

‘It’s Training Man’! Membership Categorization and the Institutional Moral Order of Basketball Training

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Abstract

In this paper we examine how physical and verbal actions are constituted as morally accountable within an institutional context. Through the detailed examination of a video recording of the aftermath of an on-court altercation between players in a basketball training session, we explore how the members work to establish a locally organized institutional context for an action within which in situ moral reasoning practices are then brought to bear to make sense of the players’ actions and render them as morally accountable or not. In examining the moral organization of institutional accountability in an instance of basketball training activity, the paper develops a further level of detail to understand the reflexive organization of membership categories and the institutional moral order.

Keywords: Membership Categorization Analysis, Conversation Analysis, Moral Ordering, Institutional interaction, Omnirelevance, Sports Coaching.

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1. Introduction

In this paper, we examine how physical and verbal actions are made morally accountable within the institutional setting of basketball training. Drawing on membership categorization analysis (MCA) as reflexively entwined within a sequential flow of social action, we explore how members negotiate the locally organized institutional context in making accountable players' actions. Through an analysis of an extended argument sequence, we highlight the ways relevant contexts, categories, actions and interactions are invoked and made institutionally morally accountable. At the heart of this discussion is the examination of the way members negotiate their actions as justified within a morally ordered multi-layered institutional context as this unfolds in the flow of interaction.

1.1. Basketball Training as Situated Moral Work

In focusing on morality as a situated phenomenon, our interest is in how social norms and rules are made operative and reflexive through invoking a moral order tied to a situated action by members as a resource for making actions intelligible and also accountable. That is, following Garfinkel (1967) we treat questions of moral and accountable action as matters of *practical* relevance for members of society. The analysis below centres on a single event occurring during a basketball practice session, in which the coach of the team intervenes following a heated on-court altercation between two of his players. This specific extract was chosen for analysis because it makes available a range of different procedures through which the moral responsibilities and entitlements that players have in relation to one another are found, used, and disputed by members in the process of establishing the local (moral) sense of the prior actions and events. The anger and indignation expressed by the members indicate that an initial breach has occurred in the moral order of the setting, and this breach in turn generates an attempt at resolution in which further locally relevant constitutive moral expectancies are made apparent. At the same time, the occasion illustrates how displays of morality, knowledge, perception, understanding, and competence intertwine as members establish, engage and reconstruct the local (sense of) events.

1.2. Basketball Training as Institutional Work

The study of institutional interaction focuses on the in situ structures of action and social knowledge oriented to by members in their production and recognition of the *institutional* work. Sometimes called workplace studies, the study of institutional talk attends to the ways

in which institutional tasks are organized and conducted through interaction and how, in the process, the parties ‘talk the institution into being’ (Drew & Heritage 1992: 28). The objective of these studies is ‘to identify and explicate the ways in which interactional activities contribute to the accomplishment of institutional tasks’ (Arminen 2005: 37). In this case, the interest is in the interactional accomplishment of tasks associated with basketball coaching and training organized and oriented to by the parties as institutional.

While Heritage and Clayman (2011) note that the boundary separating institutional from non-institutional interaction is a ‘fuzzy’ one, they identify several features characteristic of institutional interaction (73, emphasis in original):

1. The interaction normally involves the participants in specific goal orientations *which are tied to their institution-relevant identities*: President-elect and Chief Justice, doctor and patient, teacher and student, etc.
2. The interaction involves special constraints on what will be treated as allowable contributions to the business at hand.
3. The interaction is associated with inferential frameworks and procedures that are particular to specific institutional contexts.

