Football as Work: The New Realities of Professional Women Footballers in England

by

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DECLARATION

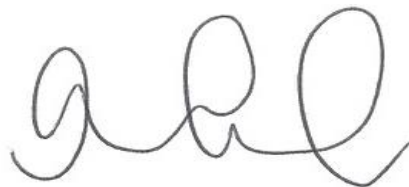**For the award of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)**

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ABSTRACT

In 2011, the Football Association (FA) the national governing body of football in England, launched the first semi-professional league for women. The inception of the FA Women's Super League (FA WSL), created the opportunity for football as work for its elite women footballers, in an occupational field tied historically to a highly masculinist and thus, gender exclusive culture. In 2018, the FA WSL adopted full-time professional status. The professionalisation of women's football in England has provided both the opportunity to offer insight into football as work for women and examine the workplace and employment policies available to professional women footballers. Ambiguity exists between the growing professionalisation of women's football and the precarious work conditions in which players operate. The low visibility and status afforded to women's football means that research on women working as professional footballers remains particularly limited. Ergo, the outcomes and consequences of professionalisation in England are largely unknown.

This research examines the experiences of women working as professional footballers in England. Drawing upon the theoretical apparatus of Pierre Bourdieu, the research investigates how professional women footballers learn the values and dispositions (habitus) of the intrinsically male dominated football field and incorporate this into their practice. A qualitative approach was undertaken which involved conducting 30 semi-structured interviews with professional women footballers. This study employs a qualitative interpretative framework that allows for

an in-depth understanding of football as work for women in England, acknowledging participants' realities and perspectives. Key themes examined here include, demographic information, operating with dual career/education, life in Women's Super League, contracts, policy, life and identity as a player and post-career considerations.

The key findings of this research demonstrate women are unprepared for their new, highly gendered careers as professional women footballers. The prospect of a professional football career means women embody professional expectations of clubs and the FA. The roles, remits and expectations placed on players are increasingly complex and dynamic, placing obligations on players personal/private lives. Women are mixed into an existing system of professional football, with limited policy consideration for their needs as women professional footballers. A key contribution of this research is the neglect of essential employment and workplace policy such as education, maternity leave and post-career options. This neglect reflects the disempowered position of professional women footballers, who are devoted to *making it* as a professional footballer. The contribution of this research identifies implications for those players highly invested in their career as a professional footballer, once their short careers reach a conclusion.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

BAME	Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic
DCMS	Digital, Culture, Media, Sport
EA	Equality Act
EC	European Commission
ET	Engineering Technology
FA	Football Association
FA WSL	Football Association Women's Super League
FIFA	Fédération Internationale de Football Association
FIFPro	International Federation of Professional Footballers
LGBTTQQIAAP	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transsexual, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, Ally, Pansexual
MBL	Major League Baseball
NBA	National Basketball Association
NFL	National Football League
PFA	Professional Footballers' Association
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics
TASS	Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme
UEFA	Union of European Football Associations
WFA	Women's Football Association

INTRODUCTION

Football developed as a codified sport by men and for men at the start of the 19th century (Pfister, 2015). Thus, historically, football in England has been a profoundly male domain across many contexts, from coaching, playing, to journalism and fandom (Pope, 2011). Men's football was transformed in 1888, by the legalisation of professionalism when the Football League formed (Lewis, 1997). Women's football operated in more ambiguous circumstances, although popular during World War One, the Football Association (FA) banned women playing at affiliated grounds in 1921. The ban would last 50 years, and it has been argued elsewhere, that the ban marginalised women's football socially, culturally and economically (Williams, 2006). Women's football continued in an underground fashion and formalised into a league structure after the formation of the Women's Football Association in 1969. The FA took control of women's football in 1993 and began to promote it, however, it would take a further 18 years for women football players to be offered payment in England. The formation of the first semi-professional league in England for women, the FA Women's Super League (FA WSL) in 2011, led to increased media attention of women's football, income from sponsorship and, significantly for this research, the payment of professional women players. Thus, as Williams (2013) suggests, making a living as a football player is no longer the exclusive domain of men.

Women's football is rapidly developing. Despite this rapid growth, the wider impact of this expansion on sport and society in a more general sense remains lacking in empirical research. In 2017, International Federation of Professional Footballers

(FIFPro), the world players union, commissioned quantitative research conducted by the University of Manchester. A total of 3,295 elite women footballers were surveyed from across the world on their employment conditions. Data highlighted concerns of players, including: childcare, economic remuneration, contract length and post-career playing options. What stands out within the data, is elite women footballers operate within inconsistent and insecure workplaces. Therefore, a more developed understanding of workplace concerns of women footballers becomes pertinent. The above concerns can be considered examples of disparities that can directly affect how well women footballers do their job. Perhaps, more importantly, workplace concerns that could present challenges in individuals non-work life and post-career.

Given the lack of empirical research to date, the data generated by FIFPro is critical to the furtherance of knowledge and both framing and understanding employment policy of the women's game. Despite the importance of FIFPro's research there remains little attention paid to how players understand their employment and work-life conditions, or how they internalise these circumstances. Therefore, a deeper understanding must be generated of the consequences of lived employment conditions. Moreover, it is important to gain some sociological understanding, qualitatively speaking, of the extent which players interpret their new working conditions.

Football can now be considered a career opportunity for women in England. Indeed, analysis of football as work for women in England becomes particularly pertinent as the sport has undergone rapid evolution as a result of professionalisation in 2011.

The establishment of the FA WSL in March 2011, the first semi-professional league for women in England, can be considered a watershed moment. The FA WSL, initially operating as a summer league aimed to provide elite women footballers with space in the sporting calendar. Moreover, the FA WSL offered an opportunity for women to create an identity in the overwhelmingly male dominated sport of football. Since the formation of the FA WSL it has been subject to various reconfigurations. The most recent restructure (2018/19) required all clubs in the FA WSL to move to full-time status. Given the relative infancy of the FA WSL, and professional women's football in England, very little is known about the professional careers of women footballers, and how they experience their new profession.

In 2017, the 'Lionesses' (England women senior team) broke previous television records of 2 million, as 4 million people watched their semi-final defeat to the Netherlands in the European Championships 2017 (Sweney, 2017). The defeat in the European Championship and the semi-final defeat in the World Cup in Canada 2015, can be considered significant turning points for women's football in England, in terms of media attention and complex notions of celebrity. More simply, there are two sides to the research, on one hand the historical and current precariousness that exists, and on the other, the widening of potential, possibility and perspectives. Given the exponential growth of both the media and social media in the last decade, a need exists to contribute to this gap in research. With this in mind, through the sociological apparatus of Pierre Bourdieu, the careers of professional women footballers in England are examined in this research.

Although this thesis makes a contribution to the sociological study of women's sport, it does not present a feminist analysis. In agreement with Macbeth (2004), much existing research on women's football is grounded in feminist theory, that collectively, provides a narrow focus. It would be counterproductive to produce a feminist account that may conceivably reduce the workplace concerns of professional women footballers to women's problems. Although, it would be remiss not to acknowledge feminist theory when researching women, it must be considered that most elite women footballers do not take up the career of football to be part of a feminist agenda. Alternatively, the thinking tools of Bourdieu are employed throughout the thesis to explain how professional women footballers incorporate professionalism into their practice and how they are taken in by the game. In order to gain an understanding of players interpretations of their new careers, semi-structured interviews were undertaken in an attempt to add to knowledge in this neglected area.

This research examines football as paid work for women. The category 'woman footballer' is unlikely to be homogenous but as a 'class' is – while yet to be investigated – likely to be comprised of individuals differentiated by age, sexuality, ethnicity and social background (Crompton, 2006). There are few examples of professionalised elite women's team sports. Therefore, the focus on football as work for women, provides a unique opportunity to situate and investigate, a new career opportunity for women.

At this juncture it is necessary to outline important terms that are used throughout the thesis. According to FIFA's definition, a professional footballer is someone who has a written contract with a club and is paid more than the expense they incur for football activity (Williams, 2006; FIFPro, 2017). In this research a professional footballer is considered a full-time footballer, who is paid for their contribution and accordingly does not have another form of employment. Interestingly the category of semi-professional does not exist in FIFA definitions (Williams, 2006). In this research, a semi-professional player is considered a part-time footballer who broadly falls between the spectrum of professional and amateur. Meaning players earn a meagre salary and most players would have to subsidise these earnings through a dual career that may or may not be football related (Dunn, 2016). At the time of interview 27 from 30 players in this research were full-time professional players, subsequently three from 30 players were semi-professional, two were considering a full-time contract and one was in a dual career.

In this research the professionalisation of women's football in England means the previously improbable professional woman footballer, transformed in England with the inception of the FA WSL. Professionalisation means all players in the research were being remunerated for their football endeavours. Moreover, budgets at women's clubs are increasing, particularly clubs affiliated strongly with a men's club. At the centre of establishment of the FA WSL was commercial sustainability to ensure successful FA WSL clubs were those with the best business model (Fielding-Lloyd et al. 2018). Women's teams affiliated with professional men's clubs can take advantage of both commercial and marketing expertise. A focus on business

objectives mirrors commercial narratives relating to financial viability, consumption and profit (Fielding-Lloyd et al. 2018). Therefore, in this research commercialisation represents an attempt to attract more investment both in an economical sense and the time given to commercial aspects of women's football, for example social media, branding and sponsorship. To date, the focus on the elite level of the game in England has been minimal, mitigated by low status, limited visibility, and the amateur traditions that have dominated the game. The FA sought to address these circumstances with the development of the FA WSL, and generating work opportunities for professional women footballers, therefore, it is a ripe area of investigation.

The focus on football as work highlights an employment situation which is precarious and insecure. Previous research on men's football details an unpredictable work place (Parker, 2000; McGillivray & McIntosh, 2006; Roderick, 2006; Wood et al. 2017). Yet arguably, women's work, and football as work for women more specifically, is fraught with further insecurities, which will be discussed in detail throughout this research. It is a contention of this inquiry to explore why and how, women attempt to forge a career in this occupation. A recent report in the Telegraph (Wigmore, 2017) detailed 88% of FA WSL players earn less than £18k per year. Therefore, analysis of football clubs as workplaces, becomes particularly pertinent, when we consider a career that offers individuals, at best, ten years of economic security, a short career and limited post-career options (McGillivray et al. 2005).

This introductory chapter has two components. Firstly, in order to contextualise the study, my background and career will be traced as a former professional footballer. This aspect includes outlined reflections bound within personal pronouns. Secondly, the aim, structure and content of the thesis is outlined.

Background to the study

My initial interest in researching the work lives of professional women footballers stemmed from my experiences as a professional footballer. I played football during the transition from amateur to professional and it was often reinforced how lucky we were to have the opportunity to be professional. Indeed, I believed that to be true, it was something I never thought would be possible, something of a dream, more than ambition.

