sexuality are experienced, understood and 'managed' within and through 'leadership' in the context of sport organisations in Australia. Some liberal feminist approaches have been adopted, such as the implementation of compulsory board quotas for all government-funded sports organisations in Victoria (Vicsport, n.d.), but sport leadership across Australia is still considered a majority male domain, despite Sport Australia setting gender targets back in 2015 (SportAus, n.d.). By avoiding an essentialist approach to gender, looking at the past through the lens of more recent feminist theories of self-production, it is hoped that this research can make a significant contribution and offer a different look at the 'problem of leadership'. The goal is that it might lead to more diverse workplaces and new ideas of leadership, explore different ways of embodying leadership and provide some new data to help with some of the challenges faced by women in sport.

The chapters

This thesis comprises six chapters. This introductory chapter lays out the context for this thesis, how I came to my topic and the desires that motivated me to undertake this research. I describe how the 'queer pull of the past' led to the 'first fold' of my 'traditional' oral history approach. I then articulate my research questions and the purpose and significance of this research.

Chapter 2 introduces the work of research in the fields of sport and leadership, and of sexuality, gender and leadership, and lays out the current 'field of play' in the context of gender and sport leadership in Australia. I also provide an explanation of the feminist philosophers, theories and theorists I 'plug-in' to in an effort to untangle some of the complexities of the sport leadership space.

Chapter 3 discusses my methodological approach and how I conducted the research. It highlights the concepts of emotion and affect, assemblages, entanglements and hauntology that I apply in my approach to research and writing. I outline why I chose to privilege affect and engage in vulnerable writing along with other vulnerable methodologies to bring feminist theorists to bear as I considered the strategies embodied by lesbian women as becoming-leader-in-sport.

In Chapter 4, I 'plug-in' the theorising from the previous chapters and engage with Hazel's narration of an event I have called 'the last straw'. Through her story, I explore how affects and power circulate to shape the affective process of becoming-leader. By mapping how desire flows and power operates in various sport-assemblages, I interrogate normative and generative ideas of leadership, normative scripts and ideas of 'success' and 'failure' that inform a remaking of leadership subjectivities.

Chapter 5 goes on to examine the circulation of shame, pride, fear and desire through Margaret's re-telling of 'the DA affair' and how women in sport are always-already entangled with this narrative. In writing-remembering these narratives as multiplicities, I trouble the scripts of normative existence that construct 'ideal' notions of the sporting body, embracing shame to remake leadership.

In Chapter 6, I conclude by discussing thinking with theories of emotion and affect, assemblage thinking, vulnerable methodologies and hauntologies, and the implications for gender equity in sport leadership. By reading-writing in this way, I am queering my research and queering leadership to move to a more relational model of leadership, and embracing affect to open up possibilities for becoming-leader-in-sport.

Literature review

Sport, gender, sexuality
 Biology, belonging, exclusion
 Love, pride and shame
 Sticky affects
 Entangled as we stretch our limbs
 Yearning for the win, the stoke, the connection
 The escape

Blurring in success and failure
 But defined by who
 I re-turn again

You may look at me and wonder why
 I fight for those I do not know
 Their stories are not mine
 Who am I to speak?
 Who am I to feel?
 But I carry the wounds for them, for me, for us
 Of a society trying to control
 Gendered ideals
 Through moving bodies

* * *

The poem 'Sporting Scars' by Holly Thorpe (2021) was published just as I was completing this thesis. I've taken some liberties with this excerpt, pulling out pieces of the poem that resonated with my research journey and the theories with which I have engaged. She is experimenting with reimagining 'feminist politics, vulnerabilities, and the implications of sporting policies that continue to reinforce gender binaries, harming, and excluding so many' (p. 1). That is also the goal of this research, as well as working with the 'sticky affects' (Ahmed, 2014) of love, pride and particularly shame (Probyn, 2005), 're-turning' to the past while always already 'entangled' (Barad, 2014).

Sport can, on occasion, be a hostile environment for non-sporting men, athletic women, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) individuals (Burroughs, Ashburn and Seebohm 1995; Griffin 1998; Hargreaves, 1990; Litchfield, 2015; Sartore and Cunningham, 2009; Tredway, 2014). Ryan and Dickson (2018) demonstrate how useful sport is for understanding the way gender shapes leadership and the problematic nature of masculine cultural norms. They provide an insight into what is normalised and the masculine sub-text of leadership and state. The 'gender leadership problem' is not the under-representation of women, but rather the 'dominant presence of groups of men and valued forms of masculinities' (p. 330). Stead and Elliott (2019, p. 2) encourage us to 'interrogate normative gender representations that sustain leadership as a heroic, masculine site of activity' and challenge the limited attention given to how structural inequalities impact women differently and how organisations can effect change.

Absent from the knowledge base is literature that examines gender, sexuality and leadership together in a sport context. Additional to context, country matters when determining what attributes constitute leadership (Ryan and Dickson, 2018), so I was interested in asking how gender and sexuality are experienced, understood and 'managed' within and through 'leadership' in the context of sport organisations in Australia?

The field of play

In sport, gender equality discourses appear to have coherent goals to increase the number of women in participation, administration, coaching, officiating and leadership roles. However, despite these 'goals', and programs of intervention from the Australian Sports Commission (Hanley, 2021) over the last few decades, we have not reached gender equality in sport leadership. Monique Hanley's (2021) thesis finds that, in this 36-year period, the Australian Sports Commission ran 189 gender equity-related programs and grants. From 2002 onwards, these were dominated by the various iterations of the 'women leaders in sport' programs, and these initiatives have overwhelmingly focused on a theory of change that sought to develop women's capacities. She identified significant gaps in the data relating to the impact of this funding and Greg Blood (2021a, 2021b), a former librarian at

the ASC, shows that there has been no increase in the number of women in CEO and president/chair positions of national sport organisations.

Increasing the number of women on sport boards is an important *first step* towards gender equality. Adriaanse and Claringbould (2016) have identified that hostility by male board members undermined gender equal governance. de Haan and Dumbell (2019) also discovered that sex integration does not necessarily equate to gender-neutral discourse, and 'initiatives advocated by liberal feminism of quotas and active promotion of female sport can have only limited impact' (p. 147).

Shaw (2006) provides an important critique of the liberal feminist paradigm that identifies gender as a women's only issue in sports organisations, where the focus has been on increasing numbers of women and ignoring deeper attitudes toward gender within organisational culture. She proposes a focus on 'social processes'; informed by dominant discourses, they are an integral part of the gender relations of organisational culture. Social processes are the gendered, informal, everyday interactions that have not featured in many organisational analyses. She finds that the acceptance and repetition of seemingly innocuous gendered discourses leads to social processes that deny women's access to influence within organisations, thus making it more difficult for women to access leadership positions.

More recent explorations of these issues by Madeline Pape (2020) have identified how the way an organisation defines 'gender equity' in one area (on the sporting field, for example) can inadvertently impede women's efforts elsewhere. She explains how the gender-segregated nature of participation in sport and the 'accommodation' of women athletes does not transform an organisations 'gendered logic'. This logic re-emerges informally at the level of leadership, excluding women because they are perceived not to have the ability or experience for leadership and the 'tradition' that sport leadership is men's domain. This form of inclusion affirms binary difference and masculine superiority even though leadership is often constructed as gender-neutral and meritocratic. Pape (2020) advances a

theory of organisational change based on the assumption that in order to transform an organisation's gendered logic, equity projects must challenge binary and hierarchical notions of gender difference. However, she found that 'organizations will more easily accommodate women under conditions that affirm the binary' (p. 83). With respect to leadership, the work of feminist philosopher Elizabeth Grosz (1994) usefully highlights the challenge of how women are often positioned as the 'problematic lack', and we are yet to fully reimagine social meanings of sexual difference that are more conducive to women's autonomy.

In order to interrogate the ways in which women leaders navigate an organisation's gendered logic, I call on the concepts of '(in)visibility' and 'effortful identity work' explored in the work of Binns (2010) and Stead (2013). Identity is framed as a process of crafting a leadership persona from normative scripts, gender stereotypes, social expectations and values. Binns (2010) proposes that female leaders need to 'do effortful identity work to reconcile the embodied feminine with the masculine ideals embedded in the dominant concept of leadership' (p. 169). Stead (2013) draws on concepts of (in)visibility, including (in)visibility as states of exclusion or difference, how states of visibility and invisibility are maintained through power relations, and how (in)visibility operates and is reproduced through organisational processes and practices. Women can never be completely successful at conforming to the unwritten rules of heroic masculinity, nor can they stay in the 'genderless leadership identity' position: it is risky and requires effort beyond the basic performance of leadership itself and 'just' doing leadership entails alignment with a (hidden) masculine construct (Binns, 2010).

Leadership is a constraining subject position for many, and as Gedro (2010) argues, there are specific pressures on leaders who identify as lesbian and, by extension, those who claim any non-heterosexual sexuality. Riach, Rumens and Tyler (2014) expose how normative expectations can undermine the complex lived experiences of LGBT subjects, which can constrain their performance in organisational settings. Muhr and Sullivan (2013) highlight how difficult it is for leaders and followers to make sense of LGBT leaders and leadership,

due to the binaries of the heterosexual matrix. Gedro (2010) proposes that stereotypes about those who take a lesbian identity – which she names as their resilience and a predilection towards sport – would be useful when aspiring to a leadership position. While I am sceptical that this is the case, it raises the question of what positive aspects there might be for my research participants.

This thesis focuses on the Australian context and I have chosen to turn most of my attention to research conducted here. Evans and Pfister (2021) highlight research that shows women are under-represented in leadership positions globally, and that women in other countries face many of the same challenges that Australian women must confront. They also acknowledge a lack of intersectionality and specifically draw attention to the lack of work on sexuality; they found no research on gender, sexuality and leadership in sport.

Given the limitations of the current literature and my aim of drawing upon contemporary feminist insights beyond sport, I chose to explore a post-structural trajectory and to ‘plug-in’ key concepts such as assemblage (Fox and Alldred, 2013), emotion and affect (Fullagar and Pavlidis, 2018) and hauntology (Barad, 2010, 2014). By avoiding an essentialist approach to gender and looking at the past through the lens of more recent feminist theories of self-production, my research aims to offer a different perspective on the ‘problem of leadership’.

At this point, I would like to draw attention to the concept of performativity. I come to understand Judith Butler’s work on this through my reading of feminist Deleuzians (Braidotti, 2011; Grosz, 2003) and not from reading Butler directly. I understand and recognise the impact of Butler’s legacy around gender performativity in contemporary thought, but considering the limitations of a master’s thesis, prefer to work through the feminists who have pushed beyond discourse to recognise how affect shapes the way embodiment is enacted through sport leadership.

Plugging in theory

Jackson and Mazzei (2013) describe 'plugging in' as a way to use theory to think with data and to use data to think with theory. My focus is on the theories to which I am 'turned towards' (Iisahunter and emerald, 2016) and on asking questions of the data from the perspective of different theories and back again. The existing literature on sport leadership alone cannot untangle the complexities of this space. I 'plug in' theory and writing to address questions of power and subjectivity in sport leadership, centring sexual difference (Braidotti, 2011) and Ahmed's (2014) conceptualisation of emotions.

Plugging in creates a different relationship among texts, theory, research data and myself as becoming-research student. Our qualities are transformed, we constitute one another and in doing so we create something new. This initiates a process of folding as I work the same data fragments repeatedly, re-turning to my data. This process of thinking with theory involves plugging in works against homogenising data into aggregated themes to produce new data and to produce data differently.

Drawing on feminist philosophers Sarah Ahmed, Karen Barad, Rosi Braidotti and Elspeth Probyn, whose work I discuss below, I 'plug-in' my texts and the theorists' philosophical concepts of emotion and affect, assemblages, entanglements and hauntology to explore how women who claim a non-heterosexual identity embody leadership in a sport context in Australia. This body of feminist scholarship enables me to explore aspects of leadership that have been under-theorised, yet are crucial in shaping experiences of leadership such as emotions and affect.

Ahmed (2014) cautions us not to look for emotions only when a leader is attributed with 'being emotional'. An 'unemotional' positioning also involves emotions; it is a way of responding to others and to objects. In this way, we might avoid a normative equation between emotionality and (hetero)femininity. In making this move, I am not trying to solve the 'gender leadership problem'; instead, I am writing through fragments to demonstrate

the workings of power and generating alternative readings through a critical-creative analytic that is discussed further in Chapter 3.

Emotion and affect

Affective flows and intensities are analytic resources (Chadwick, 2021; Page, 2017). Ahmed (2014) says that 'attention to emotions allows us to address the question of how subjects become invested in particular structures' (p. 12). I should note at this point that Ahmed departs from the tendency to separate affect and emotion, as she believes that distinction is only analytic and 'risks cutting emotions off from the lived experiences of being and having a body' (p. 40). According to Probyn (2005, p. 136), 'affects play a crucial role in how assemblages are composed and decomposed'. The flow of affect within assemblages is the productive means by which lives and history unfold (Fox and Alldred, 2013), generating capacities through interaction. Feminist forms of knowing, being and resisting are born in affective spaces of dislocation and dissonance (Chadwick, 2021), which is why I use them as my 'starting point' (Blackman, 2015) for analysis in this thesis. Affect reaches out; affectivity 'does' (not 'is') (Fullagar and Bozalek, 2022a), and is disclosed 'in atmospheres, fleeting fragments and traces, gut feelings and embodied reactions and in felt intensities and sensations' (Blackman, 2015, p. 25). As part of an ongoing process of becoming-research student, I am interested in and pay attention to these affective relations for knowledge-making and the implications for my own research through an ethnographic orientation (Blackman, 2015).

The question is not whether these affects are good or bad. When we engage with uncomfortable affects and disconnections (Chadwick, 2021), we open up space to explore the affective process of subjectification – of becoming-leader-in-sport. Affects generate further affects within assemblages, producing the capacities of bodies to desire and do (Fox and Alldred, 2013); thus, observing the circulation of affects (which is also a circulation of power) enables us to think about what affectivity does.

In their work on affect theory in gendered organisations, Pullen, Rhodes and Thanem (2017) question how 'negative' affects might be engaged with affirmatively to subvert and

destabilise the false and oppressive male/female dichotomy. The purpose of affect theory, they argue, is to 'generate a politics that enables people to break out of the sad regimes that oppress us' (p. 21). Affect is key in understanding how my participants as becoming-leaders work through the constitution of dominant narratives and meanings underpinning organisational relations (Fotaki, Kenny and Vachhani, 2017).

Hauntology

Karen Barad (2010, 2014) and Lisa Blackman (2015) use hauntology to bring absence into presence and affects into the realm of 'knowing'. Hauntologies raise ethical and methodological questions concerning how one can interrogate ghosts (Blackman, 2015), leading me to consider what the power struggles that haunt the leadership space might be.

Hauntologies might start with a feeling of being unsettled or wanting to unsettle, so an analysis of hauntologies requires forms of reflexivity that involves 'diffracting the human and the technical' (Blackman 2015) with sensitive methodological tools. Embodied hauntologies work with the feeling that there is more to say, that one should look for those fragments, submerged narratives, gaps and absence that register effectively – what Barad (2010) describes as:

a dis/orienting experience of the dis/jointedness of time and space, entanglements of here and there, now and then, that is, a ghostly sense of dis/continuity, a quantum dis/continuity. There is no overarching sense of temporality, of continuity, in place (p. 240).