Although basketball coaching has not so far been examined as a form of institutional interaction it nonetheless displays similar features, as will be made explicit over the course of the analysis. First, the parties display clear orientation to accomplishing tasks tied to institution-relevant membership categories. Second, the types of actions and interactions that occur do so in institutional spaces and physical locations oriented to by the members. Third, there are in operation particular inferential procedures around the meaning of particular actions related to the setting ‘basketball training’, organized and invoked as an *omnirelevant* device (Sacks 1995). Through an entwined categorial and sequential analytic approach, the discussion highlights the ‘reflexive codetermination’ (Schegloff 2007) of membership and social action. The analysis explores the reasoning practices members use to make sense of particular actions as institutionally organized, predicated to institutional membership categories, and morally accountable within institutionally predicated rights and responsibilities. In the analysis that follows, then, our focus is on how members’ actions and conduct is subject to practical *moral* reasoning within and as part of the institutional work of a basketball training session through making accountable relevant membership categories and their in situ actions.

2. Data and Method

The data is drawn from a corpus of approximately 50 hours of video recordings of an Australian elite youth basketball team's practice sessions recorded over the course of a season (Evans 2013). Video was recorded using a single camera, and audio was captured via the use of a wireless microphone attached to the coach's arm. A university Human Research Ethics Committee approved this study, and players and coaches agreed to participate by signing an informed consent form. All participants' names have been changed, and images have been anonymized by converting them to line drawings using *AKVIS Sketch*.

The analytic framework applied to the data draws upon concepts and methods from membership categorization analysis (MCA) and conversation analysis (CA) combined within an analytic focus where members' category work is entwined within and is part of the sequential flow of interaction (Fitzgerald & Housley 2002; Stokoe 2012). Treating this category work as part and parcel of the sequential flow of social action provides an analytic sensitivity to the *gestalt contextures* (Watson 2015) that members build through and use as resources for recognizing, organizing and doing interactional tasks (Fitzgerald *et al.* 2009; Mondada 2009; Butler 2008; Stokoe & Attenborough 2015). Here we extend this focus towards an analysis of members' activities made morally and institutionally accountable.

2.1. Membership Categorization Analysis and the Moral Order

Through a focus on the flow of interaction, MCA provides a way of investigating the reflexive relationship between morality and normative accountability of action, *in action* (Jayyusi 1984, 1991; Housley & Fitzgerald 2002, 2009). As Jayyusi (1984) argues, it is through members' work in seeing actions as category bound with predicated rights and responsibilities which make visible members' resources for displaying and recognizing the *moral accountability* of actions (Watson 2015; Reynolds & Fitzgerald 2015). Moreover, Jayyusi (1991) goes on to say that not only are straightforwardly 'moral' predicates, such as 'rights' and 'obligations', often associated with particular categories (e.g. 'mother', 'doctor', 'coach'), but that other predicates such as 'knowledge', which are not on the face of it 'moral', turn out to provide grounds for making moral judgements. That is to say that members' situated use of membership categories invokes category-bound predicates that – whether explicitly 'moral' or otherwise – function to specify routine and expectable identities and forms of accountable conduct as part of their practical-moral inferential work. Moreover,

predicates and predicating actions are always locally organized and constitute setting-relevant normative expectations where action can be reflexively rendered intelligible and made normatively assessable.

2.2. *Omnirelevance, Sequentiality and Institutional Work*

In examining how members invoke and negotiate the moral accountability of their own and others' actions, we also highlight how members shift and propose alternative categories as situationally and setting relevant for defining the categories members occupy and how these categories *should* behave towards each other. Moreover, the process of categorization is itself morally organized as members invoke and configure alternative relevancies and alternative norms of conduct for categories *within* a membership device, or indeed within a device that is omnirelevant for the participants (Sacks 1995; McHoul & Rapley 2002; Rapley 2004).

For Sacks (1995), omnirelevant devices point to the way members may orient to the locally relevant context for their interaction which at some level organizes and accounts for their actions in such a way that it invokes a contextual layer organization for the participants around 'who-we-are-and-what-we-are-doing' (Butler & Fitzgerald 2010; Fitzgerald & Rintel 2013). Moreover, omnirelevant devices, once invoked, may have some priority over the ongoing interaction for the members such that any particular action is placed in the context of the overall device 'who-we-are-and-what-we-are-doing' (Sacks 1995; Butler 2008; Fitzgerald *et al.* 2009; Rintel 2015). To be sure, an omnirelevant device does not preclude the relevance of other devices in the production of an interaction, and does not assume that an omnirelevant device is always in operation for the duration of an encounter, but that:

