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Wayfinding through boundaries of knowing: Professional development of academic sport scientists and what we could learn from an ethos of amateurism

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Abstract

What should professional development of knowledge and skills of academic sport scientists look like? Here, we address this question by dwelling in what 'being a professional academic' entails. Professionals work methodically, typically specialising their knowledge and skills, strategically planning how to progress their careers while not rocking the boat of the academic discipline they call home. To gain promotion, they expertly work within predetermined disciplinary boundaries, typically adjudged on objectified metrics that demonstrate a 'track record' in meeting professional standards, closely linked to university performance measures. Disciplinisation and performance evaluation becomes an issue, though, when rules, regulations and conventions prevent academics from exploring beyond their disciplinary walls, instead being lulled into *playing the game*. The amateur, in contrast, typically studies for the love of it, enthusiastically embodying their interest as a way of life, maintaining the highest standards of knowing-in-being. This passionate exploration is not limited by disciplinary conventions or performance metrics, but by how far they wish to roam through the boundaries of knowing. They are, in other words, a *wayfinder*, making their way through the world by corresponding with what holds their interest as they go. Never neglecting the *ethos of amateurism*, we contend its potential value for professional development of academic sport scientists, embracing – and perhaps even rekindling – a love of continued learning with and from those we encounter.

Key words: Amateurism, professionalism, sport science, wayfinding, academia, knowledge, skill

Out walking in the frozen swamp one gray day,

I paused and said, 'I will turn back from here.

No, *I will go farther – and we shall see.*'

- Robert Frost, The Wood-Pile

Introduction

"*What is your five-year research plan?*" I (the first author) was asked following the award of my doctorate in sport science. Like most recent doctoral graduates, I had grown a slight boredom with what I had been studying for the last three or so years, so was eager to throw on my hiking boots and begin exploring new knowledge landscapes emergent on the horizon. Perhaps this is why when asked such a question, I remember feeling a sense of concern, unease, confinement and anxiety, knowing full well that phrases like 'publish or perish' circulated in academic disciplines, including sport science. If to avoid perishing, I had to publish, would I have time to explore – *for the love it* – the various things that jagged my attention? Or perhaps worse, would I even be *allowed* to venture beyond my disciplinary home in the hope of encountering, and weaving together, new knowledge, skills and experiences?

I would later learn that this notion of 'publish or perish' is a professional, academic ideology founded on a model of capitalism and marketisation within universities. It should be noted, though, that it is hard to be overly critical of such a model here, as it is indeed a broader societal reflection more globally. Nonetheless, it is a model that sees colleagues as potential competitors and quantitative performance metrics as ways of evaluating and judging, and holding to account, 'expert work'. Oft-coming at the cost of studying for the love of it, a professional academic's focus typically shifts towards *gaining* things that can be added to a résumé in order to progress their career. This can be a stressful, overly-anxious and hostile environment, particularly for young, professionally-developing academics.

But, is there another way of looking at our engagement with knowledge and skills? Can we support intellectual freedoms of professional development for academic sport scientists – encouraging them to explore and apply their knowledge, skills and understanding – potentially leading to genuinely novel, creative, and practically useful insights for the broader sporting community?

The aim of our paper is to explore this idea through the notions of professionalism and amateurism in the development of academic sport scientists. To do so, we first explore what professionalism commonly entails within a capitalist society, and how this runs at odds to the ethos of the amateur, who *studies for the love of it, as a way of life* (Said, 1996). To help us navigate these waters within the university, we lean on the sociological arguments of Brint (1994), who distinguishes 'expert professionalism' from 'social trustee professionalism', and Kalfa et al. (2017), who explore the Bourdieusian metaphor of 'the game'. Then, weaving in the seminal work of Alfonso Montuori, we propose 'creative inquiry' for professional development of academic sport scientists through the approach of transdisciplinarity. This approach to inquiry is situated to take academics in-between, through and beyond disciplinary boundaries (Woods et al., 2021b) – transcending norms and conventions as they go. It pushes back on the *disciplinary siloing* that can blight the quality of work through the pressure of specialisation that accompanies professionalism in the academy. Instead, our arguments encourage developing academic sport scientists to replace the silo with *the tent* (Ingold, 2021), and the impersonality of networking with the relationality of *corresponding* (Ingold, 2013). These ideas on embracing an ethos of amateurism for professionally developing academic sport scientists should not be viewed as utopic, but active and transformative in their intent to preserve the love of studying and "the joy of inquiry" (Montuori, 2008). After all, if that is not worth at least attempting to preserve in academic scholarship, then what is?