I played for several clubs in my career, including Everton, Leeds United, AZ Alkmaar, Bristol Academy and Liverpool, between the ages of 10 and 29. As a young player, becoming a professional footballer and being paid to play was impossible. Despite this, I was not deterred from demonstrating conduct deemed in keeping with professional expectations outlined by both coaches and peers. Training most nights after school, inevitably meant school work adopting a lower priority. In school, my teachers were perplexed when I missed classes for away trips and asked for extensions on my deadlines, as professional football as a career for a woman did not exist in their opinion. There was no culture or precedent of pursuing and

prioritising elite football. I knew this. However, as a young athlete I considered myself professional in all but name.

Daily life as a young player in Everton's first team was emotionally and physically intense. Off the field, I attempted to balance school work, a social life and an increasingly demanding training and playing schedule. On the field, I recall my first session of pre-season, running without the ball, being physically dragged around by a senior player. The physically intense sessions were worth it when I made my debut against Charlton aged 16. I was immediately subject to a rather heavy tackle – to which my manager responded with 'welcome to the first team!'. Those *feel-good* moments when receiving praise and positive feedback from teammates and coaches for executing a piece of skill, a good pass or scoring a goal were of immeasurable value.

By contrast, the feeling of a bad performance, losing a cup final, or receiving criticisms from coaches and teammates, equally endure in my memory. Alongside these feelings, being fat-tested, weighed, your body under constant scrutiny, was something new and unnerving. The fear of underperforming on the field, in fitness tests, or putting on a pound in weight were never far from my mind. I played with a very raw aggression, something I attribute to my working-class background, playing with boys, and at times, an emotionally tough upbringing. Football was my escape, as it is described by many players in that way. A handful of coaches, referees and parents disapproved of the way I played the game. I always had the feeling perhaps, it was not a feminine enough approach to playing the game. On many occasions

match days and training sessions – coaches suggested my aggression was arrogance, a bad attitude. Both stigmas stuck with me for some time. A question of attitude 'did I want to make it as an England international?' 'what *is* your priority?' – questions such as these misread my attitude for fear. Playing football meant everything to me, I became desperate to prove I had a good attitude and a professional approach to the game. Often acting in ways that did not reflect my emotions at the time. I couldn't show my true self, or ask for help when required, because my perception was that such 'weaknesses' had no place in football.

Signing my first full-time, professional contract was a significant moment in my life. My life as a professional footballer at AZ Alkmaar in Holland began with increased intensity in training, more intense than I'd ever trained, and I considered myself to be a physically fit, well-conditioned player. The intensity was something your body adjusted to. The pressure increased to be not only physically fit, but mentally tough. I wanted to demonstrate that my professionalism and commitment extended beyond what was accepted and prove my worth to the team. We were a team who were unbeaten in the league for two years, league winners, and prestige was attached to playing for my first fully professional club. At times, the consequences of such pressures were serious and unforeseen. I would often under eat and over train, searching for the perfect physique that I had convinced myself would improve my performance. Yet, I was only focused on preparation for the next training session, game or encounter with my coach and teammates. The importance of maintaining professional behaviour was often outlined to women footballers. Perhaps we were viewed as guests at the men's club.

Returning home to play in the FA WSL was a decisive moment in my career in many ways. I signed for a new club, Bristol Academy. The newly formed club had assembled a good squad and we reached the FA Cup final in our first season. However, questions surrounding my attitude returned. My professionalism was questioned by the manager, as I dared to question his. The team was expected to behave in certain ways, professional behaviour was necessary to ensure positive public perceptions, the league was new, and as players and clubs, we had to generate and maintain public interest. Yet, professional guidelines were not followed by the coach. During such times, I lost faith with the team and the ethos of the coach. My love for the game slowly unravelled. Daily life at Bristol became increasingly difficult and after a number of clashes with the coaching staff, I finished my career early, on loan at Liverpool. My time as a professional footballer highlighted the lack of employment, social and mentally supportive policies in place for women players. My experiences of working as a professional footballer meant exposure to moments of isolation and a loss of autonomy which in part fuelled my ambition to undertake this research, although there were other provocations.

The women's game is on an upwards trajectory, yet my experiences as a professional footballer sensitised me to workplace concerns that players remain unprepared for. My exposure to professional football renders me uniquely positioned to undertake this research. The uncertainty surrounding a career as a professional footballer remains a persistent feature in the women's game. The precariousness and pressures in this new career are bound up in notions of professionalism. To date, there is scant understanding of work-life and workplace policies for

professional women footballers. Consequently, professional women's football and football as work for women in England, becomes a pertinent area of research. With this in mind, this study provides an original critical examination of the employment policies of professional women footballers and their lived experiences in professional football.

Aim and objectives

The aim of this thesis is to examine football as work for women in England. The thesis consists of seven chapters, which are summarised briefly below. A review of literature is undertaken in chapters one and two. The theory and methodology process is outlined in chapter three, while the key findings and research analysis is provided in chapters four, five and six and chapter seven is the conclusion. My main research objectives are:

1. How do women professional women footballers 'do' their work role and why are their work roles gendered in this way?
2. What employment and workplace policies exist to support women footballers in their new career?
3. What are the implications of professionalisation on the lives of professional women footballers?

Structure of the thesis

Chapter One

Chapter one explores the historical developments of women's football in England. This chapter sets out to contextualise and trace women's football history. Attention is given to the way in which women's football developed and how women were excluded from mainstream practice. This is coupled with analysis on the impact of women's exclusion from football, which marginalised women both socially and politically. The chapter then examines the development of the FA WSL and the erosion of amateur values in elite women's football. The licencing system of the FA is analysed and critiqued, highlighting current problems with the tendering system utilised by the FA. This chapter reveals evidence of increased commercialisation of women's football and how the focus of the FA and FA WSL appears to be a market based one, in line with UK neoliberal objectives of sport. It is argued, this approach is in conflict with FA rhetoric and positioning of women's football as the purer version of the game. Close attention is paid to *being* a professional and professional work to provide context within this study can be located. The theoretical lens of Bourdieu is used to bring to life how players act in a professional manner, and how such behaviours impact the field in which they operate.

Chapter Two

Chapter two delineates the changing conditions of work for women. Workplace policies that have a pivotal role for women in the workplace are examined in detail. Analysis extends to complex and contradictory situations at work for women, questioning our basic assumptions of how equitable and effective policy is. Football clubs can now be considered as workplaces for women footballers, and as such attention is given to employment policy for women. Women in the same career as men, face very different career situations. Football clubs are insecure and precarious workplaces, a number of ideas are examined in relation in insecure work which are emphasised in chapters four, five and six. The second half of this chapter examines the intricacies of football as a career, performances at work, career termination and consequences. To date, scant attention has been paid to football as work for women, as such the consequences of this new career remain unknown.

Chapter Three

Chapter three sets out and justifies the theoretical thinking tools of Pierre Bourdieu employed to organise and interpret the research data. The first section of the chapter discusses the conceptual thinking tools of Bourdieu. The second section discusses how the study was undertaken, from the initial research idea through to the data analysis. Throughout the research process, undertaking interviews, subsequent periods of analysis, and writing up, the relational thinking of Bourdieu is reflected on. This study was interpretative in nature, and Bourdieu's thinking tools shed light on

how it was impossible to separate myself from the research object. This approach was useful given my position as a former professional footballer.

Chapter Four

Chapter four is the first of three results chapters, which serve to highlight the key contribution of this research. This first results chapter draws on the interpretations of players in their new career, which are contextualised in existing literature. Specifically, this chapter addresses how players develop their feel for the game and operate within their new career, Moreover, their feelings and expectations as professional footballers. Close attention is given to the tension between expectation and reality within their workplaces.

Chapter Five

Chapter five examines employment and workplace policies of professional women footballers. More specifically, this chapter provides new insights into the work-life and workplace concerns of players and explores the value of employment policy and consequences of deficient policy. A central point of this chapter is the occupational fragility of professional women footballers, under increased pressure, with limited information or policy in place to support them in their new career, or in post-career planning.

Chapter Six

Chapter six details the changing dynamics of the field in professional women's football. Chapters four and five contextualise the insecure, contemporary work conditions of players, and their interpretation of their new reality. Therefore, this chapter examines and explores implications of increased commercialisation, ineffective employment policy and how increased pressure impacts individuals. An important consideration for this chapter is player perceptions, fully emerged in their new career and how this immersion relates to a loss of autonomy and increased wellbeing concerns.

Chapter Seven

The concluding chapter discusses the key issues examined in chapters four, five and six. The theoretical implications of the research are explored and related to the work of professional women footballers in England. This is combined with an analysis of the main strengths and limitations of the study. This chapter also considers further questions and considerations for future areas of study.

CHAPTER ONE: HISTORY OF WOMEN'S FOOTBALL IN ENGLAND

1.1 Introduction

To understand the contemporary context of professional women's football, it is necessary to analyse its historical substance. Dominant interpretations of football have predominately been male centric, both publicly and in research; men focusing on male sport. Traditionally, football offered the opportunity to gain and demonstrate hegemonic masculinity, meaning football developed as a sport considered inappropriate for women (Pfister, 2015). The well-publicised growth in participation in women's football, promoted by the FA, often obfuscates the formal and informal practice and policies that excluded women from football (Dunn & Welford, 2015). With this in mind, it is important to detail the history of the women's game in England in an attempt to provide context to the current position of the FA WSL and its professional players.

1.2 History of women's football in England

In an attempt to reposition women in the context of football in England there is a small but growing body of literature which relates to the history of women's football, most of which examines the historical development of the game, and the challenges faced by women in its unfolding (see Williams, 2003; 2006; 2007; Welford, 2008; Dunn & Welford, 2015). Central to previous scholarly inquiry are the stereotypes and

prejudices experienced by women in football. Previous research argues, that football is a game played by men and invented by men (Pfister, 2015). However, football for women was hugely popular at the start of the twentieth century in the UK, reaching a peak during the first World War (Williams, 2014). Scholarship over the last two decades has detailed women's football history as discordant (see Williams, 2003; 2006; Welford, 2008; Bell, 2012; Dunn & Welford, 2015). There is much debate about when women started playing the game, with references to a female form of the game being played in a British colony in Hong Kong in 1840 (Williams, 2007). However, Macbeth's (2007) study on Scottish women's football reports the first matches were held in Scotland.

According to Williams (2006), the expansion of women's football organised by workers in 1914 was more pronounced in Britain than anywhere else. Perhaps the most recognisable team, Dick Kerr Ladies, have received sustained academic interest. Dick Kerr organised the first match proper on Christmas Day 1917 (Williams, 2003). It is worth highlighting the popularity of Dick Kerr Ladies, as an example of demand for women's football at the time. Dick Kerr, formed predominately by a group of female munitions workers in Preston, played St Helens at Goodison Park on Boxing Day 1920, where a reputed 53,000 attended and a further several thousand more outside (Giulianotti 1999; Williams, 2006; Griggs & Biscomb, 2010; Welford, 2011). It is documented during this period, that women's football drew in sizeable crowds and raised significant amounts of money for charity (Griggs & Biscomb, 2010).