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

Sacks' observation highlights not only the categorial relevance of the omnirelevant device, but also its *sequential* relevance in that, at any point in an interaction, someone can expectedly and relevantly invoke an omnirelevant device to accomplish an activity, and make relevant and consistent the application of the device to the membership and action of other members whom that device may be used to categorize. To suggest that a device is

omnirelevant, then, is to say that it operates at an organizational level (the overall interactional event) and, at times, an immediate level (the sequential and categorial flow of the interaction). Omnirelevant devices are thus intertwined with, and reflexively inform, the sequential organization of interaction.

Within institutional settings, considerations of roles, responsibilities, and entitlements are foregrounded, in that there is a delimited organization of institutional relevance in terms of who the members are in relation to one another and ‘why’ they are engaged in a particular interaction (McHoul & Rapley 2002; Butler 2008). For our purposes we focus on the way members configure and negotiate membership of the omnirelevant device ‘basketball training’, and through this device organize and evaluate various membership categories and their categorially-related actions (Fitzgerald *et al.* 2009). We examine not only the way an omnirelevant device may be invoked in the flow of interaction as an organizing device for the members, but also how particular relevancies, categories, actions and behaviours within that device are subject to in situ practical moral reasoning. Through treating categorial and sequential aspects of interaction as two sides of the same morally-organized coin (cf. Silverman, 1998), our analysis highlights the ‘layered texture’ of interaction, in which normativity, category and sequence mutually elaborate each other in members’ talk and conduct (Housley & Fitzgerald 2002, 2009).

In the first section of analysis we examine the ways in which the members work to establish a morally ordered institutional context for their practical reasoning about the sense of prior and current actions. Following this, we then move to examine how the interaction unfolds as the parties negotiate their understanding of the event through displays of institutionally relevant morality, knowledge, perception, understanding, and competence intertwined.

3. Omnirelevance, Category Membership, and Predicates of Moral Responsibility

The excerpt analyzed here occurred as the aftermath of an altercation between two players, Boris and Steve, during a sequence of a three-on-three game-style drill¹ within a basketball training session. Steve, playing offense, had received the ball and Boris had come out to defend him (Figure 1). Steve backed Boris down and made an aggressive move to the basket, in the process making contact with Boris several times – first with his back, then with his

¹ That is, the drill is comprised of a full-speed game with players’ options restricted by the reduction in the number of players on each team from the standard five to three.

shoulder (Figure 2), and finally with his elbow (Figure 3) – before shooting the ball. After the shot was made, Boris responded angrily to Steve’s contact, catching the ball as it came out of the net and throwing it at Steve’s shoulder (Figure 4), while saying something inaudible (on the video). After throwing the ball at Steve, Boris continued to stare him down (Figure 5). Steve, in turn, appeared to treat Boris’ outburst as laughable, smiling and shaking his head as he said something back to Boris (also inaudible on the video). Another player, apparently orienting to the possibility that Steve could retaliate to Boris’ outburst, then walked between Steve and Boris, placing his hand preventatively on Steve’s chest. As he did this, Boris picked up the ball and resumed play, bringing the altercation to a close. Boris’ team scored in the following play, and this concluded the activity. As the players reassembled in their team groups, Gregg (the coach) called for all the players to come together at centre court (Figure 6) and then initiated the interaction. We join the action at this point.