An attitude of professionalism

In a lecture titled *Professionals and Amateurs*, Edward Said (1996) argued that the greatest threat to today's intellectual was an 'attitude of professionalism':

> "By professionalism I mean thinking of your work as an intellectual as something you *do* for a living, between the hours of nine and five with one eye on the clock, and another cocked at what is considered to be proper, *professional behavior* – not rocking the boat, not straying outside the accepted paradigms or limits, making yourself *marketable* and above all presentable, hence uncontroversial and unpolitical and '*objective*'." (p. 74, emphasis added)

The added emphases throughout this excerpt highlight key components of relevance to our position. First, Said (1996) notes that the professional separates or divides their work from other parts of their life in a type of *dis*embodiment. In other words, their work expresses a compartmented aspect of who they are, as if they are not all or entire when working, but rather *what they do* to earn a living. Moreover, a professional's work is somewhat predetermined and disciplinised, fitting the convention of what one should look and sound like while in their position, staying on and within a well-defined path, being sure to not 'rock the boat'. The professional seeks to *productify* their performance to make themselves marketable for employment and promotion, perhaps so they can rank higher when judged against peers – seen as competitors – or so they can claim for objectivity when professing their expertise to those deemed ignorant.

For Said (1996), this characterisation is fuelled by the pressure of specialisation – in that, the more academically qualified one becomes (i.e., the higher the academic ladder climbed), the narrower and more limited the focus of their area of knowledge. Indeed, this specialisation of knowledge is not necessarily a bad thing and can lead to important discoveries. But it can become problematic when one loses sight or becomes blinkered to anything outside the narrow confines of their 'professional speciality', regardless of its pertinence (Said, 1996). For the professionally developing academic sport scientist, a narrowing specialisation on analysis, for example, may detach them from synthesis – how data and insights can be (re)interpreted, articulated, applied and put to use – what it actually means for those in the field.

105 This detachment risks what Brint (1994) refers to as 'expert professionalism', which is defined as
106 specialised knowledge that has little concern for how it can be *collaboratively* put to use in order to
107 have a positive impact in the broader community. This narrow approach is at odds to what is referred
108 to as 'social trustee professionalism' (ibid.), where professionals are seen as trusted sharers of public
109 knowledge, carefully weaving it into practically and communally beneficial ways. The dogma of the
110 'expert professional', though, perpetuates when the opinions of those outside of the 'specialised few'
111 are seen to mean little, lulling developing academics into following "whatever the so-called leaders in
112 the field will allow" – after all, "*to be an expert* you have to be certified by the proper authorities; they
113 *instruct* you in speaking the *right* language, citing the *right* authorities, holding down the *right*
114 territory" (Said, 1996, p. 75, our emphasis). Stated differently, the pressure to specialise for the
115 professionally developing academic is likely to drive a proliferating system that rewards conformity,
116 where exploration and search are bound by the path dependencies of the discipline within which one
117 is housed.

118 In the university, the pressure to specialise has gone hand-in-glove with the rise of managerialism,
119 performance appraisals and marketisation (Allen-Collinson, 2000; Anderson, 2008). According to
120 Allen-Collinson (2000), the rise of market-orientation within the university has resulted from cuts of
121 government funding, leading institutions toward entrepreneurial practices. It should be noted that we
122 do not intend to criticise entrepreneurism in the university, as such practices can be truly supportive
123 of academic freedoms. But when coupled with managerialism, they can perpetuate performance
124 evaluations relative to standard, university-wide, metrics (Anderson, 2008). This is a concern because
125 Kallio et al. (2016) noted that the rise of 'objective'[1] performance appraisals in the university has led
126 to the emergence of a 'new academia', one where colleagues become competitors and performance

[1] While not elaborated on further, we wish to note that the myth of objective evaluation is an operationalization of an idealised way of conceiving performance. It is not neutral, nor objective. The illusion of objectivity is detrimental because it does not instigate change or improvement. Rather, it accepts a biased view of performance to be the optimal view. But optimization is always relative to a given definition and the rules that operationalise such definition.

evaluations the tools of comparison. In such an environment, academics are inadvertently lulled into expressing their speciality by *playing the game*, or risk being 'left on the bench'!