Significantly, by 1922 there were approximately 150 women's teams in operation, playing regular games, albeit without a formal league structure (Williams, 2006). Importantly, women's football was not perceived to be a direct threat to the men's game, as there was no attempt to replicate the men's league structure and games were organised in different parts of the country in response to fundraising demand (Williams, 2007; Dunn & Welford, 2015). Following the First World War, women's football continued to develop, but this continuation left women's football in a precarious situation with the FA. Following increasing criticism from the press, and supported by medical professionals, football was thought unsuitable for women and a return to *normality* in the sexual division of labour was coveted, which fundamentally meant the exclusion of women from football (Pfister et al. 2002; Griggs & Biscomb, 2010; Dunn & Welford, 2015). Scholars suggest the English FA found the development of the women's game a threat to football as a man's game (Williams, 2003; 2006; Welford, 2008; Pfister, 2015). Perhaps indicative of the threat felt by the FA, was the ban on women playing football in 1921.

The FA formally banned women playing at FA grounds in 1921. The access to grounds controlled by the FA was used as an instrument of power to impede women's football (Pfister et al. 2002). The ban generated an uncertain juncture for women's football. The ban began on 5 December 1921 and was to last until 29 November 1971 (Williams, 2006). Giulianotti (1999) suggests a connection exists between the rise of women's football, and its threat to the preservation of the men's game. The access to playing grounds were a decisive factor in the struggle for women's football. Indeed, women's exclusion from football was not limited to

England. Cox and Pringle (2012) establish that two thirds of ruling national associations both in Europe and across the world banned women from playing football in the twentieth century. For example, the German Football Association (DfB) rejected women's participation in football for ethical and physiological reasons, arguing football would impede a woman's ability to bare children (Pfister et al. 2002). While the ban on women in Brazil came much later in the 1940s (Sequerra, 2014). Previous studies reveal women experienced the same marginalisation and exclusion across the world in an attempt to safeguard men's football (Cox & Pringle, 2012; Williams, 2013; Sequerra, 2014). Williams (2006), argues that the banning of women's football had consequences that not only limited women's opportunity to participate in football, but effectively marginalised the sport socially, culturally and economically.

Many of the current challenges faced by women's football, originate from 19th century understandings of codified physical activities that are culturally produced, and shaped by those who practice them. Therefore, football culture and taste (Bourdieu, 1984), have been historically shaped to (re)produce gender binary differences and understandings. The following FA statement on the ban imposed on women playing football, powerfully conveys the cultural discourse of football as a man's game: 'the game of football is quite unsuitable for females and should not be encouraged' (Harris, 2001: 23). What is being suggested here is the divergence of women who play football, or indeed, sports deemed masculine-appropriate. It is established from a variety of scholarship, that the ban on women playing on FA affiliated pitches was significant in shaping our cultural understandings of football,

and sport more generally for women (see Williams, 2003; Caudwell, 2011; Pfister, 2015).

Scholars argue at a time when women found space in the football field, and acquired meaningful capital, not only physical but symbolic and political, women's football gained momentum (Welford, 2008). The outbreak of the First World War provided opportunity for women to popularise the women's game, as men's competitive leagues were suspended between 1914-1919 (Sequerra, 2014). Therefore, before 1921, women's football existed as an unthreatening parallel form of entertainment, a sporting spectacle in its own right (Williams, 2006). Arguably, an aspect of the cultural marginalisation of women, was the supposed erosion of middle-class amateur values on which football rested upon (Williams, 2006). As suggested earlier, women's football drew large crowds and made considerable funds that were donated to charity, considered at the time to be highly patriotic.

Importantly, the focus on charity provided women with justification for participation by embodying patriotism (Pfister et al. 2002). However, according to Harris (2001) the funds raised by women playing football were believed by the FA to be used for other purposes, thus diluting amateurist values. Critically, the overlap and interconnection of culture and societal expectations, moreover, the marginalisation of women, is evident. Distinctions were made between men and women, within the moral and ethical amateur values placed on the sport of football. Moreover, variances between the sexes manifested in the cultural and societal expectations placed on women that limited both access and opportunity which were available to

men. Thus, as the men's game moved rapidly towards professionalisation, the women's game was deemed culturally and morally unacceptable.

The meanings and practices of women's football essentially altered in 1921. Although it was impossible to ban women playing unofficially those who participated after the ban, where perceived as behaving in a manner inappropriate for women (Griggs & Biscomb, 2010). Women were understood as a homogenous group despite both commonalities and differences existing in the experiences of women. In this way, the term 'inappropriate behaviour' applied to all women who engaged in masculine sports (Williams, 2006). Inappropriate behaviour refers to a conflict between athletic pursuits defined as masculine, for example playing football, and expectations of feminine appropriate practice, such as caring for domestic matters, and the family (Scraton et al. 1999). Therefore, it is unsurprising given the association between football and masculinity, women who enter the football field experience conflict and are forced to evaluate their position (Griggs & Biscomb, 2010). The ban on women playing football was not a result of a single category of social relations, or a particular social threat, such as gender, but also includes, sexuality, class and the idea of 'proper' feminine conduct of women (Williams, 2003), perhaps in different contexts, can be conceived as pertinent today.

Themen (2016) conceptualises this more concretely, arguing that physicality and heterosexual athleticism can be considered to underpin discourse, which hegemonic masculinity is utilised as a proxy for a competitive advantage. Consequently, female participation in physical exercise was limited to activities which were understood to

be 'suitable' for the female physique. To contextualise, socially scripted gender roles which underline the political and social categories of men and women, were significant in the development and acceptance of women's football (ibid).

It is well established from previous research that the popularity, status and support of women's football in the 19th century never returned (Williams, 2006; Bell, 2012). Consequently, in the 19th century in both England and Europe, football participation manifested as a pastime predominately of men (Pfister, 2010). The findings from these studies suggest the historically lesser position of women appears particularly pertinent given the contemporary social, cultural and economic concerns of professional women footballers globally (FIFPro, 2017). Women's relative inferiority in football, means that for women to enter the male dominated world of football, they have to challenge dominant notions of femininity, and female appropriate sport. For example, Scraton's et al. (1999) research revealed consistent themes across a sample of elite European women footballers. Players identified their femininity and sexuality being brought into question, creating a situation that reinforced power relationships in their football career. Indeed, women who attempt to enter the masculine space of football are considered deviant (Scraton et al. 1999; Caudwell, 2011).

Previous research has established that the sexuality of women who play football is invariably questioned (Caudwell, 2011). Moreover, the relationship between women, sport, and sexuality can be considered a decisive factor in preventing the spread of women's sport. This view is supported by previous research, that reports women

who compete in football disclosed their sexuality in question (Cox & Thompson, 2001; Harris, 2005). While this thesis does not involve questions of sexuality, it would be remiss not to acknowledge its pertinence in the development of certain connotations that have historically shaped women's football. The negative stereotypes of women who play sport, predominately involves their sexuality, moreover, the idea that sport can potentially masculinise a woman's appearance serves to produce and reproduce social differences.

The historical and social marginalisation of women in football is inextricably tied to emergent, concurrent complications for women footballers (Williams, 2006). In 2003, football overtook netball as the most popular sport for women and girls (Welford, 2008). However, football at all levels is still not a taken-for-granted activity for women in England. Increased participation can often mask issues which continue to constrain women and girls in football. Despite a long history of involvement, change has been excruciatingly slow for women in football. For example, football coaching remains male dominated as 81% of qualified coaches in England are male, and previous research suggests women are significantly under-represented in leadership positions in organisations (Fielding-Lloyd & Meân, 2008; Welford, 2011; Lusted & Fielding-Lloyd, 2017). The focus of organisations such as the FA, have prioritised the development of the men's game in football, and more generally in other team sports, such as cricket (Lusted & Fielding-Lloyd, 2017).

The link with other team sports is an important one, as enhanced equality in individual sports is evident, for example, golf and tennis, that represent the first two

professionalised sports for women (Knoppers & Anthoniessen, 2003). More recently, all four tennis major tournaments agreed parity of prize money for both men and women, with Wimbledon last to agree in 2007 (Popovich, 2015). Both tennis and golf can be described as fundamentally middle-class sports. In support of this notion, Hargreaves (1994), argues historically, when women were permitted to compete in organised sport, they were often encouraged to play sports associated with white, middle and upper classes, with seemingly little physicality required. Sports then, are given meanings compatible and more readily, to emphasise feminine traits and expectations (Knoppers & Anthoniessen, 2003). Indeed, tennis and golf were sports played by women that seemingly did not require muscular strength or aggressiveness. The diminished positions of women are attributed to fundamental natural differences between men and women: the former seen as strong and competitive, whilst the latter weak and submissive (Matteucci, 2012).

1.3 The pathway to professionalism

Despite being officially excluded between the 1920s and 1960s, women's football continued in an underground fashion (Williams & Woodhouse, 1991; Griggs & Biscomb, 2010). It is likely the persistence of women was influenced by the women's liberation movement and second-wave feminism in the 1960s (Pope, 2011). These movements influenced the lives of women in the spheres of education, work and healthcare (ibid). A total of 48 clubs developed independently during this time (Welford, 2011). Consequently, the women's game formed an independent, separate governance body, the Women's Football Association in 1969. The WFA

introduced an official women's cup in 1970, the Mitre Challenge Trophy which attracted 71 entrants (Sequerra, 2014). In 1971, the FA lifted the ban on women playing football at affiliated stadiums, and the WFA represented the women's game from 1972 to 1993 (Bell, 2012). The end of the 50-year ban on women playing football in England was encouraged by UEFA, who had been concerned about the rise in women's football and their ability to manage and control the commercial product of the women's game, particularly in Italy and France where professional women's teams competed in leagues (Sequerra, 2014). The growth of professional women's football, outside of England in the 1970's can be characterised by three British women players, Sue Lopez, Edna Nellis and Rose Reilly who had to choose between a professional career in France and Italy and representing their country as international players (Williams, 2003).

The formation of the WFA in 1969 coincided with the rapid growth in women's football participation in England. As Williams (2003) notes, in one decade between 1969 and 1979, the number of clubs affiliated to the WFA increased six-fold. Although between 1980 and 1990 there appears to have been a plateau in women's teams. It is unclear from previous research and the WFA/FA figures, whether the dip reflected participation, inaccurate procedures for recording the number of teams, or both (Williams, 2003). In contrast to the apparent plateau in participation for women's football in the 1980's, the media became more interested in the sport, as the England women's team reached the semi-final of the European Competition for Women's Football in Norway (Williams, 2003; Sequerra, 2014). Despite the success of the England women's team and the growth in media interest, there are mixed reports on

the objectives and success of the WFA, yet what is clear, was their purpose to balance the direction of the women's game (Williams, 2007; Welford, 2008; Dunn, 2016).