Excerpt 1

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

24 (0.5)
 25 [he's taking it at you]
 26 Boris: [I know I'm (.) I know that's (.) that's that's] another
 27 team.
 28 (0.4)
 29 Boris: We're teammates here we play hard but we don't injure
 30 each [other.]
 31 Gregg: [He=] he didn't↑ he didn't↑ have his elbow up
 32 that's what (ev-everyone's) saying=
 33 Boris: =I copped an elbow right here=
 34 Gregg: =That's a shoulder.
 35 (0.3)
 36 ???: Let's go
 37 (0.2)
 38 ???: [Come on man=]
 39 Boris: [(Alright alright)]
 40 Gregg: [That's what I'm sayi][ng I-I didn't thi]nk he went
 41 ha:rd, he did go ha:rd [(.) but he didn't go
 42 i:llegal]
 43 Boris: [I felt an elbow right there so I]
 44 mi- I might be wrong
 45 ???: (Who gives a sh[it) let's go.]
 46 Boris: [Might be wrong.]
 47 (.)
 48 Gregg: Ay. Just make su:re we on the same page I understand
 49 what you were saying and I understand what you trying to
 50 do I↑ don't mind↑ us being tough sometimes fuck
 51 sometimes
 ((Video runs out))

Once the players and coaches have assembled together in a huddle, Gregg initiates the trajectory of action examined here with the utterance 'Boris why do we need that shit' (line 1), to which Boris replies, 'It's training man' (line 5). Boris' response is hearable as an attempt to account for his action, and thereby to contest the status that Gregg has accorded Boris' outburst in describing it as 'that shit'. Boris' attempt to account for his action here involves producing an omnirelevant device description along the lines of 'who-we-are-and-what-we-are-doing', 'It's training man'. What is notable here is that he does not attempt to justify his action by providing a causal explanation in terms of the events that triggered his response, as he could have by saying something like 'I threw the ball at Steve because he

elbowed me in the face'. Rather, Boris treats the question as 'inference rich' (Sacks 1995) such that he produces an omnirelevant device to account for his action.

Boris' utterance 'It's training man' not only explicitly formulates the context of the event, but also defines the parties to that activity. That is to say, invoking a device as omnirelevant for the setting works to identify a relevant context for the action, and in so doing categorizes relevant parties as engaged in the activity 'training' with the relevant categories of coach and players. Boris' utterance makes relevant the collection to which the category 'players' belongs. 'Players' is one of two categories comprising the membership categorization device 'parties to a basketball training session', the other being 'coach'. Moreover, once the 'training' device has been invoked, Boris and Steve are collected together as co-members of the 'team players' category, that is, they are doing *team* 'training', they are 'teammates'. The device 'teammates doing training' becomes consequential for the following interaction as the device is unpacked, and where relevant categories, actions and predicated moral ordering is invoked and described, beginning with the rights and obligations of membership of the relational category *pair* 'teammates'.

3.1. 'Teammates': *The Moral Order of a Standardized Relational Pair*

The pairing 'teammate' – 'teammate' comprises a standardized relational pair (SRP) of categories, and, as is the case with such pairs, 'it is known what the typical category-bound rights, obligations, activities, attributes and so forth are of the one part of the pair with respect to the other' (Hester & Francis 2004: 40). Further, the relation between the two parts of this particular pair is one of institutional symmetry: what is appropriate for one also holds for the other. By making relevant the category-pair 'teammates' and its implicit responsibilities with regard to aggressive play, Boris invokes a set of norms of conduct that the members may now retrospectively apply to Boris and Steve's altercation during the preceding play-sequence, in order to make their conduct accountable in a particular way. In characterizing the actions in question as 'things done by teammates to teammates', Boris invites others to see Steve's initial move to the basket, which was observably physically aggressive, as being *overly* aggressive, and as such, a breach of the normative expectations of 'teammate' – 'teammate' behaviour. In response to a request for an account for his own action, then, Boris' invokes the omnirelevant device 'training', in the form 'It's training man', as a way to characterize the action *preceding* his action as accountable.