This Bourdieusian metaphor of the game has recently been explored in the university by Kalfa et al. (2018), who uncovered the particular pressures that developing early career academics feel when starting their journey in academia. Specifically, it was noted that many quickly focus on 'playing the game', gaining as much capital as they can within the university, as fast as they can – manifest in generating publications, high teaching evaluations (despite being widely accepted as misguided assessments of teaching quality (see Onwuegbuzie et al., 2007)) and applications for grant funding. This is because their academic performance is judged on such metrics, being ranked against colleagues in order to progress their career. This approach comes at significant risk of intellectual autonomy – with university metrics quickly becoming what developing academics focus on (Kalfa et al., 2018), not the development of collegiality, the joy of inquiry, collaboration and debate, the embracement of uncertainty, and the excitement of 'finding out'; things which – to us at least – should be at the core of a developing academic scholarship (also see Montuori, 2008, 2011).

What we have argued thus far does seem to be a rather pessimistic view of professional development of academic sport scientists. Our intent, though, is the counter – to find and emphasise an optimistic way forward. A way that sees developing academic sport scientists wrestle back some of the key elements of Brint's (1994) notion of social trusteeship and have a positive influence on community practice at all levels of sports participation. Perhaps in searching for such an optimistic way forward, we can even start to alleviate some of the pressures of having to play the game in the hope of 'getting ahead', while preserving the joy of, and love for, inquiry. What we now go onto propose, is that this optimism may sit at the core of what is a seemingly counterintuitive ethos to that of professional, academic behaviour.

An ethos of amateurism

Said (1996) proposes that the ethos of amateurism can mitigate pressures of professionalism for the academic – an ethos defined as:

> "[…] the desire to be moved not by profit or reward but by love for an unquenchable interest in the larger picture, in making connections across lines and barriers, in refusing to be tied down to a speciality, in caring for ideas and values despite the restrictions of a profession." (p. 75)

It is worth noting that this view of amateurism is at odds with its more contemporary interpretations. Such perspectives tend to view the amateur as lower in status than the professional – labelled 'hobbyists' or 'dabblers' – engaging in activity as a pastime, not like their expert counterparts who do so professionally (Alberti, 2001). But as emphasised in Said's excerpt above, the amateur (from the Latin verb *amare*, which means *to love*) is far from the hobbyist they are often portrayed as being. For example, the amateur is one who actively researches for the love it, focusing on the topic(s) that holds their curiosity, not just on the professional metrics that objectify it. The amateur follows their interests where they lead them, transiting through disciplinary boundaries, as they are not tied to paradigmatic ways of being and doing that risk over-constraining the search and exploration of the professional. This means they have a deep care and longingness for what holds their interest, humbly professing an uncertainty about the world, but with an unceasing desire to find out more. In other words, they follow what Montuori (2011, p. 834, emphasis added) refers to as an "epistemology of *not*-knowing".

Because of this, what the amateur studies with all of what they are – *it embodies them* – it is not, what they study *about* for fulfilling a job or pre-determined metrics (Said, 1996). For example, Masschelein and Simons (2013) recount that amateurs often lose track of time while corresponding with their interest. They do so because their interest forever draws them into a presence in the present (Masschelein & Simons, 2013), grounding them in actively attending to what they are seeing, hearing, feeling, or tasting, not what they should be looking at, sounding like or acting as. A timely example of this in sport reflects the differences between a child who *plays* neighbourhood football with their friends – *for the love it* – co-designing rules, mixing teams, bringing their own, customized footballs to

176 'pop up' games, having to be reminded to return home after having been out playing all day. There is
177 a contrast with a child who *goes to* formalized – *professional* – football training sessions between
178 defined hours, being instructed to wear an exclusive uniform, to comply with established conventions,
179 and to rehearse ideological ways that the game 'should' be played, perhaps established by a national
180 syllabus in order to standardise (or professionalise) practice relative to a pre-determined cultural
181 identity (for empirical examples, see Rothwell et al. (2018) and Keeler and Wright (2013)).