The WFA was a voluntary organisation, and consequently encountered problems in both financing, and accommodating the growth of the sport (Lopez, 1997; Welford, 2008). A notable example of the WFA's financial difficulties occurred in 1980, as the WFA were forced to field only a senior England squad in international competition due to monetary complications, it was not until 1997 that junior England teams were reinstated for competition (Williams, 2003). Both Lopez (1997) and Dunn (2016) are critical of the WFA, and use the example of England's failure to qualify for first FIFA Women's World Cup in 1991 to highlight the failures and the need for a more professional approach. Despite the failure to qualify for the first World Cup, in 1991 the WFA launched the first women's national league in England, comprising of 24 clubs (Williams, 2003; Sequerra, 2014). However, according to Woodhouse et al. (2019) facilities in the amateur league were substandard and attendances were poor. Bell (2012) less critically of the WFA, suggests, despite these difficulties, women's football under the control of the WFA largely experienced self-governance, independence, and playing football without the permission of the FA.

The WFA relinquished control of women's football to the FA in 1993, who at the time had 450 member-clubs (Williams, 2003; Sequerra, 2014). The take-over was significant for women's football, as administration and organisation of football was centralised. Two examples of centralisation occurred in 1993 and 1994, as the FA

renamed the Mitre Challenge to the Women's FA Cup, and one year later in 1994, renamed the league to the FA Women's Premier League (FA WPL) (Williams, 2003; Sequerra, 2014). It has been argued elsewhere, the FA's takeover came at a time when men's football broke away from the Football League and planned a new league (Woodhouse et al. 2019). It is in the context of relinquishing control, and thus the commercial benefits of men's football, that the FA sought to gain control over elite women's football (ibid). Moreover, the FA take-over of women's football was influenced by criterion outlined by the Sports Council, who controlled public resources for sport, criterion stated, the FA and WFA must work closer together to secure future funding (Williams, 2003; Sequerra, 2014). Further pressure emerged on the FA as UEFA decided by a 39–1 majority in 1991 to recommend all member states to take responsibility for women's football (Brus & Trangbaek 2004; Williams, 2007; Welford, 2008). Indeed, despite resistance, increased participation and commercial viability of women's football, forced UEFA to take action and the FA responded (Williams, 2013).

Entanglement between women's football and the FA, meant a loss of self-determination for women, as centrally applied FA policies became normalised. Mergers in other sports became increasingly common. For example, despite some resistance, women's cricket merged with men's cricket in 1998. Similar to football, concerns were raised about a loss of autonomy, and the development of the game if women were to exist on the periphery (Velija et al. 2014). Indeed, concerns were justified, as the incorporation of women into the FA was not a smooth transition, and it was largely met with resistance in England (Williams, 2006). To put the WFA, FA,

merger into context, women were accommodated into their relative governing bodies in Germany, Norway, Denmark and Sweden in the early 1970s over two decades earlier.

1.4 Late modernity of women's football

The history of women's football is complex and contradictory. Although the FA assumed control of women's football in 1993, it was not until 2009 that plans were announced for the establishment of a semi-professional league. Attention in this section now turns to the late modernity of women's football and the significant events which helped shape professionalisation. Moreover, consideration is given to the erosion of amateur status and the creation of the FA WSL. Fundamental changes have taken place in women's football since the FA took control in 1993. In 1994, the FA introduced a pyramid system in women's football, which provided a link between the grassroots and elite level of the game (Sequerra, 2014). By 1998, Hope Powell, former England international, succeeded Ted Copeland as England manager, and Centres of Excellence for girls were established across England, a system already standardised in men's football (Woodhouse, 2002). In 2000, the FA began contemplating launching the first professional women's league in Europe (FA, 2001; Woodhouse et al. 2019). In this way, the FA attempted to increase participation and develop elite level football for women and girls by implementing structural changes.

In 2005, England were hosts to UEFA European Women's Football Championships (referred to below as Euro 2005) (Bell, 2012). This was the largest female-only sport

event held in the UK (Dunn, 2016). Research suggests, Euro 2005 was a significant moment for women's football in England that had the potential to transform the women's game (Bell, 2012; Williams, 2013). However, Bell's (2012) investigation into Euro 2005 provides a compelling argument of a missed opportunity to capitalise on the event. Bell (2012) concludes the gains made post-Euro 2005 in both participation and interest in women's football were not sustained, she argues a loss of impetus, problems with funding and a general lack of continuity and focus from the FA resulted in failure to capitalise on Euro 2005.

Despite increased participation figures, improved development pathways, and a league structure in the elite game, a number of issues endured post-Euro 2005. According to Sequerra (2014), this prompted the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to set up a committee to investigate the women's game. Despite a lack of robust evidence, the DCMS in 2006, recognised Euro 2005 as a watershed event (DCMS, 2006; Bell, 2012). DCMS reported a positive impact of Euro 2005 on women's football and promoted a discourse of growing equality. Bell (2012), provides a more critical analysis, stating post Euro 2005 gains were not sustained, and moreover, deep seated social and cultural barriers persist. Mega sports events such as European Championships, and World Cups are often cited as key to development by policy makers (Cornelissen et al. 2011). For example, the United Nations (2010), recognised sport as a tool to reduce gender inequality, promote education and environmental sustainability. Additionally, research suggests that mega event legacy can impact sport infrastructure, increased sport participation, development of sport clubs and sponsorship (Preuss, 2007).

The report released by DCMS in 2006 (DCMS, 2006) was significant in a number of ways. First, the report examined the support and financial backing of the women's game, second, it provided a guideline for potential policy improvement across women's football as a whole, and third, the report examined persistent barriers faced across all levels of women's football. Indeed, the committee arrived at important conclusions and located areas for necessary improvement, including funding, resource allocation, media and commercial support and societal attitudes. Yet the government could not produce compulsory recommendations as the FA is an autonomous, self-governing organisation. Perhaps, the most notable conclusion in the report, was in relation to future funding for the new Women's Super League (Bell, 2012). The FA concluded they required £3million of public money, each year, for five years, to successfully implement their Super League proposal. However, whilst DCMS recognised the potential benefits of Super League (SL), they rejected the request for public funding. DCMS argued as the FA recognise women's football as one of their priorities, the SL should be funded by the organisation (DCMS, 2006). Essentially, it is argued, public funding should not be used for commercial gain (Bell, 2012).

In sum, evidence suggested that whilst the FA asserted women's football as a priority, their actions appeared markedly different. Subsequently, elite women's football began to take a much more systematic and organised shape. However, research suggests, that women footballers in England largely continued to operate in an amateur way for some time (Bell, 2012; Williams, 2013; Dunn, 2016). In 2009, the FA issued 17 England internationals with central contracts of £16,000 p.a.

(Sequerra, 2014). This meant it became increasingly possible for a handful of elite international footballers to make a living from the game and acquire a certain amount of economic capital. Although, predominately players were largely functioning in an amateur capacity. In this way, the FA started to tentatively invest in women's football, and its elite players. It was assumed the investment would 'trickle down' to the base of the pyramid, grassroots football, an assumption that lacks substantive evidence. One important feature of investment concerns the emphasis on performance and results (Bell, 2012). The priority placed on performance, contradicts precedence given to development outcomes as professionalisation becomes tangible, with the formation of the FA WSL. In sum, although professionalisation can be considered a significant advancement for women's football, it has not been a linear process.

It has been argued throughout this section, that women's football has experienced an uneven, low priority trajectory in England. Connections exist between the low priority of women's football, the FA take over in 1993, and their better-late-than-never strategy for women's football, published fifteen years later in 2008. Amongst other objectives, the strategy intended to construct a new league to begin in 2010 the FA WSL. Initially scheduled for 2010 - the FA WSL was delayed until 2011, due to economic downturn (Bell, 2012; Dunn, 2016). Whilst the FA WSL strategy indicated commitment to all levels of the women's game, there was a substantial focus on elite performance (Bell, 2012). The FA objectives included: to create and retain England national team players (to stop players going abroad); improve commercial opportunity; provide football as paid work for players and strengthen pathways for elite players (FA, 2008).

The FA WSL model was fundamentally different to the men's game, it was constructed to mirror, but not reproduce, or compete with men's football (Bell, 2012). The differences between elite men and women's football were clear, as FA WSL teams would operate as franchises. Licences were available to teams who met FA constructed criteria, operating within a centralised function, through FA regulated practice. The FA could not, and did not control the men's game, commercially, or financially. As such, the FA appeared to approach the FA WSL with direct control, both financially, and commercially. The formation of the FA WSL meant a changing dynamic and relations in the field of professional football, a dismantling of amateur rules, and an erosion of amateur players.
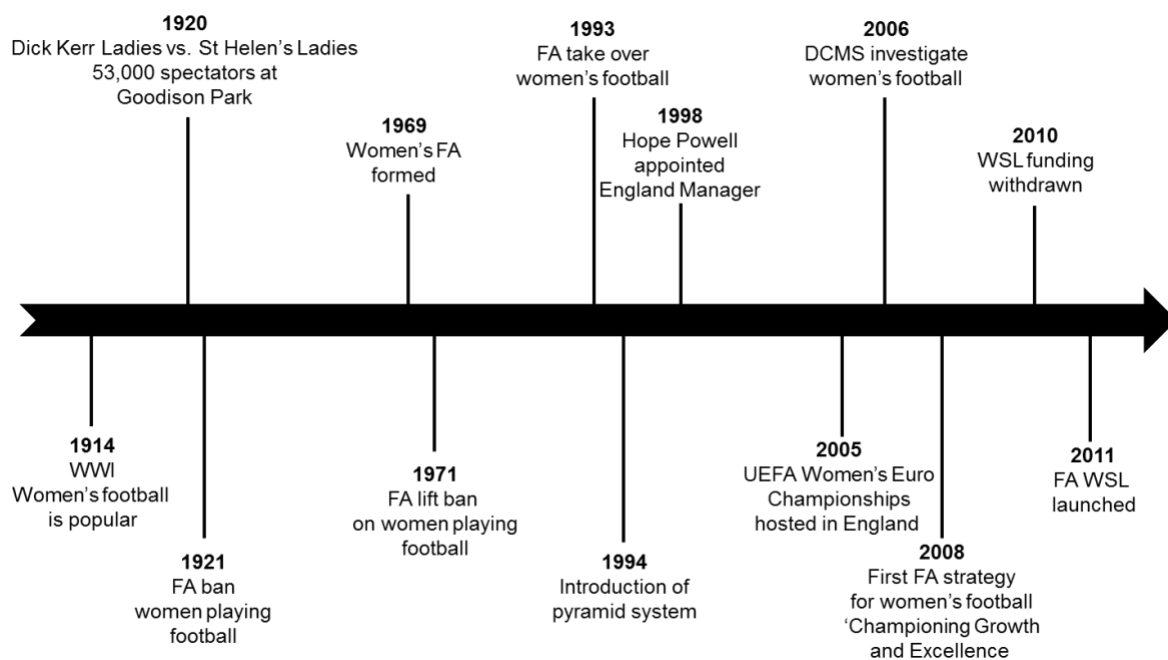
Figure 1.4 The pathway to professionalism in women's football in England. Timeline shows development of women's football from amateur to professional. between 1914-2011.