In characterizing Steve's move as a violation of the categorial responsibilities between 'teammates', Boris provides a justification for angrily throwing the ball at him in the immediate aftermath. That Boris' utterance can function in this way turns on its invocation of a norm linking Boris' outburst to Steve's preceding move. As Sacks (1974) illustrates, members may use norms as a resource to provide for the recognizable orderliness of pairs of activities that they observe:

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

Category pairing and their associated relational norms of conduct can, then, function as a members' resource for seeing and describing the components of temporally unfolding courses of action as being sequentially and normatively related. Boris renders Steve's action as a breach of teammate behaviour: via the use of a sequential norm that we might call 'over-aggressive behaviour towards another teammate → understandably aggressive response by that teammate', Boris brings his action, which the coach initially brought to attention as accountably problematic, into a sequentially paired and morally justified relationship with Steve's action. That is, Steve was not acting in accordance with the normative rules of action as teammates within the omnirelevant device 'training session', which in turn accounts for Boris' action as a sequentially provided-for physical response.

The analytic import here is the way that Boris organizes his account through a sense of multiple layers of interrelated sequential and categorial organization in producing the sense of his action. Boris' morally ordered account of his action relies upon the setting-specific categories, predicates and norms of conduct that it calls into being. In turn, the sense of these categories, and the predicates and norms tied to them, for this moment, is constituted by the sequential position within which they are invoked: after Gregg's question and, at a larger scale, after the altercation with Steve. In this way category, sequence, and normativity mutually elaborate one another as they are brought to bear in the account of the action as *institutionally reasonable*.

Despite its artful construction, however, Boris' formulation of the setting in line 5 does not succeed in absolving him from guilt. In the overlapping responses produced by a player (Keith) and the coach, Boris's utterance is treated as an inadequate account for his outburst. It is the matter of the ways in which these responses go about challenging Boris' account that we turn to next.

3.2. '*It is training*': Reconfiguring the Categorical and Moral Features of an Omnirelevant Device

In response to Boris' invocation of the omnirelevant device 'training', Keith repeats Boris' description of the context, 'it is training man' (line 6), and Gregg says 'Exactly' in overlap with Keith (line 8). Notably, neither Keith nor Gregg contest Boris' account by calling into question the *veracity* of his observation, as they might have done via, for instance, elaborating his depiction of the circumstances to introduce important details left out of his account (e.g., 'Yes, but...'). Rather, they treat his formulation as an accurate and adequate description of the context – that is to say, its *omnirelevant* status. Moreover, their responses refrain from calling into question the *relevance* of Boris' formulation for understanding the events in question. Rather, Keith and Gregg's respective utterances affirm that this characterization of 'who-we-are-and-what-we-are-doing' is indeed pertinent to establishing the sense of the events in question. However, while it is not contestable that this is, for the parties, a basketball training session, they highlight a possible disagreement as to what this device entails. As the interaction unfolds, it becomes clear that Keith and Gregg are not in agreement with Boris's account of the action as justifiable and that while all agree that the context is indeed 'training', just what this means in terms of correct actions by members of the team towards each other is treated as contestable.

Keith's repetition of Boris' formulation of the setting (line 6) is explicit and forceful. Moreover, he orients to the syntactic structure of Boris' utterance, re-using Boris' original phrase 'It's training man', but modifying it by drawing out and stressing the copula verb 'is'. In one way, Keith's repetition explicitly reinforces Boris' description of the event, yet the vocal emphasis placed on 'is' serves to highlight a problem *within* Boris' understanding of that membership device. Keith's stress on the word helps to shape his talk as not being (for instance) a mocking repetition of Boris. Instead, his utterance displays that he, too, has used the context of 'training' to find the sense of what happened, but has in the process drawn a different conclusion. Keith's reuse of Boris' syntactic frame, followed by an expletive

showing his exasperation at Boris, displays that he has employed the characterization of context offered by Boris, not to get Boris off the hook, as it were, but instead to find Boris' actions as accountably problematic. Thus while Boris invoked the omnirelevant device 'training', other members (of the device) invoke disagreement as to the organization and content of this device. This illustrates that while the invocation of an omnirelevant device may serve as controlling manoeuvre in terms of 'who-we-are-and-what-we-are-doing', just what that device entails in terms of 'what-we-do-in-relation-to-one-another-as-part-of-this-device' may be subject to disagreement and negotiation.