182 For these reasons, Said (1996) argues that the scholar of today ought to embrace an *ethos of*
183 *amateurism*. In doing so, they can "transform the merely professional routine most of us go through
184 into something much more lively and radical; instead of doing what one is supposed to do one can ask
185 *why* one does, *who* benefits from it, *how* can it reconnect with a personal project and original
186 thoughts" (p. 83, emphasis added). As we now go onto discuss, the ethos of the amateur resonates
187 with an approach to inquiry captured within *transdisciplinarity*. Thus, in searching for ways to preserve
188 and stimulate the ethos of amateurism for professional development of academic sport scientists,
189 transdisciplinary inquiry could be a good place to start.

190 **In-between, through, beyond**

191 *The creative inquirer*

192 Differing to inter- and multi-[2], transdisciplinarity is a creative approach to scientific inquiry that takes
193 academics *in-between*, *through* and *beyond* disciplinary boundaries (McGregor, 2015; Woods et al.,
194 2021b). While still a fledgling approach to inquiry within sport science (cf. Vaughan et al., 2019; Toohey
195 et al., 2018; Woods et al., 2021b), it is flourishing elsewhere, such as in environmental science and
196 sustainability, helping researchers in tackling large, complex – *wicked* – challenges (Bouma, 2015;
197 Herrero et al., 2019). Alfonso Montuori (2019), a pioneer of creative inquiry framed through
198 transdisciplinarity, suggests that it is an approach synonymous with 'weaving', where academics

[2] While not dwelling on these differences here, interested readers could consult the work of Songca (2007) for a more detailed differentiation between these approaches.

detect and then knot together pertinent sources information (i.e., lines of inquiry) from various landscapes to conceptualise a topic complexly. From this perspective, 'trans' can be understood in a transitory way, as the academic moves with their interests, carefully attending and selectively responding to where it leads them, enriching and growing their knowledge *of* (note, not just *about*) a topic as they go. The knowledge of the transiting academic, then, grows into an unbound and ever-forming *meshwork* of ideas and inquiries (Ingold, 2007, 2011, Woods 2021), entangled by what captures their interest. This means that knowledge growth is narrational and *ongoing*, extending for as far as the academic seeks to roam, occurring "in the passage from place to place and the changing horizons along the way" (Ingold, 2000, p. 227).

This transcendence is important for professional development of academic sport scientists because it encourages them to broaden their paradigmatic assumptions. This stimulus pushes back on what Said (1996) recounts within the attitude of professionalism, which is that developing academics can get (informally and formally) coerced into following what 'the experts' say is 'the' way of doing, often at the expense of attending to what others – outside of the 'specialised few' – may have to say. Indeed, this is not to dismiss the significance of disciplinary specialists within academia, but to recognise that there are other ways of being and doing that are yet to be encountered, ways that could enrich the discipline within which one is housed (Montuori, 2005). In other words, for the transdisciplinary academic, disciplinary specialists could be viewed as knowledgeable *guides to*, not *gatekeepers of*, knowledge, skills and various experiences.

Weaving together the cornerstones of transdisciplinarity and the ethos of the amateur

These propositions are surmised by Montuori (2005 – 2019) within what he refers to as the *cornerstones of transdisciplinarity*. While we have elaborated on these cornerstones and their application in the sport sciences elsewhere (see Woods et al., 2021b), they are important to briefly emphasise here given their alignment with Said's (1996) ethos of the amateur. First, transdisciplinarity is inquiry-based, not disciplinary-based. This means that questions emerge through continued

correspondence with a *topic*, which may not be housed to a specific disciplinary norm. In other words, an inquiry-based approach pushes against what Montuori (2008) refers to as 'reproductive education' – where a developing academic simply seeks to reproduce an established body of knowledge in order to compliantly 'fit' within a defined disciplinary boundary[3]. An interest in performance preparation, for example, may take a professionally developing academic sport scientist through many disciplines – following their inquiry, not 'a' disciplinary way of being or doing *per se*. This, though, does not lessen the importance of learning disciplinary ways of doing (i.e., methods or concepts), but rather encourages the developing academic to venture *beyond* them, which is an integral part of many contemporary theories of performance preparation and athlete development (e.g., O'Sullivan et al., 2021; Woods et al., 2021).