1.5 The era of professional women's football in England

The inception of the FA WSL in 2011, was both critical, and timely for women's football in England. Critical, as the emergence of the FA WSL the first semi-professional league in England, marked a new era for women's football. Timely, as the interest in women's football appeared to be increasing steadily, and there was pressure to reform the women's game as the league lacked competition and quality (Sequerra, 2014). In 1993, the FA formally took control of women's football in England. Twelve years later, England hosted the 2005 European Women's Championship, and scholars argue this gave women's football a timely boost (Bell, 2012; Dunn & Welford, 2015). However, the performance of the team did not match anticipation, as England finished bottom of their group. It has been argued elsewhere, England's failure can be related to a lack of real competition in the league (ibid).

Arsenal Ladies monopolised domestic competition pre-FA WSL, which was both unappealing to fans, and did not provide the competitive quality for elite players to progress (Dunn & Welford, 2015). The lack of competition for elite players, was highlighted in the FA's strategy for the development of the women's game 'Women and Girls Football Strategy 2008-2012: Championing Growth and Excellence' (Sequerra, 2014). The document proposed necessary changes to increase competition, and generate sustainable interest in the women's game, in the shape of a summer league.

Within the 2008 document mentioned above, the FA identified two conclusive outcomes after fifteen years of control of women's football. First, the number of affiliated players grew from 10,400 to over 150,000, second, using data from Sport England Active People survey, participation reportedly had grown, and 260,000 women and 1.1 million girls played football (The FA, 2008; Sequerra, 2014). The reported rise in participation, alongside perceived legitimacy afforded to women's football through FA administration, prompted the FA to capitalise on women's football. However, a note of caution is necessary when viewing increased inclusion and participation as a demonstration of equality, or acceptance, as it is the nature and perception of inclusion that remains crucial (Fielding-Lloyd & Mean, 2011). It has been argued elsewhere, that women's football was being simply bolted on to the men's game, with little structural changes to reflect their needs (DCMS, 2006; Dunn & Welford, 2015). Whilst in part, this may be true, the development of the FA WSL represented structural change. What remains unclear, and under-researched, is if the women's game is bolted on to the men's game with little regard for women's needs, what are the consequences for elite players operating within the FA WSL.

The FA WSL was designed as summer league, aiming to provide women with space in the sporting calendar, and an opportunity to carve out a niche in an overwhelmingly male dominated market. Emergent macro strategies of professionalisation, were met with both complications and criticisms, yet very little, if anything, is understood from a micro perspective. The FA (2012) described the FA WSL as a seminal moment for women's football. The introduction of a semi-professional summer league, aimed to provide a commercially viable, competitive

product. However, scholars urge caution, and in their discussion on structure, governance and impact of the FA WSL, Dunn and Welford (2015: 92) argue, the placing of women's football as a summer league effectively renders them 'outsiders on the inside'.

The attempt to develop a niche product, in the shape of a summer league, can be considered complicated. Nostalgia recognises football to be a winter pursuit regardless of gender. In this way, women's football is 'othered', and situated outside *normal,* and recognised forms of football in a summer competition. The FA objectives aimed to enable players to focus on football through earning money from their clubs, leading to both an improved league, and international standards of competition. Moreover, the implementation of FA WSL was timely and provided the FA with an opportunity to shape the women's game of the future. Whilst research exists on the history and development of women's football (Williams, 2006; 2007; 2013), watershed moments in England, (Bell, 2012), and analysis of structure and governance (Dunn & Welford, 2015), researchers have not treated women working as professional footballers with much detail.

The FA detailed their strategy for the development of women's football in England: 'Women and Girls Football Strategy 2008-12: Championing Growth and Excellence' (FA 2008). The development of elite football for women was central to FA objectives. Scholars were critical of the FA's marketisation methods concerning women's football, which appeared to be based primarily on commercial business objectives (Bell, 2012; Dunn & Welford, 2015). The FA needed results for its investment, and

whist increasing competition and standards of play are difficult to quantify, attendances and public interest, via broadcasts are easier to report (Dunn & Welford, 2015). For women's football to survive in an oversaturated sports market, embracing market values and commercial orientation, may be considered necessary. Arguably, in line with men's football, there is an increased focus on a commercial product, and entertainment spectacle (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2016).

Previous research evaluated the increased focus on the commercial product of women's football, and the FA's decision to award the broadcasting rights of FA WSL games to ESPN, a pay per view, digital satellite platform (Bell, 2012). A central component within the FA's first strategy for women's football (2008) was to prioritise generating public interest. However, if the FA wanted to generate enthusiasm through live games, it could be argued broadcasting on a free to air channel would have better developed public interest. This rationale is supported by FA data (2008) of two women's cup finals. The UEFA women's Euro 2009 final recorded 1.7 million on BBC Two for the England senior women's team playing Germany, in contrast, 182,000 viewers were recorded on Sky Sports 2 for The FA Women's League Cup Final 2008. The obvious quantitative differences could be explained by two arguments, on one hand, Euro 2009 generated more interest due to the magnitude of the final. On the other hand, it can be argued, by using a pay per view satellite television network, the FA narrowed potential viewers thus effectively not generating the same public interest. In sum, the increased focus on women's football as a commercially viable product, meant super league teams would represent business

enterprises. The FA held significant monopoly over women's teams with ambitions to compete in the FA WSL.

Problems emerged as the FA proposed a licensing system for clubs with aspiration to play in FA WSL. The term 'franchising' has been used to cover a variety of business relationships reflecting a growing trend for new commercial objectives in many sectors (Mansfield & Killick, 2012). Sport franchise models are most common to North American sports, or the big three; American Football (NFL), Baseball (MBL) and basketball (NBA) (Mansfield & Killick, 2012; Allison, 2016). Whist FA documentation resists using the word franchise to describe FA WSL clubs, the FA effectively put club licences out to tender. Each franchise, or club, would receive significant funding from the FA and in return, clubs would be bound and tightly regulated to and by the FA (Bell, 2012). Many professional sport franchises that operate within league structures, such as the FA WSL, are concerned with image and *doing good* in the form of corporate social responsibility. In contemporary Western economies, corporations are often influenced by altruistic, strategic and/or economic motivations, by using interventions to stimulate a positive social response, or both to engage in corporate social responsibility that further the social good (Sheth & Babiak, 2010).

In line with corporate social responsibility, it could be suggested that gendered inequalities and the underrepresentation of women in football is being addressed through increased investment by the FA and as men's clubs purchase licences for a women's team. However, Sequerra (2014) rejects this claim, stating the FA's initial

investment of £3 million represents 0.5% of the FA's 2010 turnover of £304 million, and 1.5% of the £101 million put aside for investment in football, therefore, represents insufficient investment by the FA. Whilst investment in women's football is to be celebrated, the FA's commitment is questionable, as there is an over reliance on men's clubs providing substantial financial commitments to its women's teams, which in the past has been problematic. For example, the promise of a professional women's league by 2003 by the FA prompted Fulham FC to professionalise its women's team in 2000, however, the league never materialised, and Fulham withdrew their financial support in 2006, consequently players were effectively unemployed (Sequerra, 2014). Similarities can be drawn between women's football and netball in England, Mansfield and Killick's (2012) research details an empowered franchise model in netball. Both football and netball share a number of key features, for example, developing elite performance, a focus on national team success, and targeting commercial and financial sustainability of teams. A key problem of the tender process for FA WSL licences was the FA's unwillingness to prioritise existing clubs. Fundamentally the FA focused on clubs with the most resources. Therefore, history, reputation and loyalty did not influence access to the elite FA WSL.

In 2011, the FA allotted a maximum of £70,000 for each successful club/franchise in the FA WSL. Clubs who were successful in acquiring a licence, had to match the FA's investment and the FA determined how the funds would be allocated. The 'Club Development Fund' allocated to each FA WSL club, would be distributed in three FA defined, specific areas. First, £25,000 was allocated to management, commercial

and marketing services, to enable clubs to generate revenue for sustainability; second, £25,000 was assigned to coaching, medical and other football-related support services, to encourage professional standards at clubs with coaches, medical staff and so on; third, £20,000 was allocated to facilities, to enable clubs to develop infrastructure, to generate income and become independent (The FA, 2008). In short, successful licence applications were contingent on clubs possessing significant funds and the capacity to match the financial backing of the FA (Bell, 2012; Fielding-Lloyd et al. 2018).

Two important considerations emerged for incipient FA WSL clubs through increased FA investment and the financial support of their men's clubs. First, increased investment meant elevated professional expectations on FA WSL teams and by extension the players, and second, emergent professionalisation processes were accelerated. Indeed, the acceleration of professionalisation meant a turbulent process for many clubs. In 2011, 16 clubs applied for eight places in the inaugural season of the FA WSL; Arsenal, Barnet, Birmingham City, Bristol Academy, Chelsea, Colchester United, Doncaster Rovers Belles, Everton, Leeds Carnegie, Leicester City, Lincoln Ladies, Liverpool, Millwall Lionesses, Newcastle United, Nottingham Forest and Sunderland. Some established clubs were diminished by professional expectations, and investment stipulation and withdrew their application for the FA WSL. Additionally, a few clubs were unable to compete financially, the most high-profile example being Leeds Carnegie (Formerly Leeds United but adopted the name of its sponsor). In 2011, the inaugural FA WSL season comprised

of eight teams; Arsenal, Birmingham City, Bristol Academy, Chelsea, Doncaster Rover Belles, Everton, Lincoln Ladies and Liverpool.

In contrast to those teams unable to compete, or were unsuccessful with their application, some incipient FA WSL clubs invested more than the minimum requirement in order not to lose ground in the competition. Clubs employed a handful of full-time players, staff and introduced more systematic training schedules as part of growing professionalisation. Accordingly, an immediate disparity emerged between clubs in terms of finances and club attractiveness to potential employees. The change in values and structure of women's football and its clubs, from staunchly amateur to wholly professional, did not occur at the same, or indeed with the same tempo. A period of instability followed the professionalisation process. Many clubs in the FA WSL struggled to cope in their new professional reality, and similar to research conducted on rugby union and professionalisation, it appeared clubs did not know what professionalism meant financially and experienced periods of unpredictability (O'Brien & Slack, 2004). However, a trend towards aligning financially and commercially with a men's club emerged and was highly coveted by the FA.