Gregg's response to Boris' account provides further indication of the way in which Gregg and Keith find a different moral sense of the events to the one Boris has proposed. After affirming Boris' description of the setting with 'Exactly' (line 8), Gregg asks Boris two questions which display Gregg's understanding of the relevance of the setting 'training' for making sense of what had happened on the court: 'What else is he gonna fucking do?' (line 8) and 'How is he gonna train soft?' (line 11). Both questions refer to Steve, and both contest Boris' attempt to render Steve's move to the basket as not being a legitimate 'teammate' action. The questions function in this way by linking an alternative predicate to the membership category 'team players' to that invoked by Boris. Recall that Boris had used the context of 'training' to make relevant the 'teammate' – 'teammate' SRP and an associated norm of conduct regarding teammates' mutual obligations to refrain from displaying overt aggression toward one another. In contrast to this use of context, Keith and Gregg treat the setting as making relevant a different obligation for players: that of 'training hard'. This orientation is explicitly displayed in Gregg's second question to Boris: 'How is he gonna train soft?'. The utterance, through its syntactical design as a reverse polarity question (RPQ) (Koshik 2005), is hearable as asserting that Steve should *not* train soft. The question invokes the undesirability of 'training soft' and, by contrast, the desirability of hard play as predicates of 'category (player) doing appropriate action (training)'. This then, makes these predicates relevant to establishing the moral sense of Steve's play where, unlike Boris, Steve was doing appropriate actions as a 'team player doing training'.

Boris' first attempt to justify his action by formulating the setting has been met with strong resistance, both by the coach and by another player (Keith). In his next utterance (line 12), Boris launches a second attempt to justify himself through invoking further layers of institutional categorization.

3.3. *Layering Category Membership in the Moral Ordering of an Omnirelevant Device*

Boris' response (line 12) to Gregg's questions is comprised of a 'no'-preface and a subsequent clarifying statement. This 'no' works as a discourse marker that rejects Keith and Gregg's incorrect understanding of Boris' prior utterance in line 5². The remainder of Boris' utterance, 'we're on the same team', clarifies and makes explicit what he had been trying to convey in his use of the device 'training' – that is, his co-incumbency with Steve of the 'teammates' SRP and the set of obligations they have toward one another within that pairing. In producing this misunderstanding clarification, Boris both displays his recognition of the normative rule that Gregg and Keith have taken to follow from his formulation of the activity as 'training' (i.e., 'players should train hard'), and rejects it as the *relevant* rule for understanding the events in question here. His 'no'-prefaced utterance, then, rather than functioning to agree (negatively) with Gregg's RPQ in line 11 (which would be the 'preferred' response projected by the question (Koshik 2005)) rejects the moral relevance of the setting that has been proffered by Gregg and Keith.

This second, more explicit attempt by Boris to categorize himself and Steve as 'teammates' during the time the controversial actions occurred is flatly rejected by Gregg in line 14. Since Boris' justification of his action depends upon his claim that he and Steve were co-incumbents of a 'teammate' – 'teammate' SRP, Gregg's rejection of this assertion rejects a predicate of the co-incumbency. In rejecting Boris' claim, Gregg displays an orientation to organizing the players via a set of different membership categories, 'colour teams'³ (i.e., 'red team' and 'black team'). This re-categorization involves a process of duplicative organization where the category 'team players' itself becomes a membership categorization device, made up of the categories 'red team' and 'black team'. While this device is still within the omnirelevant device 'training', the categorization of the players within that device to different colour teams reconfigures the organization of the device such that, for the purposes of the activity, the players are members of *different/opposing* teams. Crucially for the moral work being done here, there exists what Sacks (1995) terms 'partitioning inconstancy' between the device 'training' and the device 'team players'. By partitioning inconstancy is

² For a discussion on the use of 'no' as a discourse marker, and specifically as a means of managing hearers' misunderstandings of a speaker's previous turn, see Lee-Goldman (2011).