Second, transdisciplinarity adopts a complex systems perspective, which counters the traditional, disjunctive and reductive thinking that both Montuori (2005) and Said (1996) argue is common to disciplinary specialisation that accompanies professionalism (also see Morin, 2008). Appreciating this, the professionally developing academic sport scientist with an interest in performance preparation would likely root their inquiry within a theoretical framework that draws on a plurality of disciplines and knowledge sources to theoretically model and empirically investigate the phenomenon (for an example of this, see Rothwell et al., 2020). Third, transdisciplinarity studies with, not about, including the academic in the inquiry, not attempting to expel them from it in the hope of maintaining objectivity. In striving for embeddedness, the academic can attempt to remain 'in touch' with their inquiry (preserving its contextuality), countering the detachment that typically characterises what Brint (1994) calls an 'expert professionalism'. Moreover, by being embedded in their inquiry, the academic can learn to continually attend and selectively respond to it, getting to know it more relationally. This relational knowledge of one's inquiry aligns with Said's (1996) characterisation of the

[3] Capturing this sentiment eloquently, Michael Foucault, cited in Plumwood (2009), stated, "endeavour to know how and to what extent it might be possible to think differently, instead of legitimising what is already known".

amateur's ethos – one who studies for the love it, *as a way of life*. In other words, when they study - they are whole, they put all they are into it; the transdisciplinary academic is not just passively describing or documenting what has occurred through a vertical integration of knowledge (see Woods & Davids, 2022 for an overview), but actively transforming *with* what they directly seek, experience and discover. This approach requires careful reflection by the academic, routinely considering what or who is shaping the way they are approaching the inquiry (Montuori, 2013).

Last, given its transitory nature, transdisciplinarity is trans-paradigmatic, not intra-paradigmatic. This perspective liberates academics from the (perhaps unseen) confines of their discipline, encouraging them to push back on conformist ways of doing by constantly questioning why things are the way they are (Montuori, 2013). Our own transdisciplinary research in sports skill acquisition, for example, has taken us into a variety of complementary disciplinary paradigms – from social anthropology (Woods et al., 2021a), to ecological psychology (Araújo, Davids & Hristovski, 2006), and dynamical systems theory (Davids, 2012); each adding new, integrative, unique and significantly richer insights than before. This approach, however, raises an important question for our current position – what is the role of the discipline with regards to transdisciplinarity for professional development of academic sport scientists?

Wayfinding tent dwellers

Indeed, transdisciplinary inquiry does call for considerable blurring and even transcendence of disciplinary lines and boundaries (Mahan, 1970). It would be a mistake, though, to think that the discipline does not have a role within trans*disciplinarity*. To clarify, it is a role that should not constrain or limit one's search, but rather, start and stimulate it (Montuori, 2019). Ecological economist, Robert Costanza (2003, p. 655), metaphorically surmised this notion rather eloquently when proposing a future vision of science, rooted in transdisciplinarity:

> "In the future, disciplinary boundaries will be as porous as many state and national boundaries are today. Likewise, one's disciplinary background will be noted much as one's place of birth is noted today – an interesting fact about one's path through life, but not a central defining characteristic."

This proposition is deeply rooted within a core profession of transdisciplinarity, which is a humble appreciation of *not* knowing (Montuori, 2008), and an unceasing desire to 'find out' (Montuori, 2019). Stated differently, the goal of transdisciplinary inquiry is not about reaching a terminus destination – an end point, a definitive solution, an all-knowing vantage – but about uncovering entanglements, more *related* lines of inquiry to follow on with. This process appreciates that the phenomenal world is not fixed and ready-made, broken and categorised into pieces, locations, objects and *disciplines*, waiting simply to be known *about*. Rather, the world and its inhabitants, are deeply entangled, related and forever *becoming* (Ingold, 2015). In other words, every*thing* is on its way to becoming some*thing* else – professionally developing academics included! Henri Poincaré, emphasised this eloquently, in stating that "the aim of science is not things themselves […] but the *relations* among things" (1905, p. xxiv). Extending this perspective, we weave in the words of the eminent anthropologist Tim Ingold, who in discussing the relational constitution of being alive to the world, declared that "things *are* their relations" (2011, p. 70, emphasis in original).