I came to the concept of hauntology towards the end of my research, when intra-acting with my texts, and I encountered the 'ghostly' feeling there was 'more to say'. What was sayable by my research participants and where were the gaps, what was submerged in places, registering as absences? This led to my theory-method approach of engaging with 'sensitive' and vulnerable methodologies, which I discuss in Chapter 3.

Taking the lead from Barad (2014), I use the term 'intra-action' rather than 'interaction' to illustrate that texts are not separate and then brought together, but rather always-already entangled and needing to be read 'intra-actively' through one another. This intra-activity enables me to think through leadership and becoming-leader as multiplicity.

Assemblage thinking

Fox and Alldred (2013) define assemblages as relations (forces, desires, affects) of things to each other that develop in unpredictable ways around actions and events. They are processual rather than structural networks of connections that are always assembling and reassembling, with no fixed structure, never stable, always emergent, always in a constant process of becoming. Assemblage thinking allows us to shift our thinking on leadership from a 'heroic, masculine site of activity', from women as individualised subjects 'lacking' leadership 'qualities', and towards the concept of leading as a relational entanglement.

The assemblage contains pasts, presents and future so, to think about this research project as an assemblage is to recognise that I am always-already entangled in this multitemporal process. Assemblage thinking enables me to shift thinking away from structure and towards the multiplicity of relations and events that shape such things as social change and gender equality in leadership. We can see things – lesbian leaders, sports organisations, oral histories, media accounts, research student, sport and cultural narratives, and so on – as constantly entering into combinations with each other.

In bringing into dynamic relation the elements in assemblage formations, the focus shifts to multiplicity; historical practices are brought into relation in certain ways to examine what counts in-between them (Fullagar and Taylor, 2022). Fox and Alldred (2015) provide a framework to 'dredge' data to identify relations and affects in an assemblage of bodies, things and social formations, and also to assess the capacities that emerge from these assemblages. Rosi Braidotti (2013) has influenced assemblage thinking by exploring how transformative lines of flight from the assemblage – or, in other words, becomings – need to be accounted for. This involves a shift in attention from what a body or a thing 'is' to what it

can 'do'. Thus we can use assemblage thinking to ask the question: Who is it possible to become when enacting leadership in a sport-assemblage?

Fullagar and Taylor (2022, p. 33) invite me to pay heed to the 'dynamic, multiple and creative push–pull happenstance of assemblages in which individual experience is entangled with embodied, affective, cognitive and material change'. This sparks new ways of imagining the ongoing formation of social change and how we might examine the ongoing questions around gender equity in sport leadership. As argued by Braidotti (2002, p. 1), in this time of change 'the challenge lies in thinking about processes, rather than concepts' to make sense of the complexities we find ourselves in and to 'develop an approach to subjectivity worthy of the complexities of our age' (Braidotti, 2013, p. 102).

I can only ever claim to partially know the experiences of other women, allowing for an acknowledgement of vulnerability when facing that which exceeds knowledge (Page, 2017). Returning to Thorpe's (2021) poem that opened this chapter, as I engage with 'Sport, gender, sexuality' through the affects of 'Love, pride and shame', these 'Sticky affects' with which I am always-already 'Entangled', I challenge and change my thinking as I am becoming-research student. Those experiences are produced relationally through multiple embodied connections and differentiations (Fullagar, 2020), such as whiteness, sexuality, age, education and class. Therefore, I am not concerned with creating knowledge 'about' women, but instead interested in who it is possible to become.

Methodology

Introduction

In this chapter, I outline how I came to the topic of leadership in sport, its entanglement with gender and sexuality and the theoretical lens(es) I used in the creation of knowledges. I explain my use of 'traditional' methods of oral history interviews, the use of vulnerable writing, informed by feminist post-structural approaches and my shift towards thinking with theory. I explore alternative ways of thinking about leadership through the privileging of affect, the use of the critical-creative analytic, assemblage thinking and considering the power struggles that haunt the sport leadership space. The key concepts with which I engage as I move towards becoming-research student by exploring the generative possibilities for leadership are subjectivity, effortful identity work and (in)visibility.

Initially, my desire was to research lesbian women in sport leadership through a historical perspective, with an urge to 'fill in the gaps' due to what I perceived to be an active erasure of the experiences of the women with whom I identified. I hoped to undertake a historical reclaiming. I enthusiastically embraced the core pillars of feminist research, such as, making the research process visible, maintaining ethical relationships and a challenge to connect with the reader in alternative ways (Wheaton et al., 2018). In addition, as Olesen (2011, p. 206) argues, 'knowledge remains the dominant theme in feminist research, opening up questions such as: whose knowledges do we consider; where are our knowledges obtained; from whom; and how will they be used?'

Karen Barbour (2018) outlines the work of Belenky et al. (1986) on women's ways of knowing – silence, received knowledge, subjective knowledge, procedural knowledge and constructed knowledge – and presents a sixth epistemological strategy: embodied knowledge. Employing an embodied way of knowing or an embodied knowledge strategy is

a mode of being where I am already, outside of academia, instinctively 'living out the possibilities' (Barbour 2018, p.221) and embracing feminist research practices and modes of knowledge production (Chadwick, 2021). I weave knowledges together with my passions, experiences and individuality, and live out 'alternative understandings to dominant knowledge' that 'create challenges and tensions' (Barbour 2018, p. 221), avoiding more 'traditional' and 'objective' approaches favoured in the construction of Western knowledge 'based on a dualistic ontology that privileged men and associated qualities' (Barbour 2018, p. 210). Grosz (1994, p. vii) states that subjectivity 'can be thought ... in terms quite other than those implied by various dualisms'. I bring these feminists theorists to bear as I consider 'the problem of leadership' and the strategies lesbian and queer women embody in becoming-leader-in-sport.

As the initial instigation of the project came from an oral history project, I knew I wanted to incorporate this method into my research. Oral history 'invites active interpretation and participation by both the narrator and the oral historian' (Ryan, 2009). It is important to remember that, historically, same-sex desire was framed as pathological and this is why oral history is a powerful, presentist tool for scholars of diverse genders and sexualities in enabling them to ask questions of the past in relationship with the present (Theobald, 2013), in order to understand power and leadership. Feeling the 'queer pull of the past' (Brown, 2015), I wanted to enable my participants to voice their roles within the historical record (Ryan, 2009) as a way to engage with and queer the production of knowledge.

In documenting the narratives focused on sexuality, gender and leadership in sport, I became attuned to concepts that resonated with the stories that participants recounted, including effortful identity work, (in)visibility and agental capacities. While using oral history as a method to capture some data, I began working with the data in more post-structuralist ways, through vulnerable writing and the critical-creative analytic.

Thinking with theory

Throughout this process of becoming-research student, I struggled with wrapping my mind around new concepts and new ways of thinking. It was difficult for me to break away from thinking in a binary way: I constantly had to resist the desire to capture the 'known' and normative, and it was continuous work not to homogenise data into themes and concise narratives. I experienced a lot of discomfort as I became increasingly aware of the assumptions I brought to my research. I had to sit in the discomfort of awareness of my limitations and the limitations of my research while challenging the expectations of doing feminist work. Sitting in this discomfort was turned productive by embracing vulnerable methodologies. I wanted to trouble dominant narratives and I had to work with and against my own thinking and to fully embrace feminist methodologies that attempt to engage uncomfortable affects and disconnections (Chadwick, 2021), affective flows and intensities as analytic resources (Chadwick, 2021; Page, 2017).

I was very interested in those issues and moments that seemed irreconcilable, that were disturbing, that were not easy, and didn't fit together so it was hard to make sense. This created uncertainty around how to progress. I embraced writing as a re/iterative process that could potentially reconfigure my thinking (Bozalek and Fullagar, 2022) and enable me to learn and unlearn, engage in knowing and unknowing as an ongoing process (Fullagar, Pavlidis and Stadler, 2017). This enabled me to combine critique with creativity (Braidotti, 2013) as I engaged with the complexity of research as a process of becoming.

Central to this approach is the practice of listening and writing through the body as multiplicity, thus 'post-qualitative research is a material-discursive formation through which my own and the participant's bodies and stories are co-implicated in the production of meaning' (Fullagar, 2020, p. 180). Or, to paraphrase Barad (2007), we – this thesis, myself, my participants and my supervisors – have intra-actively written each other.

Research design

Participants

Braidotti (2013, p. 99) suggests using Claire Colebrook's argument that sexual difference is a productive location to start from and 'sexuality is a force, or constitutive element, that is capable of deterritorialising gender identity and institutions'. I deliberately sought out 'leaders' across multiple sports in Australia who were active in their roles from 1970 to 1999, who self-identify as non-heterosexual, and who worked to change things for the better with regard to gender. I recognise that 'manifestations of leadership [may] derive from active involvement, rather than formal status' (Henderson, 2018, p. 1038), so I was open to 'leaders' who may not have held formalised leadership roles.

I had already spoken about my desire to conduct research on this topic with friends and colleagues, so my first participant was selected from my immediate network and the second after snowball sampling was set in motion (Theobald, 2013).

A total of four women initially agreed to participate. I would count Hazel as a friend and maybe even a mentor in some ways. I did not personally know Margaret, but I was familiar with her contributions to women's sport. She was mentioned to me by Hazel as well as by an acquaintance I knew through my work in the lesbian sport community. It was my acquaintance that gave me the introduction to Margaret. There were two more women with whom I had hoped to speak but who did not follow through into doing the research interview. One had agreed to participate and signed the consent form, but did not follow through with answering my emails about arranging an interview until two weeks before my thesis was due. Another agreed to participate but then did not sign the consent form or respond to my follow-up email. It was harder to recruit than I had expected. It is possible that some potential participants may have been wary of being involved in such a study when some still consider speaking about sexuality to be 'taboo' (Iisahunter, 2018; Riach, Rumens and Tyler, 2014). The two participants with whom I proceeded held leadership positions in sport governance in both volunteer and paid positions.

Throughout the process, I maintained a relaxed rapport with both participants. While some of the subjects on which we touched were uncomfortable, dialogue remained open and free flowing. At the conclusion of the two interviews, I felt we had built an extra level of trust due to the nature of some of the information that was disclosed to me.

I disclosed some personal information too – more so to Hazel as she knows more about my personal life than Margaret. With Margaret, in order to build trust and rapport, I shared some anecdotes or situations that related to her sport or were similar to ones I had faced when volunteering as a sport administrator with my community football club. Johansson, Moe and Nissen (2021) refer to these as ‘affects of trust’, which are actualised not just from shared biographies but also from the completed interplays of the different components of the research interview (event).

Data collection and analysis

I have taken a multi-method approach to collecting in-depth data by drawing upon the insights of Fox and Alldred (2013, 2018), who illustrate how an anti-humanist ontology may be applied to empirical data. My data collection included recorded, long-form oral history interviews, written transcripts of interviews, my research diary detailing reflexive listening of interviews and autoethnographic reflections, interview encounter narratives, emails and other conversations with my participants, suggested reading sent by participants, contextual historical research and writing-analysis. This was all a part of the research-assemblage, the processual networks of connections assembling and reassembling (Fox and Alldred, 2013) around this process of becoming-research student.

Before I interviewed my participants, I asked them both to fill in a small questionnaire where they detailed the work they were doing in sport between 1970 and 1999. I approached participants by email to make the ‘initial’ contact, then followed this up with information by email detailing the nature of the project, consent form and options for a time for an interview. This established expectations and caused affect to flow between myself and my research subjects.

Once my participants had signed their consent forms, I sent them a pre-interview questionnaire asking them to detail their roles in sport during the period on which we were focusing. The number of roles, especially for Hazel, was overwhelming and in order for me to fully comprehend the amount of work they were undertaking, I needed to visualise the data. I created a colour-coded spreadsheet to keep track of the four dozen roles she had held over the 23 year period we covered.

In the first interview, I asked a set of open-ended questions, such as: When we talk about 'identity', what does identity mean to you? How has the way others identified you/the way you identify benefited you/your sport career? Some say there is a 'strong societal association between being an athlete and being a lesbian'. What are your thoughts on this? What kinds of stereotypes have you noticed about women in sport? What does leadership mean to you? Do you consider yourself a leader? From the 1970s to the end of the 1990s, a period of great social change in Australia and elsewhere, how did these social changes – especially around gay liberation – affect your work? How do you feel your sexuality influenced your work relationships?

These questions were used to frame the discussion. I was always already entangled with some of these questions before I began this research. Some questions arose through my reading, as I learnt to ask better questions. My participants knew what my research was about and they came prepared to give narrative answers to the questions they thought I had, so I let them guide me into asking questions in response. I was haunted by research that had come before and was motivated to ask questions that enabled me to 'critique the complexities of social life' (Jackson and Mazzei, 2013, p. 261).

I was encouraged by Chadwick (2021) to write short narratives of our interview encounters to write through my reflections and also situate them in a time and place, giving me something to build from and re-turn to. In this way, 'my approach to the interviews was self-consciously non-objective' (Theobald, 2013, p. 368). I stressed that they could say as much

or as little as they liked, and that they could refuse to answer or terminate the interview at any time.

At times, I was disappointed, not getting the answers I thought I wanted. But I realised I was looking in the wrong places and the answers to questions were not where the affective data was; rather, I had to consider the in-between spaces. This meant moving away from listing traits to answering questions, such as 'What do you think makes a good leader?' to asking 'how' questions about the processes shaping the enactment of leadership.

I felt we were all entangled in pasts, presents and futures as we moved through my interview questions and were haunted by the power struggles that circulate in the sport leadership space. Even as I write this in the 'now', that is constantly moving and I feel the tug of entanglements (Barad, 2015), wanting to do right by these women, not wanting to focus on the 'negative', wanting to do good academic work, finishing on time, and navigating with my partner who also wants some of my time. My past, their past. All tugging. There is no singular Truth, so I have relied on multiple approaches and voices, including my own, to tell this story of lesbian leadership in sport in Australia. It is also my own story, in a constant process of being rewritten as I was constituted as part of the research assemblage – participants, histories, texts, supervisors – that is always-already entangled with their strategies for enacting leadership and possibilities for becoming that are being written intra-actively through this process.

Reflexive listening/transcription process/re-turning to the data

The goal was to conduct the interviews in person and at a location convenient to the participants, preferably in their homes or somewhere else they felt comfortable and relaxed. However, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic made this impossible, while generating new possibilities and enabling me to become an ever-present 'participant' in this research. Interviews were digitally recorded, using audio and video, over Zoom and transcribed by me using Otter transcription software.

In taking a reflexive, autoethographic approach to the data, the goal is to open up reflexive spaces within the research around any taken-for-granted positions or issues, and to enable participants to 'reflect on the tensions, conflicts and compromises involved in becoming and maintaining viability at work through the narration of seemingly coherent, recognizable selves' (Riach, Rumens and Tyler, 2016, p. 10).

I am also driven to question how we can employ our own senses in analysis. This might be 'listening to recordings of interviews rather than reading transcriptions, or smelling/tasting/watching/feeling field texts' (lisahunter and emerald 2016, p.37). In my first listen, I put on noise-cancelling headphones and just listened and recorded my initial thoughts and reactions in a close, reflexive listening. I would stop the recording if I felt I had a lot to say. It is an evocative practice, in which emotion and affect are privileged.