The FA WSL expanded in 2014, increasing the number of clubs from eight to ten. A notable example of financial alignment with a men's club is Manchester City. City, a club with the monetary and commercial support of the men, purchased a licence through the tendering system. The contrast between Manchester City a club with little pedigree in women's football, and Doncaster Belles, a club steeped in history is

stark. In 2014, Doncaster Belles were the only team to have played in every season of elite women's football since its inception in 1991, winning the FAWPLND (FA Women's Premier League North Division) in 1992 and 1994 (Sequerra, 2014). In comparison, Manchester City had never played in the elite league but had strong financial support of the men's club. In 2014, Doncaster Belles were replaced with Manchester City and Doncaster Belles started the season in FA WSL 2 (now the FA Women's Championship post-restructure). The process of licencing took shape in 2014, through both conflict, uncertainty and unpredictability. It can be argued organisational change has led to a change or reconfiguration of the rules in the field of professional football (McDonough & Polzer, 2012). Moreover, the shift in organisational context, has resulted in a restructure and a reformation of contemporary position taking of both teams and individuals in the field.

The most recent example of unpredictability in the FA WSL was the dissolving of Notts County Ladies in 2017. Notts County Ladies had experienced a turbulent history, previously known as Lincoln Ladies who competed in the FA WSL for three years before being refranchised as Notts County Ladies. The then chairman of Lincoln City FC, left the club following a dispute, bought Notts County and subsequently applied for a 2014 FA WSL licence as Notts County Ladies (Dunn & Welford, 2015). Rebranding was stated as necessary to fulfil FA criteria for FA WSL clubs, however, an FA embargo prevented further explanation of the decision. The Guardian newspaper (2013) reported that this re-brand reflected the increased significance of women's association with a men's club, and the prioritisation of the business side of the game. As Dunn and Welford (2015) note, even in the early

stages of the FA WSL, women's football appears to be suffering from the more negative conditions of men's football.

The reformation of Notts County from Lincoln Ladies did not prevent the discontinuation of Notts County Ladies, two days before their first scheduled league game after an unpaid tax bill (Magowan, 2017). Strategic decisions about where to allocate resources meant a consequence of liquidation for Notts County Ladies was the cancellation of professional contracts; all players without jobs and in some cases a home (Riach, 2017). The new chairman Alan Hardy argued economically the numbers to maintain the ladies project, simply did not add up (Riach, 2017a). It remains unclear and undocumented whether the unpaid tax bill emerged from exclusively the women's team. A link can be made between clubs with relatively smaller operating budgets closing their academies for example Huddersfield Town (Lucas, 2017) and investment in women's teams. The overall financial health of a club means the club operates within organisational dichotomies between pragmatism and saving money (Bullough & Mills, 2014). In this way, women's football clubs are uncertain places to work and often subject to unavoidable change. In sum, the introduction of professionalisation processes for FA WSL clubs meant an effort to define, construct and direct women's football towards a professional agenda that relies heavily on men's football as standardised practice.

Contemporary research exploring professionalisation processes in women's football is particularly limited. Previous research in England is historically based, and focuses predominately on Dick Kerr Ladies, perhaps the most well-known women's team.

Whilst Brus and Trangbæk (2003) discuss the development of the Danish team BK Femina in the 1960s. More recently, Skogvang (2006) analysed the consequences of commercialism and professionalism in women's football in Norway. Skogvang argues that Norwegian clubs increased their income by 45%, due to the Norwegian FA's strategic planning and employing individuals in positions to help generate sponsorship deals. In a detailed analysis of professionalisation processes, parallels emerge between the FA WSL and the process of professionalisation in women's football in Sweden and Denmark (Kjaer & Agergaard, 2013), in particular the usage of a licensing system. Kjaer and Agergaard identified the emergence of a 'new professionalism' in Sweden and Denmark, with priority given to performance enhancement through normative professional practices. The concept of 'new professionalism' was coined by Everetts (2009) and characterises organisational professionalism as something worth striving for as an instrument for organisational change.

Emphasised within the licensing manual for Sweden and Denmark was both organisational professionalism and the development, and implementation of a business plan. Whist there are comparisons between the licence objectives of England and Scandinavia, for example, improved facilities and coaching standards, the main objective of the Scandinavian model was to increase performance through professional practices. This ideology was based on the notion, if a club *acts* more professionally, the level of play will increase. Although acting professional is subjective, Kjaer & Agergaard (2013) argue that acting professionally means

women's football moving towards rationalisation, through organisational control. The process of rationalisation is to ensure predictability and calculability (Ritzer, 1983).

In order to actualise predictability, an emphasis must be placed on routine, consistency and methodical operation (Ritzer, 1983). In this way, the constitution of specific rules to ensure outcomes, such as successful clubs will develop clearly defined job tasks for members of staff, eradicating one person serving multiple roles and clubs subjected to performance reviews annually. On the other hand, calculability, a focus on quantifiable measures and sports, have always been dominated by a focus on numbers on the field. For example, the number of sprints a player competes in a game, or the number of goals a striker scores per season. However, according to Ritzer (1983), to enable calculability off the field, means developing precise measures on how much work needs to be done by each individual and reducing it to numbers.

Problems emerge with this approach, as it remains particularly difficult to quantify professional performances of employees, both as players and other members of staff. Further, calculability as a method for measurement does not take into account employees subjective experiences. Kjaer and Agergaard (2013) provide an example in Danish football of professional practice and expectations. During the 2010/2011 season, 19 matches were rescheduled, subsequently the Danish football federation considered this unprofessional and demanded more professionalism from clubs. In contrast, the FA licence remit required clubs to be flexible to reschedule games to fit

with the commercial sponsors and tv demands. In this way, the focus for the FA WSL is a market based, commercial one.

In their analysis of professional processes, Kjaer and Agergaard (2013) demonstrate the low priority of financial income, and high priority placed on improving the overall level of professionalism in both Sweden and Denmark. To improve overall professionalism means a purpose is placed upon organisations to prirotise professionalism to achieve balance between clubs, by attempting to limit emergent disparities between clubs (ibid). To this extent, to scrutinise the licence objectives of Sweden, Denmark and England, launched at a similar time, reveal differences that could be attributed to different sport models within each country. Kjaer and Agergaard present the Nordic civic model for sport, with social cohesion part of the rationale for sports organisations. Whereas in England, UK Sport prioritises neoliberal objectives of competition, commercialisation and winning. Indeed, football provides an ideal arena for tangible achievement through hard work. To combat inequalities, neoliberalism claims hard work is fundamental to achieving success (Cooky & McDonald, 2005). Therefore, in a meritocratic system, success or failure is largely understood as the responsibility of individuals (Gill, 2007). Individual action, self-regulation and personal responsibility are endemic of neoliberalism (Sequerra, 2014). The focus on individuals which dominates neoliberal discourse, renders organisations such as the FA, and to a lesser extent, clubs, unaccountable for the success or failure of professionalisation.

Similarities can be drawn between the professionalisation process of men's football in Sweden, rugby union in England and the professionalisation of FA WSL (Billing et al. 2004; O'Brien & Slack, 2004). Despite both Billing et al, and O'Brien and Slack's investigations being relatively dated and focused on men's sports, football in Sweden 1967 (Billing et al. 2004) and rugby union 1995 respectfully, (O'Brien & Slack, 2004) both studies demonstrate resemblances with professionalisation of FA WSL. Both Billing et al. and Slack found professionalisation processes to include accelerated commercialisation, increased expectations on clubs for sponsorship and marketing, intense resource demand, and extreme competitive pressures. Despite the turbulent processes and uncertainty and conflict detailed by scholars, an oversight exists in how professionalisation processes impacted individuals. Further, both sports had a fan base and were not marginalised by their gender, the same cannot be said for women's football. It is fair to say that through professionalisation processes, both men's football and rugby experienced a change in values, that drifted from their amateur roots and embraced financial opportunities with business owners that continue to monopolise both sports (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2016). The turnaround in the culture of football has been significant. In their Marxist analysis of football in neo-liberal times, Kennedy and Kennedy (2016) suggest football left behind its gentlemen-like, amateur approach to off-field affairs and embraced the financial and commercial opportunities that opened up to it.

In this research, professional processes are understood as the beginning of football as work for women and the development of a new occupational field. FIFA's Women's Football Survey of 2014 reports that 30 million girls and women play

football globally (FIFPro, 2017). As such, football is recognised as the most popular sport in the world for women and girls. Moreover, football organisations are increasingly taking the development of the women's game more seriously (Anderson & Barker-Ruchti, 2018) and football can be considered a career opportunity for women. To understand the process of professionalisation micro-structurally then, consideration is given to the introduction of football as work, combined with an increased commercial emphasis on women's football and an erosion of amateur values for players.

In its original sense, amateurism is defined by not earning any money, or being financially incentivised in any way from sport. Most research presents athletes as individuals playing for the love of the game (O'brien & Slack, 2004; Kjaer & Agergaard, 2013). In opposition to amateurism, is professionalism, whereby athletes are remunerated for their athletic endeavours (Kjaer & Agergaard, 2013). In Dunning's (1975) classic analysis of the amateur professional dichotomy he argues the unfolding of professionalisation involves a process of increased seriousness of play. Subsequently, increased seriousness leads to an erosion of amateur values. According to Dunning, this transition is replaced with 'something else' which is not necessarily predictable. However, the deinstitutionalisation of amateur values in women's football in England equalled a change in structure and culture of the game. As Fielding-Lloyd et al. (2018) report, the focus on financial criteria in the FA's introduction of FA WSL, mirrored the commercial narratives relating to consumption, profit and financial viability. Moreover, for women's football to secure its position and future, it appeared necessary to align with the commercialised, commodified men's

game (ibid). In this way, although the field of women's football has its own internal structure, it is not wholly independent from other fields influence.

Similar to the boxing field in Paradis' (2012) study, the change in structure and culture of women's football through professionalism has led to a change in types of capital valued within it. Although Bourdieu is accused of determinism, his conceptualisation of field emphasises internal struggles which take place within and across fields. A fuller, dedicated discussion of Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical terms is to follow in this section and in chapter three. Professionalism was actively pursued by organisations and expected by the FA. As a result, there has been a change in field structure and adjustment in responsive habitus' in a continuous process of transformation (Hardy, 2008). Under these conditions, individuals' symbolic capital is open for transformation, as agents react to the changing rules of the field and develop a professional habitus.