³ For the duration of the practice activity during which the altercation between Steve and Boris occurred, the players had been divided into different teams. The players wear reversible singlets to the practice sessions, one side black and the other red, allowing them to be grouped together into easily recognizable 'colour teams'.

meant that those members partitioned together into some category using one of these devices do not necessarily remain together when using the other. While Boris and Steve are partitioned into the same category – ‘team players’ – by reference to the omnirelevant ‘training’ device, when the category ‘team players’ is made into a device for this activity, they are partitioned into separate categories (different ‘colour teams’). In the activity in question, the ‘red team’ and the ‘black team’ are not co-incumbents of the category ‘teammates’ for the local in situ occurrence of the action. At this point, then, the omnirelevant category ‘teammates’ is made *extrinsic* to the particular action on court and so the relationship between Boris and Steve can be understood by the SRP ‘opponent’ – ‘opponent’. This category pairing involves a different set of moral rights and obligations between the two members than that made relevant by the ‘teammate’ – ‘teammate’ pairing. That is, the *operative* (Sacks 1995; Butler & Fitzgerald 2010) category and device for doing and interpreting this action is ‘opponents’ and, as such, ‘playing hard’ is a required and valued predicate of this category in this device. The selection of an alternative categorization device thus results in a very different normative orientation to Steve’s aggressive play, and seeks to undercut the legitimacy of Boris’ angry response.

Although hard physical play is clearly normatively valued in this setting, its status is not unambiguous. The next section demonstrates how this norm may itself be subjected to further members’ reasoning.

3.4. *Moral Ordering of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Categories*

At line 15, Boris launches what appears to be a new line of argumentation. He produces a description of Steve’s action that is understandable as a counter-complaint (the utterance ‘I understand he turns but he’s going like this’, combined with a gesture that constitutes a ‘bodily’ or embodied ‘quote’ (Keevallik 2010) of Steve throwing an elbow, timed to coincide with the word ‘this’). Second, rather than continuing to attempt to assert the relevance of the ‘teammates’ device over the ‘opponents’ device that Gregg and Keith have proposed as a more relevant one for making sense of what happened, Boris instead produces an account of Steve’s action that draws upon the very norm of physical play invoked by the ‘opponents’ device. After briefly disputing the facticity of Boris’ description of Steve’s conduct (line 16), Gregg calls for the players’ attention (line 19), abandons the current line of argument regarding the nature of Steve’s action, and begins a fresh attempt at resolving the ultimate issue of Boris’ ball-throwing outburst (lines 21-25). In doing so, Gregg returns to his earlier

strategy of attempting to characterize Steve's performance as good, hard physical play. Interestingly, however, rather than reinvoking the 'opponents' SRP and its associated norm of hard play to constitute the moral sense of Steve's action, Gregg instead produces an utterance that draws upon the very category membership that he had disputed when used by Boris: Steve's and Boris' co-incumbency of the 'team players' category and their corresponding 'teammate' – 'teammate' relationship. Here Gregg offers a reconfigured 'teammate – teammate' SRP, the pairing Boris had used to imply that Steve had breached his moral responsibilities, in order to show that it was *Boris* who had failed to act in accordance with normative expectations.

The form of Gregg's utterance to Boris in lines 21-25 (to paraphrase, 'If Steve had done something like that on Saturday (i.e., during a competitive league game against an opposing team member), you would have congratulated him, but today he is doing it against you and you are responding angrily') employs a 'moral discrepancy device' (Housley and Fitzgerald, 2009). Such devices formulate the absence of one event, given the occurrence of a relevant prior event, as an accountable moral failing. Their availability is based upon the conventional recognition, outlined above, that two sequential actions are normatively tied together, such that if the first part of the pair occurs, the second can reasonably be expected to follow. The sequential pair of normatively tied events that functions as a sense-making resource in this case could be paraphrased 'performance of (good) hard physical play by one player → appreciative response by that player's teammates'. By invoking this device, then, Gregg employs the 'teammates' SRP first suggested by Boris to in fact find Boris's response to Steve's action as accountably morally problematic. Gregg's move here invokes a moral discrepancy device in relation to an *extrinsic* setting, on this occasion the attempt to transpose a set of normatively paired categories from one setting to another. By referring to a particular time ('Saturday'), Gregg's utterance invokes a specific social setting, 'league games', which in turn implies a host of further categories, predicates and standardized relationships of a different omnirelevant setting. The sequential pair of events 'performance of hard physical play by one player → appreciative response by teammates' is relevant to such a setting where the team is playing a competitive game against a league opponent. Gregg's utterance, then, attempts to draw upon the available normatively tied pair in 'league game' settings ('our team' – 'opposing team') to render Boris' angry outburst as a morally accountable *absence* of an appropriate response to a teammate's commendable play.