The humility of not knowing… But an unceasing desire to find out

The epistemology of *not* knowing, underpinning transdisciplinary inquiry, captures the humility of the amateur's ethos in a way that Ingold (2021) refers to as 'imposter syndrome'. Its symptoms, according to Ingold (2021), are detected in the feeling of being totally underqualified to speak on matters that you are *supposed* to be authoritative about. Indeed, we (the authors of this paper) have all been diagnosed with such a syndrome at various stages of our lives. It is, though, nothing to be ashamed of, as the syndrome is associated with the rise of 'expert professionalism' – where the pressure to specialise for the academic sees them claim for a (false) certainty about the world (Ingold, 2021). The real imposter, then, is perhaps the one who professes to 'know it all', closed off to what the world and

its inhabitants – outside of their discipline – can share with them. This is because the discipline, for the detached expert, is akin to a *silo* (Ingold, 2021) – housing all they need to know in order to profess their certainty about the world. The walls of these silos – that is, the boundary markings between disciplines – become thicker with the ever-increasing pressures placed on academics to specialise (Said, 1996). The disciplinary landscape can become a hostile environment, with the pressure of exclusivity and specialisation seeing academics claim and defend their turf from 'outside attacks', rather than as welcome 'interjections' (Montuori, 2008) – established in sport science by academic journals that clearly define the work that is 'allowed' to be published there (defined as 'within the scope'), along with the way such works 'should' be formally written and presented.

As we have emphasised, though, the amateur does not feel such pressures – instead, relishing the freedom to roam as far as their interests take them. The role of the discipline within transdisciplinarity, then, is one akin to a *tent*, not a silo (Ingold, 2021). Indeed, a professionally developing academic sport scientist needs time and a shelter to gather their thoughts, record their ideas and to note their observations – which the 'tent-as-discipline' affords. Further, given the transitory undertones of transdisciplinarity, the tent can be easily packed up, and the professionally developing academic sport scientist can set out again, following what has jagged their attention. An important feature of the tent, in this respect, is that it is *pitched in the ground* – meaning that the academic never loses touch with their inquiry, as they are (figuratively) grounded in it. This is important for professional development of academic sport scientists, as it encourages them to maintain regular *correspondence* with various sources of experiential and empirical knowledge – i.e., from coaches, athletes and other support staff in the field, to perhaps social anthropologists and ecological psychologists in completely different landscapes! More than a professional life dedicated to models or theories, data or their treatment, sport scientists would benefit from a robust correspondence with reality (the phenomena of sport performance and preparation). This process of correspondence would be impactful on the nature of experiential and empirical knowledge. While Montuori (2008) refers to transdisciplinary scholars as 'detectives' or 'investigators', to us, they are better understood as *wayfinders* (see Woods et al., 2020),

who although professing a humble uncertainty about the world, never stop searching to explain what it is that captures their attention and directs their making. Given the tenets of transdisciplinarity, their expertise, if anything, sits within their capability to seek out pertinent sources of information and then *weave* them together while taking refuge within their tent. Such an itinerant is, in other words, the "connoisseur of loose ends" (Ingold, 2021. p. 165).

Entangled lines of correspondence

Indeed, follow up advice to being asked about my (the first author) five-year research plan mentioned in the introduction, was to *"expand your 'network'"* – since, according to the proverb, "it is not what you know, *but who you know*!" To us, this is a rather shallow and impersonal view of engaging with people, and perhaps even another manifestation of the rising market-orientation within the university (Kalfa et al., 2018). For example, similar to teaching evaluations, publications and grant funding, the sentiment of 'networking' appears to be about gaining capital (Ingold, 2021) – social capital in this instance simply playing the game just to get ahead professionally.