Many footballers begin competitive sport at a young age (McGillivray & McIntosh, 2006; Mitchell et al. 2014). Involvement in sport from a young age means success in sport is continually reinforced by significant others such as, family, friends, coaches, teachers and the media (Coupland, 2015). Previous research suggests when participation is paired with success and reinforcement from significant others, it leads to a strong self-identification as an athlete and a well-adjusted habitus (Mitchell et al. 2014; Coupland, 2015). In terms of football, it is recognised players spend a high percentage of their time training, in competition, in match day or generally around football (McGillivray & McIntosh, 2006; Roderick 2006; 2016;

Mitchell et al. 2014). Indeed, footballers are encouraged to live, breathe, sleep and eat football. It is these cultural markers that are recognised within previous research that evoke commitment to *making it* as a professional footballer (Roderick, 2006; Brown & Potrac, 2009).

Defining professionalism and professional behaviour can be considered particularly opaque. Previous research indicates a clear starting point for characterising professionalism is an emphasis on good work (Schinkel & Noordegraaf, 2011). In their research, Schinkel and Noordegraaf define typical professions as doctors, lawyers and university professors. They link professions to knowledge and skills, define successful practice and include members who have a higher calling. Indeed, a higher calling or feeling compelled to act intentionally without intention (Coupland, 2015) can be said to characterise a career in sport. In sports careers with low visibility and status, like women's football, players exhibit what Noordegraaf (2007) defines as *pure professionalism*. That is, a highly specialised knowledge, pure professionals know what skills to use and how to use them. Crucially, specialised knowledge materialises without necessarily being rewarded for their high level of skill (ibid). Footballers are urged and expected to act in a professional manner at all times. Attributes such as athleticism, commitment and manners are deeply revealing to acting professionally. Players oblige in order to strengthen their position in the field, as professionalism is a goal in itself, and can be considered a form of symbolic capital.

To be a professional worker requires more than simply learning a job skill. A professional must be well educated in their area of expertise and importantly, well behaved within their professional field (Noordegraaf & Schinkel, 2011). According to Bourdieu (1990) to develop professional capital requires a particularly well-adjusted habitus. Previous research has highlighted the influence of habitus on career decision making (Guichard, 2009), and how individual habitus emerges through life histories, fundamentally impacting their current status as professional athletes. The professional habitus is developed through *acting* in a professional manner, for example, behaving professionally around the organisation, completing extra training sessions and generally looking after your body, through a strict regime of diet and control (Wacquant, 1995; Roderick, 2006). Within the group, or team, members are regulated by acting professionally which affords them legitimacy within a particular field (Noordegraaf & Schinkel, 2011). Bourdieu often uses the metaphor *the game* to illustrate the competitive nature of field, the role of habitus within them and the unequal power relations that shape them (Hodkinson & Sparkes, 1997).

According to Bourdieu (2000), fields are governed and configured by the rules of the game. Each field is infused with a *doxa,* described as unquestioned established order, fashioning perceptions and acceptance of the status quo (ibid). To extend this point then, in relation to professional women footballers, the term professional and behaving in a professional way, can be described as somewhat ambiguous. However, research suggests the possession of a good professional attitude is crucial to career development and progression (Parker 1996). This means for Bourdieu, the field of professional football is characterised internally by its own illusio which

prescribes a certain way of behaving, and a belief that the game is worth playing. Bourdieu explains the origin of illusio, derived from Huizinga's association between illusion and ludus (game) illusio makes reference to taking the game seriously (Schinkel & Noodergraaf, 2011). Illusio refers to one's interest in the game, in a more general sense and not necessarily in an economic sense (Garrigou, 2006). According to Schinkel and Noordegraaf's (2011) research on professions, doxa and illusio grant credibility to the functioning of the field.

Although women's football has professionalised in England, Pfister (2015) raises an interesting point on the development of a specific football taste as potentially problematic to further progression of women's football. To develop this line of thought further, through the combination of doxa and illusio, the public in England, appear to have grown up with men's football in the media and dominant images of men's football being defined as 'real' football. Those who occupy lesser positions in the field, in this case women footballers, subscribe to the legitimacy of the principles according to their position (Schinkel & Noordegraaf, 2011). To this end, it is questionable how individuals and groups, in particular women and girls, have embodied and normalised dominant images. Hence, it can be proposed that certain images of professional footballers are embodied in early socialisation experiences, meaning football as work is often reinforced and accepted as a man's job.

The concept of illusio is rarely discussed beyond Bourdieu's work, yet, Wacquant (1992) considers it central to his thinking. Illusio provides a powerful tool for analysing the relational nature of the field of professional women football and the

individuals who compete within the field. The illusio is created through repeated action and routine and represents an unreflexive commitment to (re)producing and enforcing the rules of the game (Lupu & Epsom, 2015). With this in mind, it is necessary at this juncture to consider the habitus of the woman footballer, and how they are taken in by the game in their development as a professional footballer. According to Crolley (2012) illusio is explicit and conscious. There are some links between her research on austerity impact in the workplace and football as work for women. Crolley details how emotional investments are made by individuals in the workplace and how those emotional investments are embodied in the professional habitus (ibid). Football is an emotionally intense occupation as players make emotional investments to their work, often experiencing intense highs and lows. In turn, the emotional investments made, emphasises identity and belonging in the workplace, as you commit a large proportion of your life to work (Parker, 2000; Collinson, 2003; Roderick, 2006; Kalleburg, 2009).

Playing football professionally is often described as an occupation, in which those who play it for a living are considered lucky, or living a dream, as most forms of labour are considered relatively unsatisfying (Roderick, 2006). The football field like any other field, generates its own illusio. In a way, football is paradoxical as it is often romanticised as playing for the love of the game, rather than material rewards (Garrigou, 2006). Indeed, in part this can be considered true for women footballers pre-FA WSL, as they were considered simply devoted to a sport but did not receive economic capital. To outsiders, this devotion could be considered extreme. As detailed by Dunning and Sheard (1976), the football dream is a modern social

construction, a discourse grounded in material interests and social struggles. This discourse took cultural and institutionalised form through exclusionary practices of women and rule-making (Gruneau, 2006). Considered alongside aforementioned growing professionalism and commercialisation of women's football, the construction of the material football dream emphasises legitimacy, prestige and status for women footballers in a professional field they have been excluded from until fairly recently.

1.6 Conclusion

In order to conclude these opening remarks on the professionalisation of women's football in England, the most notable outcome for this research, is the formulation of football as a career opportunity for women. The history of women and football in England can be considered complex. This chapter detailed the FA's historical relationship with and acceptance of women's football as unstable and unpredictable. The establishment of the FA WSL provides an opportunity to reflect on active opposition to women playing football, through to facilitating professionalisation of women's football in England. Despite the professionalisation of women's football, questions remain whether structural change will produce a meaningful challenge to taken-for-granted assumptions of football as a man's game.

The installation of the first women's professional league in England provides a unique opportunity to examine football as work for women. Many studies in the field of women's football have predominately focused on structural problems. Therefore,

this study examines the consequences of professionalisation for players. The professionalisation of women's football, is often celebrated within organisations such as the FA, clubs, and the media as entirely positive for the women's game. However, a closer examination of such generalisations is necessary, if we are to understand the complex, and dynamic nature women's football careers in England.

The inception of the FA WSL in 2011 was both critical and timely for women's football in England. The process of professionalisation has meant an erosion of amateur values and a reconfiguration of the women's football field. Since the launch of the FA WSL the league has undergone four restructures, the latest restructure meant the FA WSL and its players adopted full-time professional status. The FA WSL currently consists of eleven teams; Arsenal; Birmingham City; Brighton & Hove Albion; Bristol City; Chelsea; Everton; Liverpool; Manchester City; Reading; West Ham United and Yeovil Town. All teams that compete in the FA WSL are associated to a men's club, albeit to varying degrees of investment and absorption (Woodhouse et al. 2019).

It is important to bear in mind, through increased professionalisation and commercialisation comes a change in dynamic of the field, new rules of the game and new earning opportunities for successful footballers. However, scholars of men's football, describe football as a career precarious and insecure. In short, the outcomes of the accelerated development of football as work for women are largely unknown. Women's teams are increasingly incorporated into men's clubs as part of their brand, a process that is normalised and expected by the FA. With this in mind,

it becomes important to develop our understanding of football clubs as workplaces for professional women footballers and examine the employment and workplace policies necessary for their career.

CHAPTER TWO: FOOTBALL AS WORK FOR WOMEN

2.1 Introduction

The inception of the FA WSL, the first semi-professional league for women in 2011, was a watershed moment for women's football in England. Accordingly, women's football can be considered increasingly complex, fluid and rapidly developing. A significant development in women's football in England occurred in 2018. The FA announced the FA WSL 2018/19 season would comprise of a full-time professional women's league. This announcement meant all players competing in the FA WSL are considered professional footballers, and football is their occupation. This chapter provides an examination of football as work for women. Consequently, it provides an overview of the transformation of work for women, and the employment and workplace policies considered necessary for women at work. The focus on football clubs as workplaces for professional players is necessary, as women face different challenges in both work and non-work settings. The issue of employment policy for professional women footballers, has grown in importance in light of recent documentation revealed by BBC Sport (Magowan, 2018), that suggests FA WSL players can be sacked without warning if they are physically or mentally injured for more than three months.

Since football is a new occupation for women in England, a contention exists whether employment policies are appropriate or suffice for players. It is unclear whether policies are available or applied in support of women footballers. Football is a career

short in nature. With this in mind, it becomes increasingly important for players to be supported in career transitions and in their post-athletic endeavours. As complexities arise, the need to more readily understand the needs of professional women footballers becomes pertinent. The first half of the chapter outlines the changing conditions of work and examines employment and workplace policies necessary for security in work. The second half of the chapter, draws on potential implications of professionalisation for women footballers, operating within the field of football as it develops apace. Much uncertainty exists about the relationship between increased professionalisation and the consequences for professional women footballers.

2.2 Work: Changing conditions

Work occupies a central and defining position in contemporary society, whether interpreted in conventional economic terms, or activities beyond waged labour (Bain, 2003). The study of work has historically been at the axis of sociology from its classical foundations (Roderick et al. 2017). The organisation of work was central to Marx in his ideas of social class and capitalism, and Weber's accounts of stratification and rationality (Grint, 2005). However, major changes in the contemporary job market have occurred. Transformations include growing inequalities in the labour market, equalling greater precarity for all workers (Kalleburg, 2012). Hewison and Kalleburg (2013) define precarious work as work that is unstable, uncertain and insecure, whereby workers receive little social benefits or statutory requirements. Indeed, whilst insecure work is on the rise, it is

women and other socially marginalised groups who are impacted most (Kalleburg, 2018).