Theobald (2013) invited me to question how I might position oral history texts and how I would influence the outcome of this co-constructed text, 'interview transcripts should be thought of as negotiated interpretations of women's historical experiences instead of windows into the past' (p. 364).

During the second listen, I played the recording through transcription software, correcting the transcript and taking notes at the same time. It was here that I noticed a 'failure' of the Otter software: it is designed for the publication of a 'smooth' transcript so it removes hesitations and corrects speech. I found this to be detrimental to an affective reading so I would revisit sections of the recording as I was writing my analysis.

Taking the transcript, I then copied and pasted all my reflexive listening notes into the transcript. The transcript text is black, the reflexive listening notes blue and then there are purple notes, written while reading the transcript and my blue notes together. I have returned again and those notes are in orange. I continued to construct texts. I sent the transcript (without my notes) to the participants for review. The interviews were recorded,

transcribed and sent back to the participant. A follow-up interview was scheduled to reflect on the transcript.

I invited research participants to review their transcripts and communication remained open for additions and updates. Hazel took up that invitation more readily, sending me articles, books and podcasts that related to the conversations and the time period we were looking at.

Hazel's edits to the transcript were minor: she made 415 changes and all but five were adding commas and capitals and a few corrections to names. All minor words and marks. I love that Hazel spent all that time just adding commas and minor edits for comprehension, 'I've tried not to change the intent or spontaneity of my answers' (Hazel, email, 6 July 2021). What does that say about the kind of person she is? The kind of work she does? There's attention to detail. What does it say about her satisfaction with her narrative? She seems happy with her story. She has told these stories many times over.

Margaret's edits were more detailed and some shifted the meaning a little. In one case, she removed a whole story only to repeat it to me in the second interview. I think she's very conscious of the way she is perceived. I recorded my thoughts on her edits in the transcript in magenta. She also edited for clarity and smoothed out the transcript, removing verbal 'ticks' like 'and so on' and 'things like that' which she says a lot. This is despite me asking her not to do that. 'Really, all I did was just tighten it up a bit, get rid of the ums and ahs and just make more concise sentences to make a bit more sense, to explain things' (Margaret, second interview). She didn't 'just' tidy things up: there were some quite significant edits and deletions. But this indicates to me that she doesn't feel she's changed the meaning in any significant way, just tried to make herself clearer. She doesn't want to be misunderstood.

A follow-up interview was scheduled for the purpose of reflecting on the transcript together to allow for reflexivity and collaboration of the interview narrative. Again, we used video

chat technology and I prepared a list of follow-up questions, such as ‘How did you feel reading over the transcript?’

Affective intensities

As I moved through the research process, I privileged affect and emotions – those of my participants, mine and the intra-actions between them. In this research, I have taken into account my affective responses to what my participants have said. Plugging in Ahmed (2014), I’m working with the emotionality of texts. Some of the texts that I read circulate in the public domain, and include news articles, posts from web forums, and others are generated from my oral history interviews and email communication with participants. My research is an attempt to think more about what the texts are doing and how my reading intra-actions generate affects.

I was sensitive to ‘starting points’ (Blackman, 2015), foregrounding my own affective investment in my participants and their narratives. It was immediately obvious to me when speaking to Hazel and Margaret that both women performed leadership in highly affectively charged spaces. There were many moments of affective intensity that I could use to ‘begin’ my analysis. I followed my ‘gut’, noticing what I resisted, what unsettled and chose my moments based on both ‘good’ and ‘bad’ affects. Many fragments were written and most discarded – not for any lack of ‘value’, but as a matter of space. I focused my analysis on two key moments, although there was so much more I could have done.

Thinking and writing through emotion and affect have been quite uncomfortable for me – I find it painful and scary. However, through this approach, what has been produced for me has been transformative. It has been challenging, confronting, inspirational to explore the affects that circulate in relations of power, in sport-assemblages, events and what this means for leadership in sport within and beyond this current celebratory environment, as well as what it means for individual leadership subjectivity and who it is possible to become. The desire, belonging, fear and shame circulating around these texts are entangled with the movements of power and possibilities for individual subjectivity in sport leadership.

Writing as methodology

Writing is a corporeal activity. We work ideas through our bodies; we write through our bodies, hoping to get into the bodies of our readers. (Probyn 2005, p. 141)

The practice of writing is an iterative and mutually constitutive working out, and reworking, of 'book' and 'author'. (Barad, 2007, p. x)

Moving through this research brought up a range of methodological questions. My thinking shifted, and continues to shift, through this process of becoming-research student. My writing and research are entangled: I enjoy writing but don't necessarily find it easy to write well – anything I put forward will just have to be 'good enough' and that feeling of 'failure' complicates and infects my research.

My research does not aim to represent a singular Truth; instead, it presents contradicting narratives and alternative possibilities as I contribute to a growing body of knowledge on leadership. That which I am 'turned towards' (Iisahunter and emerald, 2016), that which 'sticks' (Ahmed, 2014), drives this research. In creatively writing through these affective moments as fragments, I aim to draw the reader into the 'politics of discomfort' (Chadwick, 2021) as they are affected and become a part of an entangled 'research assemblage' (Fox and Alldred, 2018).

Through writing and a focus on methods as a creative practice, it is becoming clearer to me that discursive practices such as writing produce rather than just describe the subjects of knowledge practices (Barad, 2007). I am documenting the process of becoming for myself, these women and the concept of leadership in sport.

I hope this writing can be used to think through some of the known challenges with the 'problem of leadership' and offer a different perspective on the particular tensions around equality, diversity and inclusion.

Vulnerable methodologies

I'm often asking myself what I even know, doing a master's thesis? What can I possibly contribute? This isn't some sort of pathologicalised, gendered 'imposter syndrome' rearing its head; rather, it is a question about what it means to generate knowledges and asking epistemological and ontological questions about knowing. I am working through what Chadwick (2021) calls 'vulnerable methodologies'. Embodying vulnerable feminist methods involves reimagining with hesitancy, uncertainty and being receptive to 'not knowing' (Page, 2017) and asking, 'What can I learn from this? What do I notice that slips through the attention of other research methods?' Keeping this space of 'not knowing' open helps me explore the entanglements of gender, sexuality and leadership in sport.

In addition, I think perhaps I didn't realise how much I would feel the weight of responsibility of doing this work. I felt the affective and sensorial demands of being receptive to the limits of knowing (Page, 2017) and the pressure of 'doing right' by these women, to respond to the demand that I do justice to their lives in working with their narratives. Thus, a feminist ethics informs me in the production of knowledges in relation to others as I examine the way our inter-actions exposed and produced vulnerabilities.

Vulnerable writing

Guided by Page (2017), I engaged specifically in recognising vulnerability and forms of not-knowing within the research process by employing 'vulnerable writing' and by remaining open and receptive to that which resists 'sense-making'. Writing vulnerably helps bring certain forms of knowing and unknowing into focus and involves working with the textures of what is available, instead of seeking out more material – or even seeking to work with all the material I have. I am writing to create spaces for examining how my participants and myself are subject to contemporary power relations that materialise and territorialise leadership, decentring an agentic, unified self; writing through the affects that are produced and against the normative ideal of generating answers to the questions of the 'problem of leadership'. I re-turn to the materials, a temporal tactic that allows me to sit with the

complications and contradictions, leading to insights and continued failures in understanding.

At the heart of vulnerable writing are ongoing questions about what unsettles (Page, 2017) and about the complexities of subjectivity and effortful identity work rendered (in)visible, of bodies and their actions when they are outside coherent themes of knowledge. Though a focus on gender, sexuality and leadership narratives, I am complicating leadership and who it is possible to become, the 'modes of self-production' (Grosz, 1994, p. 144) it makes possible.

I work with fragments of narratives from my interviews with participants, working in my own narrative fragments and fragments that I took from seemingly unrelated sources as the use of these fragments creates multiplicity. I examine the way our inter-actions expose and produce vulnerabilities, and how these vulnerabilities are valuable to thinking through ways to do leadership.

Critical-creative analytic

To become attuned to the tensions in the narrative and the desire to enact leadership, not only to be a leader but to be a 'good' leader, I worked with the critical-creative analytic (Fullagar, 2020). The affective traces in these accounts are also '(un)knowingly entangled' (Fullagar, 2020) with my embodied reading-writing as a research student and my involvement in advocacy for gender equity in sport.

To dwell in and to stay with discomfort, the trouble and contradictions, I experimented with analytic poetry and ficto-criticism created from select sections of the transcript. I started with 'I poems' (Woodcock, 2016) and I experimented with 'word clouds', images of words created with software I use in my professional work as a user researcher and content strategist; methodological sensitivity is not an entirely human affair (Blackman, 2015) and working with these non-human eyes enabled me to find new patterns and generate new theoretical questions. In some cases, I did some light, creative editing of the poems by bringing in the third person, and 'he' and 'they'. I didn't follow 'the rules' exactly. I kept re-

turning to the story, re-turning the narrative, turning it over, re-turning to my participant to ask further questions. As Hazel says in the transcript, 'I needed to do something different' – a line of flight, a generative possibility. So too did I.

Plugging in theory

I undertake what Jackson and Mazzei (2013) call 'plugging in' to use theory to think with data and use data to think with theory. This project centres on a rather conventional oral history interview study of women leaders in sport, but data analysis does not happen by simplistic approaches of 'reducing data to themes, and writing up transparent narratives that do little to critique the complexities of social life' (p. 261). Instead, I worked with the critical-creative analytic (Fullagar, 2020) to generate dialogue between texts that work within and against interviewing data.

Drawing on feminist philosophers, Sarah Ahmed, Karen Barad, Rosi Braidotti and Elspeth Probyn, I plug in these theorists' philosophical concepts of emotion and affect, assemblages, entanglements and hauntology to produce complicated and conflicting voices and data and to produce data differently. Thus my research brings together different ways of knowing in an attempt to evoke the multiple subjectivities of women in sport leadership.

I have a sense of an endless number of possible variations of what this thesis might become, what knowledges might be created, which makes it impossible to know when I'm finished, which comes with the realisation that I never will be. My thesis, like me, is always becoming and I'm resisting 'the institutional desire for "timely completions"' (Fullagar, Pavlidis and Stadler, 2017). This production of knowledge, creation from chaos and emerging as assemblage is not a final arrival but rather a result of 'plugging in' (Jackson and Mazzei, 2013).

To escape the tendency towards unified theories, practices and 'answers', my strategy is to keep my focus on multiplicities, assemblages and fragments. However, I experienced many struggles and strained through the research process and, just as Probyn (1996) talks of

desire as being productive, setting in motion many possibilities, there were many times where I felt frozen, unable to push myself forward.

Narrative analysis: Fragments of stories

When I interviewed my participants, it wasn't just the answers to my questions that interested me, but also the way they told their stories and what was not said. With this approach, I am focused on my participants' multiple subjectivities and the ways they come together to form and intra-act with assemblages.

In considering the multiple affects and spaces to be explored in this thesis – shame, disgust, anger, fear, the personal, the local and international sport assemblage, 'events' and the broader socio-cultural environment in Australia – relations of power and desire are always in play, including the heterosexism underpinning possible futures, generating 'lines of flight' and new possibilities for the women's lives as leaders.

In working with these fragments of narratives, and bringing different stories into 'useful dialogue' with each other (Squire, Andrews and Tamboukou, 2008), I am able to see different and sometimes contradictory layers of meaning, to investigate the construction of these stories and to understand more about individual and social change. As a methodological approach, narrative inquiry enables me to consider how leadership subjectivities are constructed and to investigate how these stories are told.

This research 'began' with a rather 'traditional' oral history (Leavy, 2011) interview. Following on from this 'first fold' (Johansson, Moe and Nissen, 2021, p.46), I have not conducted a thematic analysis, but rather focused on a single fragment from each participant, undertaken a critical-creative analytic and 'read' each narrative against theory that I have 'plugged-in' and against each other narrative. In this way, narratives are productive: 'they do things, they constitute realities, shaping the social rather than being determined by it' (Squire, Andrews and Tamboukou, 2008, p. 7). I am sure my participants are aware of this productive power of their narratives, and there were stories that they

came specifically to tell me, seeking to articulate a certain kind of subjectivity for themselves.

In Chapter 4, I have taken a critical-creative approach to writing and analysing the participant interviews, our affective intra-actions, my autoethnographic writing and texts found online and in Trove, the database of the National Library of Australia. There was no way to include all the fragments of writing from the interviews with my research participants. There was no way to include even five fragments, so I whittled it down to two – one each. I'd like to think the choice I made was strategic, but in a way it was pragmatic. Through this becoming-research student learning process, I took direction from my supervisors and tried to determine which fragments they felt were most progressed or had the most to say. I feel I have 'failed' to do this work thoroughly, but what I have is enough to explore some of the multiplicities of leadership subjectivity embodied by women in sport contexts. In a way, this serves to 'resist an easy story', for to incorporate all the data holds the danger of reverting to sweeping generalisations (Jackson and Mazzei, 2013). I assume that 'data is partial, incomplete, and always being retold and remembered' (p. 263); I therefore re-turn to the transcripts and the recordings of the fragments I have chosen, enabling a deeper analysis of complex ideas in line with my methodological approach.

Limitations of the method

Given the small scope of this research, I am troubled by who I was able to include and who was excluded from the research. I did actively seek to recruit women from culturally diverse backgrounds and of different abilities, and I ended up with two able bodied (as far as I know) white women. As a white woman myself, who has benefited from colonialism in myriad ways, I acknowledge whiteness as an invisible regime of power, and my way of knowing is racialised as whiteness and exercised epistemologically (Moreton-Robinson, 2004). I acknowledge my position of privilege and constantly work towards understanding and dismantling systems of oppression. I cannot claim to be representing all women's experiences; instead, the goal is to open up lines of inquiry and explore issues that cut across individual biographies in different ways. Sameness and moments of recognition and connection are

epistemically and politically significant as we, all white women, use them to perpetuate a white feminist way of being in the world. I acknowledge this as a flaw in my research and interrogate those moments throughout the process of becoming-research student.

Ethical issues

Sangster (1994) warns about a power imbalance when conducting feminist research, I feel that in these cases it is more likely that I am the one learning and, as Leavy (2007, p. 13) states, 'a certain outcome of good oral history practice is that it will lead you to individuals from whom you will learn immensely not just as a scholar but as a human being'. However, I do not deny that by telling their stories and through analytical framing, I will be exercising power and the participants will not necessarily agree with my interpretations. I need to navigate the expectations of some of my participants that, as an insider, there is an assumption that I will be sympathetic to their world view in my analysis (Taylor, 2011).

Conclusion

This journey has changed my thinking considerably from my first thoughts about doing a 'traditional' oral history. Experimenting with different methods, such as vulnerable writing and the critical-creative analytic, has opened up epistemological and ontological possibilities of becoming-research student and ways of doing sport leadership research. In examining the ways in which the intra-actions between Margaret, Hazel, myself and my supervisors exposed and produced vulnerabilities, I show the value of these vulnerabilities to thinking through ways to do leadership and to interrogate normative representations of leadership as a 'heroic, masculine site of activity' (Stead and Elliott, 2018, p. 2).

Embracing vulnerable methodologies and interrogating notions of 'success' and 'failure' have led to a queering of leadership to see what newness might be incited, to help us approach our thinking about sexuality, gender, leadership and sport in a different way.