However, while Boris' response (lines 26-27) displays his acceptance of the accuracy of the normative pairing for a different context as formulated in Gregg's utterance, he rejects this explanation as applicable to the setting here and now. In pointing out the difference between a league game and a training session – that a game involves 'another team' (line 26) –, Boris disputes the categorial logic of transposing this rule of conduct drawn from one setting, unmodified, to another. In effect, he suggests that by attempting to invoke the rule of conduct relevant to 'Saturday' here and now, Gregg misunderstands the reason why Boris would celebrate Steve's aggressive play during the game on Saturday. The reason being that, given the setting, Steve's aggressive play would necessarily be directed toward a member of another team. In the device 'training', however, such aggressive action aimed at a 'teammate' is not the same thing, and therefore the sequential norm drawn from the game-context simply, for Boris, *should* not apply.

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

At this point, the dispute devolves into flat contradiction. Boris then makes an 'epistemic downgrade' (Heritage 2012) of his assertion that Steve had thrown an elbow, conceding that his understanding of Steve's action may have been mistaken (lines 43-44). By admitting possible epistemic fallibility, Boris positions himself as potentially *factually* mistaken, rather than *morally* culpable. This is accepted as an adequate concession for the purposes of moving toward a resolution by Gregg, who responds by producing a concession himself (lines 48-51). Gregg's concession displays an understanding that both Steve and Boris had some kind of

legitimate motivational foundation for their actions. In effect, Boris' concession allows Gregg to accomplish something of a footing change: having secured adequate assent from Boris, Gregg now moves from a 'disputant' in the argument to its 'arbitrator', with both roles evidently being provided for by the 'coach' category. That is to say, while the particulars of the device may be unpacked by members of the device within the institutional context, at some point, the unpacking and parsing of the content and organization of the device must be brought to a close until the next time, and there may well be a category (i.e., 'coach') predicated with the action of bringing such negotiation to a close.

4. Conclusion: Institutional Culture in Action

In this paper, we have focused on an extended analysis of a single interactional event in order to examine the way categories are layered and entwined within morally accountable actions within and as part of institutional work. Using an on-court argument during a basketball training session, we highlighted and traced how institutionally relevant categories and devices were invoked, configured and reconfigured in the process of accounting for some action and how this reasoning reveals an orientation to a multilayered organization of institutional relevancies which may be brought to bear on a current activity. Here the invocation of the omnirelevant device 'training' provided a categorially-based source for the explanation of some action but also provided a resource to be reconfigured to contest the explanation through further distal and extrinsic devices and category relations. As such the configuring and reconfiguring of category and action within the interaction highlights the kaleidoscopic quality of a 'gestalt contexture' (Watson 2015) in action.

In this instance the kaleidoscopic quality of members' category work shifted around institutionally organized categories and actions as they become morally infused within the interaction as the event was progressively defined, challenged, and clarified. Thus, in both establishing the sense of the event and negotiating the moral implications of their accounts of the event, members were shown to possess a fine-grained nuanced orientation to institutional moral predicates and expectations distributed around the various relevant categories, their actions, their actions in relation to other categories and their actions in relation to the setting. That is to say, as the members unpacked the moral, practical and conceptual issues that arose in the process of contesting the 'moral facts' of a piece of problematic behaviour, the members displayed a fine-grained understanding of their action as *institutionally* situated.

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