This proposition, by no means, implies that collaborative engagement with people should not be a priority for professional development of academic sport scientists. After all, "inquiry always occurs with others, whether they are physically present or not, with predecessors in different times and spaces, with our friends and foes who have approached a subject we are interested in" (Montuori, 2008, p. 18). Our contention, though, is that this engagement should not be driven by a shallow agenda of gaining social capital through the addition of names to joint publications/presentations on a curriculum vitae or followers to various social media platforms, but about a genuine collaborative relationship, deeply *woven through sharing a common interest in studying a topic for the love it*. This latter description of engagement is precisely what is meant when we refer to 'corresponding' throughout this paper. Specifically, by corresponding, we mean actively participating with the ideas of others we encounter – not in the sense of reaching a fixed point, but in the sense of growing knowledge and understanding, of *carrying on* in a unique direction, together (Ingold, 2013, 2020,

Woods, 2021). Corresponding, then, is open-ended and somewhat emergent, as through its dialogicality, new knowledge can continually arise. This means that to correspond, one has to attend and be open to things (i.e., people, places, substances, and events) as they are, and (cor)*respond* to what these things have to say with care, sensitivity, and humility. "To correspond with the world", says Ingold (2013, p. 108), "is not to describe it, or to represent it, but to *answer to it*" (emphasis in original).

For professional development of academic sport scientists, relationality encourages an appreciation that we have as much to learn *from* and *with* coaches, athletes, other support staff – and indeed disciplinary expert specialists – as we would each have to learn *from* and *with* the professionally developing academic. The reciprocity of learning emphasises the deeply relational undertones of correspondence, resonating with Said's (1996) descriptions of the amateur, who *cares for* ideas regardless of the profession. Further, it aligns with Brint's (1994) descriptions of social trusteeship, where *collaboration* is central to the sharing of public knowledge for the greater good. Stated differently, as the wayfinding tent dweller transits in-between, through and beyond disciplinary boundaries, they accumulate not a dotted network of names and second-hand experiences, but *grow a meshwork of entangled lines of correspondence, knotted together by a shared love of what captures their interest.*

Concluding remarks

Here we sought to explore some implications of an ethos of amateurism for professional development of academic sport scientists. Leaning on the work of Said (1996) and Brint (1994), we first contrasted two views of professionalism – a detached expertise, and a social trusteeship. In arguing for the benefits of the latter, we discussed the value of creative inquiry through the approach of transdisciplinarity for professional development of academic sport scientists. Leaning on key ideas from Montuori, it was contended that this approach could free academic sport scientists from the disciplinary confines that can be built around them, given the pressure to specialise within

organisations. Our analysis led us to conceptualise the discipline of sport science not as a silo but as a tent, and the academic not as a specialist but as a wayfinder – unceasing in their journey to weave together loose ends that jag their attention. Thus, this paper could be seen as a manifestation of its very message, in that by following various inquiries rooted in the topic of professional development of academic sport scientists, it wove together key works from a humanist, sociologists, a creative inquirer, and an anthropologist. What 'discipline', then, would this paper call home?

Indeed, the challenges of managerialism and the pressures of 'playing the game' within universities are deeply rooted issues that this paper does not claim, nor seek, to resolve. They require to be challenged on both philosophical and systemic fronts, both theoretically and pragmatically. We appreciate, then, that there is an unfortunate inevitability in having to play the game at various levels until this change occurs. But this should not make our paper seem utopian, nor contradictory. Rather, it is important to acknowledge an ethos that we feel is crucial for all – from professionally developing to senior academic sport scientists. What is not to admire about studying for the love of it, as a way of life? Is that not the reason we stumbled into academia anyway? An ethos of amateurism, when coupled with a view of professionalism framed through social trusteeship, should, thus, be seen as being active in its intent to positively transform lives at both individual and societal scales. What it requires is for the academic to never lose sight of the love of studying and the joy of inquiry. Of searching for answers, but oft-just uncovering more questions – more loose ends – and being comfortable with that *un*comfortability. Perhaps, then, instead of asking "*what is your five-year research plan?*", we could consider asking developing academic sport scientists, "*what is the inquiry that interests you now, and what loose ends are you off to explore next….?*"

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