The last straw

Introduction

I take the notion of the assemblage as a theoretical lens through which I consider entanglements between lesbian and queer women in leadership in sport, the international and national sporting 'body', normative gendered scripts, scripts of heroic leadership, and the lines of flight that open up or shut down.

The analysis revolves around a beginning with a moment of affective intensity during the first interview with my participant, sitting with the politics of discomfort (Chadwick, 2021), engaging in vulnerable writing (Page, 2017), all while re-turning (Barad, 2014) to the transcripts from both interviews and following up with my participant. I engage with the interview text, vulnerable writing and creative-analysis to explore how affects and power circulate to shape the affective capacities of bodies that enact leadership. I am interested in the relationships between local and international sport assemblages, which intensify gendered power hierarchies and produce lines of flight.

I have mapped how desire flows and power operates in the relationships between local and international assemblages and bodies, and followed a line of flight that deterritorialises from the masculine, heroic site of leadership to generative possibilities of mobilisation of other bodies in sport.

My participant's telling of 'the last straw' that preceded the need to 'do something different' is bound up with affective relations, with becoming agentic, normative and generative ideas of leadership, normative scripts and ideas of 'success' and 'failure' that inform a remaking of leadership subjectivities.

Affective intensities

Foregrounding my own affective investments in my participants, I have researched affect by being sensitive to 'starting points' (Blackman 2015) during the interviews. The affects circulating through the telling of this narrative (powerlessness, resignation, annoyance, unfairness, disrespect, resilience) are powerful, and I was compelled to re-turn to this story in the follow-up interview. Again my entanglement with this affective moment continued to raise questions and I re-turned to it multiple times as I was writing this section of analysis.

These moments of affective intensity (Chadwick, 2021) disrupt how I have thought about the concept of 'agency' and 'choices' faced by women in sport leadership and challenge my thinking around negative affects and micro-relations. I'm encouraged to look for generative possibilities from these threads of power that may initially appear to – or in fact actually do – constrain the agentic capacities of my participants. This brings me to the question of how working with affect disrupts how we think about leadership more broadly.

The 'starting points':

I'm not putting up with this bullshit anymore. (Hazel)

There's only so many times you can bash your head against the wall, right?

Before you before you really smash your ... smash your skull. (Hazel)

These guys were just reluctant to allow women into the tent. (Hazel)

Hazel's comments, full of affect, echo with a sense of intense frustration and imagery that is violent and visceral. The shocking image of 'bash your head against the wall' is highly visual, countering the invisibility of the emotional labour she had exerted to this point. Whether she acknowledges it specifically or not, this is a recognition of affect. Amidst the circulation of these powerful flows, Hazel weighs up whether she should stay or go: 'that really was the last straw' (Hazel). Hazel resigns herself to these aggregated affects: they initially create

restrictions but then a movement away from blockages, towards a 'line of flight' and generative possibilities for Hazel-becoming-leader and new sport assemblages.

Critical-creative analytic

In my reading-writing of Hazel's account, multiple forces and relations intensify and disrupt leadership. Reading through all the texts uncovers a multiplicity of relations, including violence, gender, abuse, leadership, control, possibility, connections, support, gender and social norms. These form the basis for 'the decision', a specific moment or event on which I am going to focus on in the assemblage. In piecing together the affective flows between these relations, we see desire, frustration, anger and despair about being undermined and excluded as a lesbian leader advocating for women's sport.

Focusing on how the narrative is constructed, past present, what affects it generated, offers a way to think about gendered subjectivity and leadership as they are imagined, felt and reinvented through narrative, the becoming-research student, the becoming leader, the converging of narratives and the narratable self.

It has to be him

'Here's a little bit of discrimination for you.' You've been warned about what's coming and maybe you already know it's not going to end well for her. You don't have to prepare for violence of the physical kind, but there are other ways to hurt a woman under patriarchy. We must remember that some forms of violence remain concealed as violence, as effects of social norms that are hidden from view. What more could she have done?

An important event holds the promise of new affiliations and a chance to further the cause she was/is passionate about. She's put years of her life into it already. A chance to meet dynamic and well-connected international contacts, and build a future together.

Attending this event would have been a reward. It says something about her that she thinks of more work as a reward, but this was an historic opportunity. This would have been

recognition for all her hard work progressing the women's game, making visible all the invisible emotional labour she had exerted, exhausting herself to get there.

Might she have said something about the poor state of the women's game in Australia? Probably. But you could imagine she would not have been the only one to have something to say about the fact that, in some countries, women are/were banned from playing. In some countries, women are/were abused by their federation, by presidents, by coaches. Her board members agreed that she should be the delegate who attended, but ultimately it wasn't up to them.

He had a lot more traction because he was a bloke representing the women's interests, so he said. He didn't want to go but they sent him in her stead anyway. It had to be a man, they said. 'If you want our endorsement, it has to be him.'

You have to wonder why. He spent two days in a hotel room and came back again.

She had overcome many difficulties but this was the last straw. They made her feel like a failure.

'And you've got to get to a point where you realise that you're exhausted, and there's only so many times you can bash your head against the wall, right? Before you really smash your ... smash your skull.'

What more could she have done?

The last straw

She stood down

He was selected

He was completely different to work for,
a bit duplicitous

He never really knew where he,
where he was going,

or what he was doing
He was a great talker,
a great fence sitter
I had to change plans for him to attend instead of me,
that really was the last straw
I didn't get support
Why am I doing this?
What more can I do?
I needed a break
I needed to do something different

What's the bullshit?

They are pretending
They are duplicitous
They are schmoozing
They are ego pandering
They don't vote for you
They say one thing
They do something else
You don't engage

Analysis

Assemblages are networks of connections that are always assembling and reassembling, with no fixed structure, always emergent, always in a constant process of becoming.

Thinking with assemblages enables me to understand the territory of a sporting organisation as a choreography of practices, affects and experiences and to challenge conventional assumptions about women in leadership and progression toward gender equality.

Embracing Braidotti's (2013) idea of subjectivity as an assemblage that includes non-human agents, the experiences of my subjects and myself are always already entangled with organisations, people, places, memories, affects, objects; the assemblage contains pasts, presents and futures, including a future that emerged after this telling and is now past. The assemblage is multi-temporal.

In contrast to Truth seeking, our attention is drawn by assemblage thinking to the 'affective moments of disruption and connection that generate new lines of thought' (Fullagar, Pavlidis and Stadler, 2017) and writing that offers partial knowledges. Hazel's 'last straw' is a component within wider and diverse assemblages, entangled with the research assemblage and other assemblages that support and give historical context to her lived experiences. Mapping impersonal affective flows, territorializations and events within assemblages (Fox and Alldred, 2013) allows me to move towards a more anti-humanist ontology.

How might we apply the concept of the assemblage to social change in the context of gender equity in sport leadership? Products of molar flows in the sport assemblage such as heteronormativity, hegemonic ideas of leadership, gendered stereotypes and cultural codes of gendered conduct raise questions around who it is possible to become as a leader in these assemblages. What do these assemblages do to the becoming-leader? Assemblages are cut through with relations of power and offer a way to problematise dominant accounts of leadership as a 'heroic, masculine site of activity' (Stead and Elliott, 2018, p. 2).

While I knew some things about Hazel's history, I didn't know about 'the decision': it has been left out of previously published accounts. As I was listening to her relay this to me for the first time, I was overwhelmed with intense feelings of frustration and anger that arose through the intra-actions (Barad, 2003) that connected Hazel and myself.

As Fullagar (2020) argues, 'we need more nuanced ways of thinking sport and physical culture as phenomena that materialise through complex biopsychosocial relations'. Paying attention to data such as emotional responses is 'arresting, transforming, taxing' (Wilson, 2015, p. 2). An example of such a moment was when Hazel first relayed this story to me. I needed to take space from it in the moment, from my feelings. I had enough presence of mind to leave space for Hazel to say more. Expressing myself with few words and allowing her to go on.

Wow.

So in terms ... I mean, god, there's a lot to unpack there. Because, yeah.

(Interview 1)

This process of becoming-research student has grabbed me by the scruff of the neck, changed me and exhausted me, which I feel is neither good nor bad, but the stuff of living. To deny 'nothing is constant but change' is to deny life, to deny becoming.

These affects can also be seen as producing becoming and what Johansson, Moe and Nissen (2021) call 'uncomings' and Halberstam (2011) 'unbecomings'. 'The decision' event produces affects of exclusion and creates movements in which forces of Hazel-uncoming-leader and the flows of him-becoming-leader are in play. Hazel uses her time following to 'change plans for him to attend instead of me' and the affect of exclusion and lack of 'support' is putting Hazel-becoming-leader in movement. And as I engage with the affective intensities, 'the last straw', I am becoming-researcher but also becoming-leader. After my initial 'gut' reactions, analysing this event actualises questions regarding the decision made in that specific situation and the nature of the event, and I dwell on what it does and what we might learn from it.

Lesbian women in leadership in sport/'agency'

This story of 'the last straw' – an important adage for change, transformation and disruption – demonstrates an acute example of agentic capacities reduced to a narrow path. Hazel tried negotiating recognition within an organisational setting, and this might be seen as a 'failed' negotiation, yet it opened up a generative 'line of flight' to 'do something different'. She doesn't say, 'that's it, I'm done'. It is 'I needed to do something different'. This isn't just a job, it is something she's driven to do – desire not motivated by lack.

This moment raises the problematic issue of how we think about the concept of agency. The concept of agency is replaced with flows of affect and desire, the capacity to affect or be affected, or 'agency is a matter of intra-acting; it is an enactment, not something that someone or something has' (Barad, 2003, p. 826). The affective flow in an assemblage

defines what bodies and collectivities can do. By taking flight, Hazel opens up new particular possibilities for acting: 'We can be made to do things, articulated by human and nonhuman agencies, in ways that we still little understand' (Blackman, 2015, p. 36).

Gender, sexuality, sport, concepts of leadership and women's solidarity (or lack of it) are entangled in Hazel's story, creating an assemblage wherein agency is impossible to be disentangled and separated. This notion of agentic capacity helps us think beyond individual success or failure, and in terms of the conditions of possibility that are produced by assemblage relations. Leadership is configured as a constant process of becoming and storying self. So when we can ask what conditions of possibility are produced in the masculine sport assemblage of this moment in time? What are the conditions of possibility now? Who is it possible to be, to become?

Hazel talks about identity and switches between the 'I' and 'they' even when asked to turn her thoughts and gaze to herself: she still sees herself through the lens of others. This indicates a level of hidden work required to balance 'self-production' and 'self-observation', which allows us 'to critically and reflexively understand more about the labour involved in performing and maintaining the semblances of subjective coherence upon which organizations depend' (Riach, Rumens and Tyler, 2016, p. 3) but which also enables subjects to be 'successful' within this organisation. What 'bullshit' do you need to be prepared to put up with?

The international and national **l sporting 'body'**

As a part of my analysis, I'm creating a map of situated events and problems, then tracing the connections they make in order to follow their lines of flight. Ahmed (2013, p. 108) argues that 'individual shame is bound up with community precisely because the ideals that have been failed are the ones that "stick" others together'. In being sporting women who are not allowed 'into the tent', they stuck together and mobilised the sport organisation space for connection and the enabling of sport activity for women. This was a form of stickiness that's about holding things together (Ahmed, 2013).

In the 1970s through to the early 2000s in Australia, most sports operated under two national sporting bodies, one for men and one for women. The situation arose generally from the necessity to create an organisation to focus on the women's interests as support was not forthcoming from the more dominant men's organisations (Stronach and Adair, 2009): 'these guys were just reluctant to allow women into the tent' (Hazel).

A deterritorialization of the masculine sport assemblage occurs, but the space still exists entangled with other spaces such as the men's organisations, societal expectations, injurious norms, normative scripts and ideals, and governments.

Beginning in the 1990s and carrying through to the early 2000s, pressure was exerted by the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) for these separate organisations to merge or risk losing government funding. Additionally, international sporting bodies were increasingly only endorsing one organisation in each country or region; this too fell on gendered (male) lines. 'The writing was on the wall that amalgamation or unification was apparently going to happen' (Hazel). Decisions made by international sporting organisations have ramifications all the way through to community sport; how they structure their organisation comes to be known as 'truth' and affects all sport (Pape, 2020).

Mapping the affects that these assemblages produce, and the flows of desire they cut off, Hazel could no longer enact leadership within this specific context. This flow extends beyond 'the decision' to 'I didn't get support' and questioning 'Why am I doing this?'; the affective flow associated with this entanglement of assemblages propels her into a line of flight. The Hazel-leadership-assemblage at the moment in time of the 'decision', 'the last straw', comprises an assemblage of a multitude of psychological, emotional and social relations, past experiences and circumstances, and personal attributes that links rhizomically with local and international masculine sporting assemblages, producing capacities that in turn produce further affects.

Normative gendered scripts and scripts of heroic leadership
Sport is a highly striated space, shaped through gendered and sexualised norms and discourses: '[He] thought that he had a lot more traction because it was a bloke representing the women's interests' (Hazel). Striated spaces are hierarchical, confining and intense with rules, thus the implication is that he was placed over her in the hierarchy.

Invisible threads of power constrain and position the women's game according to lack, and as the event holds the promise of new affiliations and contacts, it is seen as desirable. Positioning in this way is what enables the logics of, 'If [we] wanted [their] endorsement for the delegate then it needed to be him going, and not me' (Hazel, by email) because she 'might have said something about the poor state of the women's game in Australia and the lack of lack of support' (Hazel). As it was, he 'spent two days in a hotel room and came back again' (Hazel), a performance of masculine leadership through symbolic gestures (showing up, leaving) that recognise the authority in the international masculine sport-assemblage.

Lines of flight that open up or shut down

Invisible threads of power constrain and enable the agentic capacities of women leaders in masculine sport assemblages, opening up and closing down lines of flight. Lines of flight are 'literal and metaphorical escape routes which destabilize systems and structures of power within assemblage analytics' (Tamboukou, 2020, p. 235). Lines of flight can be destructive, productive or both; I am interested in conceptualising Hazel's leaving as a line of flight that I will attempt to map along with its affects on her as she becomes-leader.

In order to do this, we need to shift the focus from women as individualised subjects 'lacking' leadership 'qualities' towards the concept of leading as relational. Power formations in the sport assemblage are dependent on social interaction, '[m]ovement and speed, lines of sedimentation and lines of flight are the main factors that affect the formation of a non-unitary, posthuman subject' (Braidotti, 2013, p. 189), who it is possible to become. Hazel took a literal escape from a particular assemblage, which opened up and closed down further assemblages and micro-relations. This didn't 'get rid of her'; 'the

decision' informed and strengthened her convictions, contributed to her continued becoming as a leader.

Her rage escapes the strata of the sport-organisation-assemblage, finding new outlets and maintaining her subject position around integrity, as evidenced by 'the bullshit poem'. We need to understand Hazel's flight as a strategy of survival, an action, a becoming, through which she can hold on to desire and mobilise other bodies. Hazel does not flee heteronormative sport in some revolutionary line of escape outside the social and discursive; lines of flight are not 'magical escapes' (Ringrose, 2010). A break from the 'system' may not necessarily be liberating; it is a complex entanglement of opening up and shutting down – leaving is embodied signification. It is an act of rendering visible the complex affective forces that

led me to rethink my career options. I needed to do other things. I maintained a good relationship with most people associated with [the organisation] but I found it difficult to trust, like or have much to do with [him]. He really disappointed me in many ways. All talk, not enough action (Hazel, by email).

It cannot be understood as a self-conscious choice or the product of unconscious desire; When Chadwick (2021) says that 'affective spaces of dislocation and dissonance that feminist forms of knowing, being and resisting are born', she might well have been speaking directly of Hazel's experience. Hazel definitely sees this as a formative moment of her subjectivity, as a strong woman, a leader, she is not going to put up with this "bullshit" anymore.

When leadership is territorialized, desire is channelled into a relatively narrow range of capacities, fusing it to lack. In other words and in this instance, options for how women may enact leadership are limited and entangled with ways in which they are 'not like men', thus 'lacking' in 'leadership qualities'. This results in more women's leadership courses and other

programs to 'fix women' where women's minds and bodies are 'positioned as active agents who require empowering programmes to improve' (Fullagar, 2020, p. 173).

If we take on Braidotti's (2013) idea of desire as plenitude, we can think of Hazel's actions not as failure or giving up, but more as transformative and less as a negative lack or failure as she continues to become-leader: 'The idea of desire as plenitude and not as lack produces a more transformative and less negative approach to the nomadic relational subject than previously allowed' (p. 189).

Hazel's 'failure' to be endorsed to attend the event created existential conditions of possibility for her ultimate leaving. She mobilises other bodies in connecting with other sporting 'bodies' and organisations, launching her own business. Other women's sport organisations provide crucial space for Hazel to enact her desires around women's sport and disrupt the hegemonic masculinity of sport leadership.

Conclusion

There are multiple complex relations in play that 'sustain leadership as a heroic, masculine site of activity' (Stead and Elliott, 2018, p. 2) and by using assemblage thinking for a more nuanced understanding of change, we can challenge linear conceptualisations 'moving towards' gender equality in sport leadership. Why do we still have so few women in leadership in sport? The amalgamations didn't change anything with regard to gender inequality because it didn't address the reason that women's organisations were started in the first place. Investment in women's leadership programs does not increase the number of women in sport leadership (Hanley, 2021); I would argue that one reason for this is that 'fixing women' in the masculine sport assemblage has little effect on the assemblage itself. In fact, it has been a part of it for some time: a limited number of women are 'permitted' for the assemblage to carry on, in many ways, as it has previously. Many micro changes and struggles occur but the territory is still well protected. Equity projects need to challenge binary and hierarchical notions of gender difference to have a lasting effect (Pape, 2020,

p. 83), and we must analyse what the affective capacities of sport assemblages are in ethical terms – are they enabling, destroying or both? (Ringrose, 2010).

This is a material-discursive entanglement of gendered bodies and sport organisations that intensifies and individualises ‘failure’ through the ‘subject’, the ‘other’. In this case, Hazel focuses attention on micro-relations; they are instrumental in enabling her to keep ‘putting up’ with the ‘bullshit’ and when she ‘didn’t get support from [her – a colleague and former romantic partner]’ (Hazel), she ‘felt betrayed’, which led to ‘the last straw’, an aggregation of affects that created restrictions and blockages. When probed with follow-up questions, Hazel did concede that previous published accounts ‘kept the obvious politics out of it’ (Hazel, by email) – details of the various other micro-relations, such as ‘he was duplicitous’, that accumulated in this line of flight. Thus, complex relations, histories and territories are composed by Hazel in ways that are seen in term of individualising notions of subjectivity. In personalising this narrative, its public and systematic dimensions are concealed (Ahmed, 2014). She sees his behaviour as sexist, supported by sexist relations, norms and practices, including a betrayal from someone she had previously counted on for support: ‘I was really hurt by that, because I thought she would, she would see through what they were doing’ (Hazel). Once she lost ‘support’, she sought out new possibilities by starting her own business.

The masculine fiction of individualised heroic leadership obscures power relations and gendered normativity, and Hazel’s line of flight is bound up with affective relations, with becoming agentic, with normative and generative ideas of leadership, normative scripts and ideas of ‘success’ and ‘failure’ that inform a remaking of leadership subjectivities. She is always becoming-leader as she produces affects and re-turns to the past in the research-assemblage. The entangled relations that continue to shape this journey are highlighted by me as becoming-research student and opened up through writing feminist desires and mobilising the powerful affects of resilience, persistence and collaboration. Working with these texts to ‘set off new lines of inquiry and create previously unthought connections’

(Fullagar and Bozalek, 2022b, p. 104) shows up some new ways of thinking through problems of gender equality in sport leadership.

A sticky wicket

Now one of the most difficult times for me in sport, was handling what we call 'the DA affair'. It infected my life. (Margaret)

Introduction

In working with stories as multiplicities (Tamboukou, 2008), I am interested in what the construction of these narratives do. My goal is to write histories that are much more than just a process of interpreting or capturing a singular Truth located within experience or language. I positioned these diverse voices – research participants, past players, journalists, academics, myself and the 'general public' – in relation to each other in a way that enacts an historical account that values multiplicity.

I 'started' by engaging in an affective mode of writing (Blackman, 2015), taking sections of the transcripts and combining them with various texts to 'dramatize and work to capture attention and immediacy' (p. 29) and demonstrate the multiple temporalities and hauntings of an event with which many women in sport are always already entangled. I examine what this does to the subjectification of the lesbian leader who is enacting leadership in the public eye, what it means to be positioned as gay by material discursive forces, how agency is dispersed and how queer women navigate that. I considered how my subject was positioned and shamed as a leader who 'failed' to keep 'the DA affair' under control and also 'failed' at the dominant, masculine models of leadership.

There is an affective dimension of leadership that is ignored and denied in those masculine models and there is no rational process for managing these affective moments. It is not about control; rather, it is about how to navigate through these moments, which will

continue to erupt because of heterosexism and homophobia within sport. To deny or ignore their affects impacts 'progress' towards equality and diversity.

I have also examined my own entanglement with this narrative through possible 'infection' sites, being exposed to this story across time and space, experienced as a haunting – what Barad (2010, p. 240) describes as 'a dis/orienting experience of the dis/jointedness of time and space, entanglements of here and there, now and then, that is a ghostly sense of dis/continuity'.

I cannot remember when it wasn't familiar to me, even when it seemed new, disrupting the narrative and disturbing the process of knowing. I wanted to illustrate the way 'the DA affair' is a haunting for everyone involved, including myself and how sticky affects (Ahmed, 2014) are felt and carried across and through time.

Busted by a heterosexual: A lesso story

Journalist bowled over by historical homophobia [Sarah Dingle, May 2015]¹

In 1994, the Australian women's cricket team was about to tour New Zealand. A number of players including Denise Annetts had been dropped from the tour. Denise Annetts lodged a complaint with the Anti-Discrimination Board, alleging she was dumped because she wasn't a lesbian. Overnight, women's cricket became a national sensation.

Lesbian media aghast at bias claim [Kirsty Machon, September 1995]²

The bias claim was hotly denied by the sport's governing body as male commentators clamoured for women's cricket to 'examine its conscience' and 'change the image and reality of their game'.

¹ S. Dingle, 'Field of tainted dreams', *Background Briefing*, ABC Radio National, 10 May 2015. Available at: <https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/backgroundbriefing/field-of-tainted-dreams/6444034> (Accessed 19 August 2021).

² K. Machon, 'No lesbians for one straight declared', *lesbians on the loose*, 1 September 1995.

A cricket legend's suffering [Alex Blackwell, May 2015]³

The way the Denise Annetts story rolled out, there was a very negative attitude toward gay women in cricket and that has been something that I've been aware of since a very young age.

Cricket administrator shaken [Margaret, February 2021]⁴

I at the time was totally shaken. Because, number one, I'd never confronted such an issue in sport before. And number two, because of my own sexuality. And number three, thinking of the sport and the damage it might do, I was very conscious of it.

Australia's greatest swimmer opens up on homosexuality [Dawn Fraser, 1985]⁵

We're so open with homosexuality now, but it's been accepted in sporting circles for years.

Men threatened says cricket ombudsman [Kaye Loder, November 1995]⁶

Historically, allegations about lesbianism have been a part of women's cricket. I think it has been difficult for society to accept that women would wish to participate in a sport as men do, and it has been threatened by that wish.

Lesbian complaint 'ridiculous' says administrator [Hazel, October 2020]

I only remember that it was such a ridiculous thing to complain about, really. It was a ridiculous thing to complain about. Because in other areas, and especially in soccer, some players would say that they were not selected by the first national coach. Because he was afraid of the lesbian, and he's still afraid of the lesbian.

³ A. Burroughs, L. Ashburn and L. Seebohm, "Add sex and stir": Homophobic coverage of women's cricket in Australia', *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 19(3) (2015), pp. 266–284.

⁴ 'Fresh code for women's cricket', *Canberra Times*, 18 November 1995, p. 68.

⁵ Burroughs, Ashburn and Seebohm, "Add sex and stir".

⁶ 'Fresh code for women's cricket'.

Father lashes out at sport's lesbian peril [February 2004]⁷

The perils of letting your daughter play sports ... Lauren Jackson, Michelle Timms, Zoe Goss, the Aust Women's Cricket Team, etc.

Cricket stars hide the truth [Sarah Dingle, May 2015]⁸

That's what that stereotype of 'all female cricketers are gay' did to you, it basically made you hide the truth even from yourself.

[Margaret, February 2021]

I think myself and people at the time felt they had to keep a certain part of themselves hidden.

[Angela Burroughs, September 1995]⁹

No one is actually prepared to talk about [homophobia]. Women's sports organisations seem to avoid the issue. I was hoping to open up a debate.

[Alex Blackwell, May 2015]¹⁰

I didn't want to add fuel to the fire. It was apparent that it was a negative thing to be a gay person, and so I think I really just pushed it aside and didn't come to terms with my own sexuality for a very long time, and I think that's really unfortunate because it was probably my mid 20s when I really accepted that I was gay.

[Margaret, February 2021]

Anyway, so that infected my life in that I had an answering machine at home. And this particular journalist kept ringing, wanting to get ... almost wanting me to say 'yes, I'm a lesbian' type of thing. And I think I spoke to him once and he kept ringing. And he worked it out because my

⁷ 'It's not a sports story', BigFooty, 2 February 2004. Available at: <https://www.bigfooty.com/forum/threads/its-not-a-sports-story.99677> (Accessed 19 August 2021).

⁸ Dingle, 'Field of tainted dreams'.

⁹ Machon, 'No lesbians for one straight declared'.

¹⁰ Dingle, 'Field of tainted dreams'.

answering machine at the time said, 'neither [my partner] nor I or neither of us is available at the moment' or something. So he said, 'so there's someone else, obviously'. And he was trying to get it out of me. And I said, 'look, I am not going to admit this to you, I'll admit it, or speak about it when it suits me', you know, I wasn't going to be pressured into saying it then. So that's ... it was affecting me in that personal regard there.

[Caroline Symons, May 2015]¹¹

Women's cricket, the Australian women's cricket team were world champions, had been world champions for a number of years, and no one took much notice. Then they have this lesbian in sport story, and suddenly they get a huge amount of coverage.

[Frontline, July 1994]¹²

Emma: They won a world championship, didn't even make the papers. All of a sudden it's our lead story.

Marty: They weren't lesbians when they won the championship.

[Sarah Dingle, May 2015]¹³

In Australia, female sportspeople are often hit with a double whammy. There's homophobia, and there's also sexism. What that means is on the one hand, a disproportionate interest in who's a lesbian, and on the other hand, a crushing lack of interest in their actual sports.

[Frontline, July 1994]¹⁴

Thommo: No way, Brooke, I am not having a story on women's sports on this show. It's the natural enemy of ratings.

¹¹ Dingle, 'Field of tainted dreams'.

¹² S. Cilauro, T. Gleisner and J. Kennedy, 'Add sex and stir', *Frontline*, 11 July 1994.

¹³ Dingle, 'Field of tainted dreams'.

¹⁴ Cilauro, Gleisner and Kennedy, 'Add sex and stir'.

[Margaret, February 2021]

So the press just blew it all out of proportion, because I think of attitudes at the time. And that attitude that women are, you know, playing sport, being macho being lesbians, whatever, and tarnishing the whole image of women in sport. And then basically, like, they were very few female journalists at the time, probably a couple. You know. And, and that just was the attitude, and it reflected society's attitude, but of course, they fed into it.

[Frontline, July 1994]¹⁵

Brian: This is not another women's sports story, this is a leso story.

[Alex Blackwell, May 2015]¹⁶

Having a gay image was not necessarily something our team wanted or our sport wanted.

[Margaret, February 2021]

And we just offered them ... if anyone wanted some counselling or some assistance when they got back from the tour, to let us know, and we would organise that for them just so that they could handle it as individuals. But that did put a big dint into things.

[Margaret, February 2021]

I think there was a time where parents and so on, were very reluctant about their girls joining the women's cricket clubs. And people were far more conscious at looking at what was going on, within the club structures, and what influence some of the older players were having on younger ... and young ones, and so on. And it just was a bit of a tense time there for a while.

¹⁵ Cilauro, Gleisner and Kennedy, 'Add sex and stir'.

¹⁶ Dingle, 'Field of tainted dreams'.

[Angella Burroughs, Liz Ashburn, Leonie Seebohm, August 1995]¹⁷

It would be presumptuous to assume that the Annetts incident will remain etched in the memory of women cricketers.

[Alex Blackwell, May 2015]¹⁸

That person said to another member of the cricket community that it's getting better, the fact that there are more males around the team. Basically boyfriends and husbands. It really hurt me. This person's attitude was that the fewer lesbians in the team, that would be a better thing, a comment that made me feel like what have I been doing for the last 10 years representing Australia when the attitude is it would be better if I just leave?

[Margaret, July 2021]

You know, once every ... the whole story settled down, it was just in the past, we all joked about 'the DA Affair', and so on.

Analysis

Introduction

Through this performative interpretation of the affective intensity generated by this media moment, I make visible entanglements that maintain an active absent presence (Blackman, 2015). The multiplicity of narrative fragments enact historical moments of homophobia that ripple through time, haunting the present and permeating the mediated terrain of sport leadership.

Working within a critical-creative approach, I 'discover' that 'texts (or statements, events, actors, and agencies) are always-already entangled' (Blackman, 2015, p. 37) in 'the DA affair'. This re-telling breaches the narratological conventions of coherence and closure

¹⁷ Burroughs, Ashburn and Seebohm, "Add sex and stir".

¹⁸ Dingle, 'Field of tainted dreams'.

(Tamboukou, 2008) by working with contradictions: ‘it’s [homosexuality] been accepted in sporting circles for years’ (Dawn Fraser, 1985), ‘it infected my life’ (Margaret, 2021), ‘it’s getting better’ (Alex Blackwell, 2015), ‘It would be presumptuous to assume that the Annetts incident will remain etched in the memory of women cricketers’ (Burroughs et al., 1995) and is a method of queering history and deferring a definitive meaning because it will never be ‘just in the past’ (Margaret, 2021).

The writing of historical accounts is personal, public and always political. By ‘open[ing] up to what exceeds current understanding’ (Blackman, 2015, p. 36), I’m focusing on the affects and how they are entangled with relations of (in)visibility that shape how lesbian sportswomen and leaders are positioned and (de)valued in particular ways.

This narrative is bound up in affective economies of complex relations – shame, desire, fear and anger – that produce conditions of uncertainty (Fullagar, 2020). By bringing affective moments to the surface and exploring them, I show how these affects continue to circulate even now as I write this. It brings up questions about how and in what ways pride and shame construct subjectivities and make visible effortful identity work that is largely invisible to male sport leaders and ignored in dominant models. For Margaret, this is both restrictive and generative in the ongoing processes of becoming-leader.

Writing-remembering ‘the DA affair’

I’m not quite sure how I first came to know about the ‘the DA affair’ and, as I set about writing myself into this narrative, it became clear, after Blackman (2015), that I was and am always-already entangled. One of the first texts I read for this project was Pat Griffin’s *Strong Women, Deep Closets: Lesbians and Homophobia in Sport* (1998). It was not the beginning, for the beginning had already begun (Barad, 2013), but it was *a* beginning. All women leaders, especially non-heterosexual women leaders in sport, step into this historical flow even though they are encouraged to think of their individual journeys and empowering beginnings.

While Griffin's work gave me an insight into the experiences of lesbian in sport leadership from the 1970s to the 1990s, her focus is on the United States and I was looking for some academic work from around the same time within the Australian context.

I came across "'Add sex and stir": Homophobic coverage of women's cricket in Australia' (Burroughs, Ashburn and Seebohm, 1995), which presented an account of the 'the Annetts incident' and an analysis of the subsequent media 'storm'. Thoughts of this event stayed with me throughout the discovery phase of my research. I was turned towards (Iisahunter and emerald, 2016) this incident and did consider the idea of writing a whole article just about this, gathering recollections of the event from various women in sport. I questioned whether there was a way to include it in this research. I was feeling the queer pull of the past (Brown, 2015) and I considered including my own recollections of the 1990s. It was a formative time for me. I came out in high school – sometime between 1992 and 1994 – so I was 'out' and exploring my own sexuality when Denise Annetts was in the news.

Questions emerged for me around the silence at the time of Women's Sport Australia, an organisation on whose board I served 20 years after the date of this event. What did women's sport advocates do when this happened? I found further reference to this event in some of my reading: 'this homophobic rhetoric was evident in the case of Denise Annetts and the Australian Women's Cricket team in 1994' (Litchfield, 2011, p. 30). In the lead-up to my interviews and while constructing my interview questions, I knew I wanted to talk about an 'event' that I could ask all my participants about. This one was ideal: there was a massive media storm at the time and I figured that if you were a lesbian working in sport, you would know something about it.

I used the Burroughs, Ashburn and Seebohm (1995) article as a talking point with my informants and as a tool to raise a number of questions: If 'women's cricket administrators have attempted to promote an image of the sport compatible with popular conceptions of heterosexual female attractiveness' (p. 271), was this a 'strategy' in other sports? Was 'the accuracy of the media coverage ever questioned?' (p. 275) Would a similar story be possible

in the media now? What were their recollections of the event? How did it affect them personally? Most significantly, what was the reaction of women's sport advocates at the time? Did they engage in self-censorship? The authors note that, 'Surprisingly, Women's Sport Australia, the peak national non-government organization representing the interests of women in sport and physical activity, failed to take a stance publicly on this issue' (p. 276) Considering the silence of other women's sport advocacy groups in other countries (Griffin, 1998), I don't consider it surprising at all.

In the interview with Hazel, my first participant, she talked about how 'ridiculous' she found the accusations and how, in her experience, it is the players who are out lesbians who get left off the team because the coach is 'so homophobic'. She also raised the complicity of the media in maintaining the story: 'it's totally about the titillation and the oddity and then what makes news', 'it was an odd story. It wasn't a lesbian complaining of being left out.' She also talks of current coaches who practise this exclusion even though they have 'not only a gay daughter but a gay son as well', 'the hypocrisy of their behaviour is ... it beggars belief'.

In the interview with Margaret, my second participant, we were talking about what effect negative stereotypes had on her personally when she brought up 'the DA affair'.

It [stereotypes] did have an impact. And I think myself and people at the time felt they had to keep a certain part of themselves hidden.

Now one of the most difficult times for me in sport, was handling what we call 'the DA affair'.

From my first reflexive listen of this interview:

I am so tempted to dig at this. Because it seems such a ridiculous thing to us now, especially considering how many players are out. I would love to get into it and can I do it without making it too ... I dunno. I really want it to be a 'look how far we've come' but also examine how it set cricket and women's sport back.

Then there's that study about dad's not wanting their daughters to play cricket 'because of the lesbians' that [a recently retired player] told me they we're still contending with at Cricket Australia.

During my research on Trove to find media clippings and other references to 'the DA affair', I found an article in *lesbians on the loose (LOTL)*, and wondered whether I had perhaps seen this in 1995. LOTL was a free magazine available from the 'gay chemist' on King St, Newtown in Sydney, where I lived having moved to 'the city' for university in that year. It is also most likely that I watched that episode of *Frontline* at the time, because it was a show I remember watching with my parents.

In the middle of all this writing-remembering, I realise that it was me who introduced ABC journalist Sarah Dingle to Alex Blackwell for the piece 'Field of tainted dreams' (2015). And now I'm wondering, was it my conversation with Alex that put me on to 'the DA affair' before my research had begun? I had a chat to her in preparation for my talk on homophobia in sport and why it is different for women in March 2014 and it was after reading those pieces that Sarah contacted me before writing her article for the ABC.

I came to realise that I was always-already entangled: this story has multiple exposure sites and I've been 'infected' at several of them. When Margaret said 'it infected my life', I didn't realise at the time that 'the DA affair' had also infected mine, something that became increasingly clear as I was writing-remembering my process. While I have no strong memory of it, it is likely that I knew of 'the DA affair' at the time it occurred through watching *Frontline* and reading *LOTL* magazine, there was another infection site in 2014 when I spoke to Alex Blackwell for a presentation I was making to Mardi Gras about homophobia in women's sport. That led to a call from a journalist for help with a piece on the same topic; that journalist turned out to be the author of the piece I used in my critical-creative work and it was actually me who introduced Alex to her. And by a weird trick of memory, this wasn't something I'd realised until I went back and checked my emails from that time. So

when it 'began' with me searching for academic work from around the same time within the Australian context, it wasn't the only 'beginning'.

Sticky affects and becoming infected

I explored affects as a way of engaging with these narratives as they moved me to creatively generate knowledges in different ways. My question, like Ahmed's (2014), is 'What sticks?' To be sticky is to be saturated with affect, and 'stickiness depends on histories of contact that have already impressed upon the surface of the object' (Ahmed, 2014, p. 90). Blackman (2014) says 'histories are always a mix of fact, fiction and fantasy', and by examining the stickiness of 'the DA affair' as a ficto-narrative across multiple temporalities, we can better examine how affects such as shame, pride, fear, desire, belonging and rejection circulated and stuck.

The use of the word 'infected' by my participant is very evocative, and these 'histories of contact' could also be considered sites of infection or contagion. Probyn (2000, p. 23) says that 'shame is infectious. Even thinking about shame feels shameful', but we must move through those feelings and consider what the dangers and possibilities of contagion might be. 'Affective contagion can be understood more strictly as a process through which a political space is "charged"' (Blackman, 2015, p. 195). The intensity of the various positions is raised in the mediated terrain of sport leadership, signified in different and oppositional ways. These shaming narratives affect lesbians and heterosexual women who want to avoid the contagion effect of their team being stigmatised, so this 'infection' is felt as an embodied haunting.

Finally, we might also consider the phrase 'sticky wicket'. As a cricket term and as a metaphor, it is useful for breaking open this sticky, wicked problem. The *Macquarie Dictionary* (2021) defines a 'sticky wicket' both as 'a wicket, affected by rain, which gives an unpredictable bounce' and 'a delicate, difficult or disadvantageous situation'. It is worth noting that the situation is only 'disadvantageous' to the batter, not the bowler, who can

very much use it to their advantage as a sticky wicket causes the ball to 'perform the queerest and most unexpected antics' (Jessop, 1903, p. 91).

Shame

Feelings of being proud of being lesbian, queer and a woman in sport are also layered with dominant discourses and feelings of shame that circulate around the hegemonic masculine sport assemblage. By 'inhabiting the "non"-normative, queer bodies take on identities that are already read as the origin of 'our shame'" (Ahmed, 2014, p. 107). In this context, we could extrapolate that any woman playing a sport coded as 'masculine' in 1994 was inhabiting a "'non"-normative, queer' body regardless of her sexuality. And this is what Denise Annetts tapped into going public with her rejection: affects of pride and shame already circulating around queer bodies in cricket. Annetts was saying that she played cricket but she was 'not like them'.

These queer bodies do not approximate the form of ideal heterofemininity, nor do they reproduce white, hegemonic masculinity associated with the sport of cricket in the 1990s. These 'shaming and unproductive' (Ahmed, 2014, p. 108) women (and especially lesbians) in cricket are cast this way because if they are not, the sport of cricket would need to recognise their proud identity as shamefully exclusionary for the pain it has caused 'others'. In this way, lesbian identities in sport were produced as shameful and even dangerous. Shame sticks to lesbian bodies, entangled with pride, winning, nationalism and athletic excellence as these narratives circulate through the mediated terrain of Australian sport culture. As Probyn (2000, p. 14) says, 'in mainstream competitive sport pride, bodies, sexuality and shame are inextricably linked', and shame and pride are mutually constructing (Johnston, 2019) so, rather than turn away from shame, I consider its productive affects as it flows through these texts and beyond. So how and in what ways does the entanglement of pride and shame in the embodiment of a queer leader in sport construct subjectivities?

Fear

This ficto-critical narrative raises the question of who becomes afraid of whom? Ahmed (2014) tells us ‘the other is only felt to be fearsome through a misreading, a misreading that is returned by the other through its response of fear’ (p. 63) and those in the least danger are often the most afraid. As Griffith (1998, p. 36) suggests, ‘The invisibility of lesbians enabled the public perception of lesbians as mannish sexual deviants who were not real women to flourish unchallenged’, thus it is the fearsome spectre of the ‘lesbian bogeywoman’ (Griffin, 1998) haunting these texts: ‘historically, allegations about lesbianism have been a part of women's cricket’. Despite there being no evidence whatsoever (Storr et al., 2017) that lesbians in a team sport environment constitute any ‘threat’ to player safety, the myth persists for some.

Fear is not an inevitable consequence of vulnerability; it is not always the vulnerable who are the most afraid. Ahmed (2014) says that threat is shaped by ‘the authorisation of narratives about what is and is not threatening, and about who are and are not the appropriate “objects” of fear (Ahmed, 2014, p. 69). As Kay Loder (1995) says in the narrative above, ‘it has been difficult for society to accept that women would wish to participate in a sport as men do, and it has been threatened by that wish’. The persistence and impact of these destructive myths reverberate through this story and highlight the role of fear in the conservation of power and securing social norms through a narrative of crisis (Ahmed, 2014). These fears serve to reinforce normative scripts and ideals around who gets to participate in sport and who gets to lead sport by rendering queer leadership invisible: ‘I am not going to admit this to you’ and ‘I didn't want to add fuel to the fire’.

Through this, aspects of these subjects’ lives are rendered shameful and ‘need to be concealed in the effort to perform a “successful identity”’ (Fullagar, 2003, p. 299). Shame, says Ahmed (2014, p. 107), can be experienced as ‘*the affective cost of not following the scripts of normative existence*’ (emphasis in original). Margaret displays a heightened self-consciousness towards ‘my own sexuality’ and an awareness that in the 1995 context, participation in cricket by women was labelled as ‘deviant’, homosexuality was labelled as

'deviant' (Burroughs et al., 1995) and, in order to continue to lead, she needed to not 'admit' her sexuality publicly and instead enact queer leadership privately, 'so I had to up-end everything, suddenly pack a bag and fly to where the team was, and talk to them about it. They ... several of them felt affected' (Margaret).

Loves and desires that deviate from the scripts of normative existence, such as the desire for other women and the desire of women to play cricket, can be read as a source of shame (Ahmed, 2014): 'male commentators clamoured for women's cricket to 'examine its conscience'' and fear, which prompts me to ask, after Blackman (2012), how fears spread in such a way that they appear to bypass rationality and reason.

Nation = cricket/ideal

Probyn (2000) asks us to consider the intimate connections between the nation and the pervasive hegemonic models of male sexuality in sport. Concepts of the nation and sport are entangled in such a way that it could be said that the sport of cricket is Australia, and Australia is cricket. This manufactured unity of the nation isn't universally agreed, of course, but to many cricket is a source of national pride, and in 1994 we are talking explicitly about the men's national Test cricket team: the Australian women's cricket team were world champions, had been world champions for a number of years, and no one took much notice.

Cricket in 1994 occupies a 'sacred' space in Australian culture and contributed to the building of the white Australian nation (Burroughs, Ashburn and Seebohm, 1995; Hutchins, 2005). Pride in cricket, the men's national team and the nation are entangled. With 'the DA affair', shame was brought onto the sport by illegitimate others, women both straight and gay who failed to reproduce its form of white, hegemonic masculinity. Australian national identity through sport is premised on heterosexism, 'this person's attitude was that the fewer lesbians in the team, that would be a better thing' (Alex Blackwell, 2015).

The 'script of normative existence' and the cricket (or sport) ideal 'is shaped by taking some bodies as its form and not others' (Ahmed, 2014, p. 109). In this instance, it does not include

women playing sport, and it does not include lesbians or other queers. Cricket in the Australia psyche is framed as an ideal, and that ideal is a heterosexual body, gendered masculine (Hutchins, 2005). The stigmatising and shaming of lesbian bodies within the social order means they are rendered by others as shameful, ‘male commentators clamoured for women’s cricket to “examine its conscience”.’

The pride of some subjects is tautological: ‘*they feel pride at approximating an ideal that has already taken their shape*’ (Ahmed, 2014, p. 109, emphasis in original). It is not just that women (and queers) can’t live up to these ideals; they were seen to have audacity for even trying to belong to something and, in that trying, changing it, expanding it to include more. This is where fear and shame come in. Fear circulates around the shameful lesbian and female body, her strength and capacities threaten the heteronormative ideal of femininity as desirable by men, and evoke fear about change of the ideal in which some subjects currently feel pride, but will no longer feel that pride should the ideal change (or even expand).

By seeking to change the ideal to be more accepting of ‘diversity’, this changes the ideal and those from whom the ideal once took shape; it can no longer be the ideal and that is what causes fear to circulate. They can no longer ‘remain invisible within (disappear into) the norm’ (Lewis and Simpson, 2010, p. 13). Not recognising yourself in the ideal, seeing the ‘other’ in the ideal or allowing the ‘other’ to be part of the ideal – what does that do to a subject’s sense of belonging? This idea of belonging for some is to be with those ‘like me’ but for others is being comfortable to be who you are.

To be visible as a lesbian leader is to risk being othered within sport organisations that were preoccupied with public identity management; it is to subject oneself to the injurious subjectification and myth of the lesbian bogeywoman. Shame plays a role in securing the (hetero)normative (Ahmed, 2014), and in this narrative it does so by exposing and re-covering some bodies – those that don’t approximate the ideal. Shame works as a ‘narrative of reproduction’ (Ahmed, 2014, p. 108); it moves through bodies to ensure the ideal does not

change, open up, and it stays as a white, heterosexual man; this applies to the sporting ideal, the national ideal and the leadership ideal.

Ahmed (2014, p. 109) says:

The possession of an ideal in feelings of pride or shame involves a performance, which gives the subject or group 'value' and 'character'. We 'show' ourselves to be this way or that, a showing which is always addressed to others. It is the relation of having as being – of having ideals as a sign of being an ideal subject – that allows the 'I' and the 'we' to be aligned.

This also is a clue to talking about what 'the DA affair' did to those within the women's game: the 'I' and the 'we' were not aligned and, in order for that to happen, there was a re-covering.

(in)visibility - un-cover - hide - re-cover

Being visible and different can challenge the status quo (Lewis and Simpson, 2010), but female leaders need to 'do effortful identity work to reconcile the embodied feminine with the masculine ideals embedded in the dominant concept of leadership' (Binns, 2010, p. 169). Ryan and Dickson (2018) propose that the 'gender leadership problem' is not the lack of women, it's the forms of masculinities that are valued and the dominant presence of men. In addition, 'queer desires become ... something to be concealed from the view of others' (Ahmed, 2014, p. 107; the threat of exposure 'basically made you hide the truth even from yourself' (Dingle, 2015): 'I think myself and people at the time felt they had to keep a certain part of themselves hidden' (Margaret, February 2021). The ficto-critical narrative above describes what Griffin (1998) calls a 'conditionally tolerant climate', and in such 'climates', lesbian visibility is the problem.

This narrative demonstrates the interaction of exposure and concealment that is critical to the work of shame (Ahmed 2013) and ties in with notions of 'success' in leadership for

women that rely partly on their ability to employ (in)visibility. This effortful identity work required by women raises implications for male leaders and is why we need to encourage them to 'see' gender dynamics and affects (Binns, 2010) and to make gender visible in leadership to 'challeng[e] the organizational power relations that privilege men at women's expense' (p. 172). Sally Shaw (2006) also draws our attention to the taken-for-granted assumptions in the social processes of sport organisations that, unless interrogated, act against opportunities for change. Social processes are just one part of wider organisational culture and are informed by dominant discourses that cause women to 'take cover'.

Women, queer and otherwise, have to turn their gaze inward, to 'examine their conscience', to self-examine and construct an identity that 'fits' under and within but does not challenge the dominant paradigm. Shame generates the impulse to 'take cover' and 'to cover oneself' (Ahmed, 2014), to decide how much to reveal, to 'admit' as Margaret says, that 'I am not going to admit this to you':

And this particular journalist kept ringing, wanting to get ... almost wanting me to say 'yes, I'm a lesbian' and obviously wanting to write in his article that even the president is a lesbian so maybe DA is right! (Margaret and over email)

So that was a time that was very, very difficult. (Margaret)

The experience of being made visible or invisible by others or through organisational practices and processes (Stead, 2013) produces conditions of uncertainty because women can never be completely successful at conforming to the unwritten rules of heroic masculinity. However, doing this work opens up possibilities for other ways of becoming-leader for oneself and others.

When Margaret asked for advice from a male administrator about how he would have handled 'the DA affair', she was told 'they wouldn't even let it get this far. They would have cut it off at the pass and not let any journalists print or say anything' (Margaret [edited]). In

other words, they would have covered it up, or attempted to do so. She was positioned and shamed as a 'failed' leader who could not keep the issue under control, under cover. This masculine fiction of individualised heroic leadership, of control, obscured power relations, enforced gendered normativity and affected her ability to enact leadership in the public eye, while agency was dispersed.

Margaret navigated this by enacting – and queering – leadership privately, meeting with the team to talk to them about it and, 'we just offered them ... if anyone wanted some counselling or some assistance when they got back from the tour, to let us know, and we would organize that for them just so that they could handle it as individuals' (Margaret). Rather than focusing outwards on brand management, the focus was inward towards the team.

In recounting this story, though, Margaret recalls it as a 'failure':

It was basically inexperience too. I mean, none of us was trained to be really sports administrators. I just grew up playing the game and wanted to get it moving forward and everything and so I took on roles and ended up in that position. Nobody ever gave me any coaching tips on how to do it and so on.
(Margaret)

For a sport that relies on literal covers to protect the pitch from rain, a re-covering would seem a natural course to take. No one within the sport stood up at the time and said, 'Yes there are lesbians here, so what?' This covering continues as a haunting to this day, from 'I was hoping to open up a debate' in 1995, an attempt to un-cover juxtaposed with 'I didn't want to add fuel to the fire' in 2015, a re-covering.

When Angela Burroughs (in Machon, 1995) says 'No one is actually prepared to talk about [homophobia]. Women's sports organisations seem to avoid the issue. I was hoping to open up a debate', we see the physicality of shame, how it creates movement, a relational force,

how it causes bodies to 'turn away' from shame. Both physical bodies and sporting bodies 'turn away' and 'avoid the issue' of homophobia, for to discuss it would be to draw more attention to it – especially from the media, which would cause more shame to stick to the cricket sporting body. In turn, this de-forms this social space as one that had the potential to be sometimes a site of belonging and re-forms it to one that moves toward the 'idea' of the cricket sporting body as a white, patriarchal nation. It is a form constantly in flux, for when Margaret later says, 'I told them that we had a transgender woman playing', she is trying to re-form her ideal of this social space as one of diversity and inclusion – this is a refusal to recover, but it clashes with the ideal of cricket as nation. A male administrator told her, 'You should not have said that', and she is turning toward something that others 'turn away' from and again forcing them to witness 'shame' as she works to create an ideal that she and other 'others' can be proud of. Pride and shame, Probyn (2000) argues, are significant dynamics that shape subjectivity and, according to Ahmed (2014, p. 108), community: 'individual shame is bound up with community precisely because the ideals that have been failed are the ones that 'stick' others together'.

Conclusion

Shame, pride, fear and desire produce conditions of uncertainty that require effortful work, but those conditions are also generative of new possibilities for leadership. These women challenge the normative scripts, although sometimes shame will produce a retreat as it enfolds subjectivity into the powerful loop of the performative (Ahmed, 2014). What this does to leadership in sport is allow movement and an expansion of our definition of leadership.

In constructing these narratives as multiplicities, I am troubling the idea of 'successful' leadership and attempting to move towards an ethics of leadership through the creation of spaces of belonging (Fullagar, 2003), embracing rather than rationalising away the complexities of affect. Women in sport leadership are always-already entangled with the 'lesbian bogeywoman' and 'the DA affair', and these moments will continue to erupt if we

continue to ignore the affective dimension of leadership. Probyn (2000, p. 25) says 'shame is simply what remakes us human'; ergo shame is what remakes leadership.

Discussion and conclusion

Introduction

My master's research started with the question, 'What strategies and practices are enacted by lesbian women while performing leadership and becoming leaders in a sport context in Australia?'

I have written becoming-leaders as multiplicity, through staying with discomfort and vulnerable writing. I have written-through moments of affective intensity and offered up ways of thinking of the questions of leadership in sport as we move closer to a more relational model of leadership. These different ways of thinking about women in sport leadership have implications that contribute towards research in this area.

This research aimed to provide a reflexive space where each participant could discuss their lived experience of enacting leadership and becoming-leader. Between us, as lesbian women, we were able to disrupt some of the coherent narratives we have felt compelled to perform, and engage with the complexities of our lived experiences. Margaret responded positively about her experience at the end of our second interview:

Oh, that's excellent. Excellent. Well, I mean, it's really, really interesting. And it's a part of me I hadn't thought of very much. So you've brought up a lot of things.
(Margaret)

In telling their stories, Hazel and Margaret have shared their gendered experience of becoming-leader in terms of affective power relations, and the interview and this thesis are recognised as sites for identity production, for my participants in becoming-leader and myself as becoming-research student.

In this chapter, I discuss how this research makes a contribution to knowledge, revisit my theory-method approach of thinking theory and method together, and lay out the limitations and my thoughts about future research.

Contribution to knowledge

This research contributes to the knowledge base of literature examining gender, sexuality and leadership together in a sport context in Australia. It is my hope that I have created a space for dialogue about different ways of thinking about sport leadership and how sport organisations are managed now and into the future. This research privileges lesbian women as becoming-leader in ways that challenge the performance of heroic, masculine models of leadership.

These analysis fragments I have written, mediated via the theory and literature, can be plugged-in to texts to enable future researchers to 'read' leadership differently and to see the different and sometimes contradictory layers of meaning in leadership subjectivities.

In their 2018 paper, Ryan and Dickson demonstrate how useful sport is to understanding gender in leadership and draw attention to the invisible norms in sport that marginalise women. This research adds to this in two ways by privileging lesbian women leaders of sport who are also leading organisations with non-heterosexual women participants. This research also draws attention to the invisible norms in sport that marginalise women and demonstrates how useful sport is to understanding gender in leadership.

This research fully engages with contemporary feminist theory, post-structuralist and anti-humanist approaches to examine how gender and sexuality intersect to affect leadership in sport in Australia. 'Plugging in' theories of assemblage thinking (Fox and Alldred, 2013), theories of emotion and affect (Fullagar and Pavlidis, 2018) and hauntology (Barad, 2010, p. 2014), I avoid an essentialist approach to gender, examining the past through the lens of more recent feminist theories of self-production. Thus, this research offers a different perspective on the 'problem of leadership'.

Thinking with theory

By taking this theory-method approach – privileging affect and vulnerable writing, and applying anti-humanist assemblage thinking – I have sought to produce different ways of doing research. Thinking theory and method together, I am generating creative forms of engagement that resist tropes of realist representation (Fullagar, 2017). By intra-acting with the data and writing up the research in this way, I am queering my research, looking at the non-normative and disrupting what we normatively think about how to do research generally and on this topic of sport leadership in particular. The practice of reading and engaging with data in this way enables different ways of understanding through creative and generative praxis and enables us to ‘ask better, more sophisticated, and more nuanced questions’ (Buch and Staller, 2007, p. 23) regarding ‘the problem of leadership’.

Emotion and affect

In privileging affects in the research-assemblage, I wrote through emotion and affect as it is lived by lesbian and queer women in leadership. These particular fragments and the ways in which sport has affected, effected and ‘infected’ their lives have demonstrated the relational nature of leading and highlighted the challenges of writing leadership. None of the stories is linear; instead, they are always-already entangled and haunted as these lesbian leaders in sport and I step into this historical flow.

I draw upon this body of work on affect (e.g. Ahmed, 2014; Probyn, 1996) to ‘read’ how texts mobilise ideas about becoming-lesbian leader. Extending Sarah Ahmed’s line of thinking, emotions are central to the gendered performance of leadership identities. She uses the terms ‘emotion’ and ‘affect’ interchangeably and states that ‘emotions shape the very surfaces of bodies, which take shape through the repetition of actions over time’ (p. 4). In addition, the repetition of these narratives also constructs Hazel’s and Margaret’s leadership subjectivity at the same time as they express multiplicity, ambiguity and incoherent subjectivity. In other words, it is messy. The personal and the political are entangled here as they narrate their experiences through discourses in which sexuality and gender become intelligible, historically and culturally and specifically, in sport leadership.

These affectively charged moments in my research sent me off on new lines of inquiry, disrupting the desire to organise my analysis by themes and creating previously (un)known connections. Affective moments disrupt neat accounts of leadership and make room for feelings of frustration, anger, grief and disgust, challenging the securing of the social hierarchy and offering a more nuanced analysis of becoming-leader-in-sport.

Assemblage thinking

This research-assemblage is rhizomatically connected to ‘the last straw’, ‘a sticky wicket’ and the masculine-sport-assemblage, to Hazel and Margaret as becoming-leaders – not just in this thesis, but to all women in sport, exposing the heterosexism underpinning possible futures for becoming-leader.

As a framing of problems that brings into dynamic relation the flows of desire, more than human forces and lines of flight and becomings, assemblage thinking has given me a framework to begin to really appreciate the complexity of ‘the problem of leadership’. In complicating the question of gender equity in sport leadership even further, it has changed my way of thinking and enabled me to ask better questions, which I articulate later in this chapter. In particular, the notion of ‘affective assemblages’ helps me to explore the relationships between complex organisational factors that shift the focus from women as individualised subjects ‘lacking’ leadership ‘qualities’ towards a ‘line of flight’ and generative possibilities for becoming-leader and new sport assemblages.

Vulnerable methodologies

Vulnerable methodologies provide space for new forms of (un)knowing and continued attempts at understanding the stories of others (Page, 2017). Like Chadwick (2021), I embraced a ‘politics of discomfort’ to engage with and trace moment of disruption and failure; vulnerable method does not attempt to resolve discomfort immediately. Discomfort functioned as a productive entry point into exploring power relations that materialise as affects in research, interviews and analytic spaces. I draw the reader into this ‘politics of discomfort’ as they are affected and become a part of an entangled ‘research assemblage’ (Fox and Alldred, 2015).

My experiences of discomfort materialise not only from intra-action with the texts but also from uncertainty around my capabilities, the unsettled uncertainty of the research process, the COVID-19 pandemic, the desire to complete worthy work, to do right by these women who I admire. This raised new questions of how feelings of discomfort affected analytic processes of working with stories, ‘What feminist forms of knowing, being and resisting were forged (or muted) by feelings of dissonance, dis-ease and dislocation?’ (Chadwick, 2021, p. 7).

Vulnerable writing enables me to push against the ‘erasure of the complexities of subjectivity when individuals and bodies and their actions do not fit or adhere to coherent themes of knowledge’ (Page 2017, p. 28), embracing an affective mode of writing (Blackman, 2015) and working with stories as multiplicities (Tamboukou, 2008). Barad (2007) describes writing as iterative, a mutually constitutive ‘working out’; Bozalek and Fullagar (2022) view it as a re/iterative process to ‘think-with’ that could potentially reconfigure thinking. I mobilised creative writing as a rhizomatic practice (Fullagar, Pavlidis and Stadler, 2017) to open up entanglements and interrogate ‘ghosts’, writing with the affective intensities within and across both transcripts and other texts as an ongoing analytic process disrupting assumptions of linearity.

The critical-creative analytic enables me to transgress the normalcy that rests upon a fantasy of leadership as a ‘heroic, masculine site of activity’ (Stead and Elliott, 2018, p. 2) and to move through new lines of thought. There were moments where I found myself ‘stuck in past patterns governed by unhelpful expectations’ (Fullagar, Pavlidis and Stadler, 2017, p. 6). So I write through the tension arising from my expectations of this research process, of myself performing competently and intelligently, through the uncertainty of not knowing. The temporal tactic of re-turning to the fragments, generating messy and disruptive texts, adopting a praxis of interpretive reticence (Chadwick, 2021) also enabled me to immerse myself in the pleasure (Tamboukou, 2008) of writing. My writing-through is a performativity itself, entangled with what haunts me as I am unsettled by and want to unsettle (Blackman, 2015) the dominant narrative around leadership in sport.

Haunting/hauntology

Bozalek and Fullagar (2022, p. 147) say that 'writing is always-already haunted by all that has been written and read before, in the present and the future'. Leading change in sport is an embodied practice that is shaped by individual and cultural histories, where 'every concept is haunted by its mutually constituted excluded other' (Barad, 2010, p. 253), troubling the way leadership is often framed. Thus, there were multiple, intra-connected hauntings that emerged from the shadows during this research process. Hauntologies raise ethical and methodological questions of how one can interrogate ghosts (Blackman, 2015) like the 'lesbian bogeywoman' (Griffin, 1998) and other hauntings in the leadership space.

Insights and significance

The overarching significance of this research is to contribute to shifting the focus from women as individualised subjects 'lacking' leadership 'qualities' towards the concept of leading as relational. Opening up the complexity of leadership subjectivities, and staying with discomfort and seeing what we can learn from it, will help us think in more complex ways about 'the problem of leadership'.

My personal/learning insights

In this movement of becoming-research student, I learnt to embrace multiplicity, to sit with discomfort and not knowing, and to write-through this 'slow process of research' (Page, 2017, p. 22). While much of my focus is on the participants in this research, this research-assemblage is also productive in that it raises important questions regarding my shifting positions as research student; the movements produce questions as well as data regarding how women's affective experiences contribute to ways of becoming-leader and becoming-research student. I have learnt to 'remain open to alternatives through enabling the space and time to question assumptions and forms of certitude, to return to materials' (Page, 2017, p. 16) and to change my mind.

Effortful identity work

What circulated between Margaret, Hazel and I was the concept of 'effortful identity work'; we all perform and regulate leadership identities through narratives of self and affective relations within the sport-assemblage. The research interview is a site for identity production; through my analysis, the processes of self-formation become visible.

We always felt under that pressure, pressure, pressure to look and behave a certain way. (Margaret)

While we are always becoming, it is clear that Margaret and Hazel want to always 'make sense' (Muhr and Sullivan, 2013). They reproduce their narratives for easy coherence by themselves and others, smoothing out their complex experiences to something more comfortable and understandable. Hazel says, 'I like to think I make sense', which speaks to her belief of a coherent subjectivity. This research revealed the labour required to 'produce and maintain semblances of subjective coherence' (Riach, Rumens and Tyler, 2016, p.3).

What if space is made for understanding the complexity and fluidity of leadership subjectivities that are performed, expressed and regulated as part of the sport assemblage? What if organisations didn't have to depend on us maintaining this semblance of subjective coherence (Riach, Rumens and Tyler, 2016, p. 3)? What if we didn't have to 'make sense' (Muhr and Sullivan, 2013)? What if we didn't have to put up with the 'bullshit' to be 'successful'? How might we reimagine the sport-assemblage to be ethically enabling (Ringrose, 2010) for all becoming-leaders attached to it?

This research makes visible effortful identity work that is largely invisible to male sport leaders and ignored in dominant models. The affective intensity of having to think about how you present yourself, asking 'Am I going to pass in this context?', 'Am I going to challenge the "bullshit" this time?' is constant labour. When Hazel talks about identity and switches between the 'I' and 'they', even when asked to turn her thoughts and gaze to herself, she still sees herself through the lens of others. This indicates a level of hidden work

required to balance 'self-production' and 'and self-observation', which 'allow us to critically and reflexively understand more about the labour involved in performing and maintaining the semblances of subjective coherence upon which organizations depend' (Riach, Rumens and Tyler, 2016, p. 3).

Affective dimension of leadership

Ignored in rationalist models of leadership, theories of emotion and affect disrupt those neat accounts and show leadership to be a site of intense affects such as pride, passion, love, shame and loss. Bringing these affects into research helps us to understand how to enable the possibilities of sport leadership without restricting the subjectivities available for women to enact through becoming-leader.

How Hazel and Margaret position themselves brings up complex ethics and affective intensities. In trying to understand how their leadership subjectivities are spoken and articulated, we acknowledge the messiness and complexity of becoming-leader and open up new ways of thinking through problems of gender equality in sport leadership. In writing-through the discomfort and 'sticky affects', this research troubles the idea that we can achieve gender equality in sport leadership without analysing the affective dimensions of becoming-leader. This research allows movement and an expanding of our definition of leadership, and encourages a move towards an ethics of leadership through creation of spaces of belonging (Fullagar, 2003).

Undertaking a remaking of leadership subjectivities

This research contributes to the development of feminist thinking about leadership as a negotiated space in considering how the stories of leadership are told and in undertaking a remaking of leadership subjectivities.

Hazel's 'last straw' makes visible the material and cultural privileges that attend the normative position (Lewis and Simpson, 2010) of 'heroic leadership', and enable us to question those masculine leadership tropes. As Hazel straddled (in)visibility, she was more

visible as a leader and the consequences for her were restricted access to material and cultural rewards and advantage. The 'last straw' shifts the focus from the 'disadvantages' attached to femininity and instead focuses on the question of the 'advantages' of embodied heterosexual masculinity exposing the heroic model.

Traditional sport organisational cultures may be a deterrent to women (Shaw, 2006), where they must seek to approximate the 'social ideal' (Ahmed, 2014) of heroic leadership. In their refusal of the promise of that ideal, and by seeking to expand it, Hazel and Margaret were moved to 'perform the queerest and most unexpected antics' (Jessop 1903, p.91) while remaking leadership.

By following lines of flight from the sport-assemblage, opening up different desires, this research exposes the heterosexism underpinning possible futures for becoming-leader. Shame, pride, fear and desire produce conditions of uncertainty, which require effortful work; however, those conditions are also generative of new possibilities for leadership. These emotions, which have often been described as negative or destructive, can also be creative or enabling, and show up the limitations of masculine models and power relations that marginalise. In working with relational understandings, this research works with complexity and 'messiness' to open up possibilities for enacting leadership and transforming sport.

This research challenges the multiple complex relations in play that 'sustain leadership as a heroic, masculine site of activity' (Stead and Elliott, 2018, p. 2), complicate the rigid binary of sexual difference in leadership and trouble linear conceptualisations of 'moving towards' gender equality in sport. This research doesn't offer a solution to 'the problem of leadership', but it does enable us to ask better questions that consider why we still have so few women in leadership in sport.

In this space, women such as Hazel and Margaret experience their sport and social identities through heteronormative gender relations that position them as gendered and queered subjects in an ongoing process of subjectification that plays out in the sport leadership

space. For Hazel and Margaret as embodied subjects, what capacities and opportunities were available in this moment of being affected by the power relations and material forces (Fullagar, 2017)?

Implications for leadership programs

This research adds to our understanding of some of the deep and pervasive values and beliefs that inform our understandings of gender in sport organisations and that often remain largely under-examined, especially in the application of gender equity programs. While examining these programs is beyond the scope of this research, I hope future researchers will be able to 'plug-in' this text and consider the sport assemblage as a space for performing selfhood and what that does to becoming-leader if women are told they need to be 'fixed'. Who is it possible to become when intra-acting with these programs? Do they territorialise or deterritorialise sport leadership?

Implications for diversity and inclusion

Women's cricket is a game for everybody and we don't care about shape, size, religion or sexual preference – we even have transsexuals playing. ('Fresh code for women's cricket', 1995)

Through this research, I show how Hazel and Margaret are attempting to reconfigure sport as multiplicity, expanding it from a site of heterosexual masculinity to a place where gender and sexuality are configured differently. As part of her leadership narrative, Margaret circulates a discourse of 'happy diversity' (Ahmed, 2010), which speaks to her ideal – but one that is challenged by a male leader:

I told them that we had a transgender woman playing in our Sydney grade competition, for example. I was trying to make a point about us being inclusive and taking whatever person and their sexuality, you know, not worrying about

such things. I had [a male leader] ringing me the next morning saying, 'You shouldn't have said that.' (Margaret)

The haunting of 'the DA affair' casts a non-present presence. By bringing out this ghost and interrogating it, I hope we have gone some way towards exorcising 'the lesbian bogeywoman'. Hazel and Margaret enact queer leadership, narrating these stories from the past through their desire to remake sport into a more expansive 'ideal', to change sport from a space where aspects of identity that were marginalised are now privileged.

Limitations

I accept that, in my research and my conversations with Hazel and Margaret, the data are partial, incomplete and always in a process of retelling and remembering (Jackson and Mazzei, 2013).

In writing with theory, I created many fragments of writing around moments of affective intensity from my participant interviews. Some narrative fragments privileged 'sameness', and I was particularly drawn to a story both my participants told of interactions with the media where their athletes were cajoled into posing for a photographer with lipstick or a makeup mirror. The sexualisation and feminisation of female athletes is not a new 'story', and while I may re-turn to it, I wanted to experiment with possibilities of telling different kinds of stories (Barad, 2013).

I wanted to work with these women because of the connection I felt with their experiences as lesbian women in sport. While this was a productive place to start for this master's research, I believe it would be productive in other ways to work with those with whom I don't identify with, especially men, interrogating them through a gender lens to further investigate the invisible norms, affective investments and normative gender representations that sustain leadership as a 'heroic, masculine site of activity' (Stead and Elliott 2018, p. 2).

Conclusion

This research turns our attention to the conditions of possibility for facilitating different relations and practices of leadership (Fullagar, 2020), resisting the tendency towards Answers and a singular Truth, towards normalisation, and embracing affect to provide opportunities for becoming-leader-in-sport.

In privileging affect, I have been able to question some of the assumptions of sport leadership and to bring affects such as pride and shame into consideration. Vulnerable writing has enabled me to write sport leadership in a way that is open to a wide range of future possibilities.

Even though this research project has ended, its affects continue to circulate and reorient my thoughts, continuing to produce questions. Rather than attempting to reconcile 'the problem of leadership', I hope this research has opened up affective, reflexive spaces to disrupt some of the coherent narratives around sport leadership and engage with the complexities, helping us to approach our thinking about sexuality, leadership and sport in different ways.

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Appendix 1: Information sheet

[Research ethics reference number: 2020/215]

Who is conducting the research

HDR candidate / researcher: Danielle Warby

Contact phone: +61 (0)405 386 792

Contact email: danielle.warby@griffithuni.edu.au

Senior investigators: Dr Adele Pavlidis and Prof. Simone Fullagar

School of Humanities

Contact phone: +61 (0)421 100 036 and +61 (0)7 5552 8766

Contact emails: a.pavlidis@griffith.edu.au and s.fullagar@griffith.edu.au

Why the research is being conducted

This research is a part of Danielle Warby's degree: Master of Arts (Research).

This project will examine how sexuality and gender intersect to affect leadership in a sport context in Australia. How women embody leadership in predominantly masculine domains like sport administration has been considered in previous research but sexuality not something this other research has looked at.

I would like to expand beyond current ideas of what leadership is and I believe your perspective will offer something different.

This work has potential implications for sport leadership and broader cross-disciplinary implications for business, the social sciences as well as gender and sexuality studies more broadly.

What you will be asked to do

1. A questionnaire
2. An interview
3. A discussion

If you agree to participate, Danielle will send you a questionnaire asking you about your involvement in sport from 1970 to 1999.

Danielle will then meet with you to conduct an interview. This will be either in your home or somewhere else convenient for you. She will ask you questions about the time period in the questionnaire but also about your work and personal life leading up to this point. As there is a focus on sexuality in this research, there will be personal questions on this topic.

Interviews will go for approximately 60 to 120 minutes – or at the participant's discretion these may be longer. These interviews will be audio recorded.

A follow-up discussion will be scheduled to reflect on the transcript together, either in person or using video chat technology.

You can also speak to Danielle at any time about the research, in addition to these planned interviews and discussions.

The basis by which participants will be selected or screened
The goal is to recruit leaders (formal and informal) across multiple sports in Australia who were active in their roles from 1970 to 1999, who self-identify as non-heterosexual, and who worked to change things for the better with regards to gender.

The expected benefits of the research
The goal of this research is to shine a light on blind spots that keep social systems intact and make seeing how to change them so difficult.

She hopes this research might lead to more diverse workplaces, new ideas of leadership and provide some new data to help with some of the challenges faced by women in sport.

There is no direct benefit for you for participating.

Risks to you

There is a very low perceivable risk from your participation in this project.

There may be a risk that you will be identified but every effort will be made to ensure confidential participation.

Your confidentiality

Anything you say in the interview will be used for research purposes only. Additionally, in any publication resulting from the research, anything you say will be de-identified. This means that your identity will only be known to members of the research team, who will keep it in the strictest confidentiality. If we want to publish something you said, we will use a pseudonym that cannot be traced back to you. You will also have the opportunity to review your own transcription, to ensure that you have not been mis-quoted.

The interviews will be audio-recorded, but only for transcription purposes. Once transcribed, the recordings will not be heard by anyone outside the research team. Audio files and transcriptions will be stored on the Griffith Research Drive and on Google Drive and protected from access by anyone outside the research team.

At the conclusion of this piece of research, research data (questionnaire responses, interview transcripts and analysis) will be retained in a password protected electronic file at Griffith University for a period of five years before being destroyed OR, if you give your permission, they will be stored publicly (for example, in the Australian Lesbian and Gay Archives Inc.). You can change your mind about this at any stage of the project.

In addition to an academic thesis, research results may also be disseminated via journal articles, conference presentations, media articles, and blogs.

Please note that despite best efforts to de-identify participants, it may still be possible for people familiar with Australian sports and its leadership to infer the identity of participants.

Your participation is voluntary

Your participation in this project is voluntary. You are free to terminate the interview at any time, and withdraw your participation, if you want.

Questions / further information

If you have any questions about the nature or outcomes of the study, feel free to contact Danielle Warby by phone on 0405 386 792 or email: danielle.warby@griffithuni.edu.au.

The ethical conduct of this research

Griffith University conducts research in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research. If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the research project you can contact the Manager, Research Ethics on 3735 4375 or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au.

Feedback to you

You will be given a plain language report, this will be a short summary of the main conclusions of the study, which will be expanded on in Danielle Warby's thesis. If you wish, the thesis will also be made available for you.

Privacy statement - non-disclosure

"The conduct of this research involves the collection, access and/or use of your identified personal information. The information collected is confidential and will not be disclosed to third parties without your consent, except to meet government, legal or other regulatory authority requirements. A de-identified copy of this data may be used for other research purposes including publishing openly (e.g. in an open access repository). However, your anonymity will at all times be safeguarded. For further information consult the University's Privacy Plan at <http://www.griffith.edu.au/about-griffith/plans-publications/griffith-university-privacy-plan> or telephone (07) 3735 4375."

Appendix 2: Consent form

[Research ethics reference number: 2020/215]

Research team

HDR candidate / researcher: Danielle Warby

Contact phone: +61 (0)405 386 792

Contact email: danielle.warby@griffithuni.edu.au

Senior investigators: Dr Adele Pavlidis and Prof. Simone Fullagar

School of Humanities

Contact phone: +61 (0)421 100 036 and +61 (0)7 5552 8766

Contact emails: a.pavlidis@griffith.edu.au and s.fullagar@griffith.edu.au

By signing below, I confirm that I have read and understood the information package and in particular:

- I understand that my involvement in this research will include a questionnaire, an interview and a follow-up discussion
- I understand that the interview and follow-up discussion will be audio recorded
- I have had my questions about the research answered to my satisfaction
- I understand the risks involved
- I understand that there will be no direct benefit to me from my participation in this research
- I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary
- I understand that if I have any additional questions I can contact the research team
- I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time, without explanation or penalty
- I understand that my name and other personal information that could identify me will be removed or de-identified in publications or presentations resulting from this research
- I understand that I can contact the Manager, Research Ethics, at Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee on 3735 4375 (or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au) if I have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the project
- I agree to participate in the project

Use of audio recordings and transcripts

Please check the appropriate box. You can change your mind about your choice at any point during the research project.

- I give my permission for my audio recordings and transcript to be publicly available (for example, stored in the Australian Lesbian and Gay Archives Inc). I understand this means I will be identifiable.
- I wish for my audio recording to be destroyed after transcription and for my interview transcript to be destroyed after the five year retention period has expired.