The rise of precarious work has emerged as a serious challenge to the contemporary world of work (Kalleburg, 2018). Consequences of operating within unstable work environments extend beyond the quality and quantity of jobs. Patterns emerge individually and collectively in both work and non-work settings, for example, mental health, poor physical health and educational choice. Moreover, family concerns, such as delayed marriage or family planning (Kalleburg, 2018) contribute to individual and collective vulnerabilities. Yet, contemporary changes in the labour market, such as new technologies, globalisation and a steady increase of working women, have formed momentum, which has resulted in organisations seeking alternative ways of working (Latham & Swiercz, 2009).

Women who enter the workplace are often in part-time and/or subordinate positions (Billet, 2006). Women who take up subordinate roles are granted low status despite analyses of their work that suggest they often perform highly complex tasks (Kalleberg 2009). Arguably 'life-time' employment is increasingly considered to be a thing of the past (Sennett, 1998). Transformations of work have led academics to consider contemporary work as increasingly uncertain (Blair, 2001; Collinson, 2003). Job insecurity can create both material and symbolic anxieties for workers. To lose one's job or feel compelled to conform to others demands through fear of job loss can erode autonomy and self-respect (Palm, 1977). Organisations which utilise new technologies to deliver flexible working conditions can intensify insecurities at work

(Sennett, 2000). Consequently, organisations encourage individualism, which has a two-fold effect - a deterioration of social relations by encouraging internal competition for capital, whilst simultaneously increasing material and symbolic insecurities (Kallinikos, 2003).

2.3 Women and work

In the UK, labour law regulates relations between workers, employers and trade unions. Employment rights are found in various acts, regulations and laws. Of particular interest to this research, is the Employment Rights Act (1996) that provides parental leave for childcare and the right to request flexible work patterns. Further, the Equality Act (2010) requires all people to be treated fairly based on gender, sexuality, race, disability, religion and age. Changes in the diversity of the labour force meant social and employment policies for women became increasingly important, as the family and domestic sphere is still considered a woman's responsibility (Crompton, 2006; Kalleburg, 2009).

Despite the domestic and family responsibilities of women, there has been an upsurge in women's labour force participation over the last 50 years (Juhn & Potter, 2006). In particular women are taking up roles within the fields of education, health, administration and retail (UK Office for National Statistics, 2013). There exists a growing body of research on women's work and how work roles are defined as masculine or feminine. Huppatz (2012) analyses four case studies of traditionally feminine occupations to understand how gender can be used as a form of capital.

Her focus is occupations in which women enjoy a disproportionately high employment rate: nursing, social work, exotic dancing and hairdressing. The research demonstrates how being a woman is generally advantageous in securing job roles; although many men appear the preferred choice for promotion. Many women in the study argued their careers are a good fit for feminine attributes. However, habitus and active dispositions are evident, as Huppatz (2012) argues women's career choices are influenced by their mother's careers and constrained by both gender and class.

Additionally, women are also taking up atypical employment opportunities (Hakim, 2000; Lawson, 2004; Martin, 2004; Williams, 2004) challenging the traditional male and female expectations of what constitutes work (Watts, 2007). Whilst women entering into male dominated professions is increasing, the number of women in STEM jobs is desperately low (Miner et al. 2018). STEM jobs represent science, technology, engineering and mathematics. In the UK in 2010, only 15% of E&T (engineering and technology) undergraduates and in 2011, 6.3% of engineering professionals were women (Powell et al. 2012). In light of these statistics, it would not be unfair to say the underrepresentation of women in STEM cannot be explained entirely by career choice, highlighting how careers can be shaped significantly by gender, class, ethnicity and so on (Miner et al. 2018).

Similarly, in academia, data suggests whilst women have equal opportunity to secure an academic career, discrepancies in pay and less opportunity for increased academic rank provides evidence women lack equity (Bailyn, 2003). Statistics for

higher education show men are more likely to be full professors (36% to 18%) which alone creates a gendered pay gap (Gappa et al. 2007). Additionally, there are less women in the faculty pool, documented lower pay for the same rank, and low representation in leadership roles (Bailyn, 2003). As such, it is pertinent to draw parallels between academia, STEM, ET industries and organisations such as construction and sport. Research conducted on the construction industry, offers a pessimistic outlook on opportunities for women in construction (Greed, 2000; Watts, 2003). Overloaded by dominant masculine stereotypes, the construction industry is associated with the strict separation of family-life and work-life, and is measured on a male career model, which reinforces men driving the industry (Watts, 2007).

A central point here, is that the equalisation of men and women cannot be constructed within institutional structures which presuppose their inequality (Beck, 1986). It can be argued, by attempting to squeeze a square peg into a round hole, required by the institutional structures dominated by men, can create conflictual situations for both men and women. Drawing on similarities between the construction site and the football club, highly masculinised working conditions are often considered to be off putting for women and perhaps intentionally so. The relationship between male dominated workplaces, such as football clubs and women can be considered complicated. For example, women who enter the uneven football field as a career choice, face considerable challenges, not least on the basis of legitimacy and credibility. Effectively, women are walking the tightrope at work, previous studies support this notion and suggest women are expected to 'prove it again' (Dixon et al. 2008; Cohen et al. 2018) based on socially constructed differences, such as gender.

Accordingly, control for women workers over their work sphere might be highly antagonistic, particularly women who work in male dominated occupations. Since the family sphere is still seen as women's responsibility, and women particularly value flexibility at work to avoid work-life conflict (Konig & Cesinger, 2015).

In sum, many women and other marginalised groups have faced obstacles to their entry into the labour market. In particular, women often face complex and contradictory situations at work based on domestic and family responsibilities that can often hinder career progression. The generation and implementation of equitable workplace policy such as USA Title IX (1972) that states: 'no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance' (McCallum, 2017). And the UK Equality Act (EA) (2010) discussed earlier, provide organisations with policy and laws to prevent discrimination at work of socially and culturally differentiated groups, for example women, ethnic minorities, religious groups, those with disabilities and Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Transsexual, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, Ally and Pansexual (LGBTTQQIAAP).

While Title IX extends to women and sport and achieved significant success in addressing gender equality in sport, the EA provides exemption for gender-affected activity. It states: 'a sport, game or other activity of a competitive nature in circumstances in which the physical strength, stamina or physique of average persons of one sex would put them at a disadvantage compared to average persons

of the other sex as competitors in events involving the activity' (Wadham et al. 2011).

Rather than requiring sports organisations to assess eligibility on skill, the exemption

merely reinforces dominant gendered views (McCallum, 2017).

2.4 Workplace policies

Organisations use workplace policies to deal with different organisational issues and

challenges which occur within the workplace (Namie & Namie, 2003). Policies are

clear statements about where organisations stand on relevant issues (Cowan,

2011). In the workplace and the legal world, the definition of equality includes 'equal

pay, equal access to opportunities to enter an occupation and advance in it and

freedom from harassment' (Bailyn, 2003: 139). However, policies do not only

communicate in literal ways. Kirby and Krone's (2002) research on work-family

policies showed how policy can communicate to individuals in different ways,

depending on actor's interpretations. For example, in their research in a US

government organisation, how particular policies were discussed between

individuals largely structured how policies were utilised. This indicates from an

organisational perspective, policy is produced and reproduced through processes of

interpretation and interaction (ibid).

Along with the rising integration of women in the UK labour market, it has become

an increasing concern for individuals and couples to reconcile work and life

(Crompton, 2006). Work-life balance is also a focal point of interest and debate in

academia and among policy makers (Sabbittini & Crosby, 2015). Measures for better

reconciliation and gender equality have become major policy issues on the European social agenda. In the context of growing female labour force participation, family policies and work hour regulations have received significant attention (Crompton, 2006). 'Family-friendly' policies, such as parental leave, help reconcile labour force participation with family responsibilities, and the limitation of work hours preventing employment from encroaching too much on family time (Landiver, 2015). Epsing-Anderson (1999) argues that the provision of childcare is crucial to female labour force participation and Gornick and Meyers (2003) report that access to parental leave reduces income inequality between men and women. It is unclear from current research whether policy provisions extend to women footballers in their new occupation.

Whilst it is important for organisations to have policies in place to reconcile women's and other marginalised groups' work-life experiences, efforts must be made to remove negative stigma attached to using policy. Dixon et al. (2008) report in their study on intercollegiate athletic departments in the US, many women felt that if they used gender equity policies, such as taking the full maternity leave, they would be perceived negatively by co-workers, potentially hindering their progression within the organisation. Previous research suggests that the creation and implementation of family-friendly policies can have a positive effect on the organisation as a whole, including men (Burton, 2015). Universal support for families, such as childcare and paid family leave, are common throughout Western Europe (Hegewisch & Gornick, 2011). However, contradictions and tensions exist as gendered structures remain incredibly resilient, despite changing gender roles, relationships and increased

implementation of workplace policy. Thus, workplace policy designed to encourage flexible work practice can often reproduce inequalities, as it is women who are more likely to utilise policy which can perpetuate inequalities both in work and non-work settings.

Gender equity policies have been adopted as an organisational value in many institutions across the world. However, evidence suggests widespread organisational culture change toward equity has not been achieved (Hoeber, 2008). Despite narratives of supporting gender equity as an organisational value, data from previous studies suggests women receive less remuneration, operational budgets, are promoted less and there are less women in leadership positions (Dixon et al. 2008; Hoeber, 2008; Burton, 2015; Cohen, 2018). Despite a growing trend in gender equitable policy and increased verbal and symbolic prioritisation of policy, intent and action are largely incompatible. More concretely, Kirby and Krone (2002) argue widespread organisational change is not achieved automatically simply by implementing gender equity policy.

This idea is developed by Burton (2015) who suggests a reason for the distinction between verbalisation and application of gender equity policies is organisations creating policies for the wrong reason. To extend this point, Burton suggests organisations create gender equity policies to secure funding, or as a politically correct way to create a positive public relation (ibid). This approach perhaps sheds light on many English football clubs' approach to women's football, firstly, as a gender equity policy and secondly, incorporating women into their organisation. As

business enterprises, professional football clubs must be financially competitive both on and off the field (Bourke, 2003). The football industry has experienced vast commercialisation since the inception of the Premier League in 1992 (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2016). Commercialisation and the opportunity for financial profit undoubtedly has an impact on a clubs' objectives (Relvas et al. 2010).

The win-at-all-costs approach shapes football clubs' autonomy, performance measurements and philosophy of practice (Relvas et al. 2010). Although there is a lack of empirical research on professional football clubs as business enterprises and their women's team, this observation could support the inconsistencies women's teams experience via their men's clubs. For example, access varies greatly between FA WSL clubs in terms of access, investment, facilities and workplace policies. All of which can be said to contribute to inconsistencies experienced by women's clubs who are absorbed into men's clubs (Fielding-Lloyd et al. 2018). The most successful women's teams in England are not yet in a position to self-fund, generate profit or stand alone, therefore they do not necessarily fit with the business models of clubs.

As suggested by Burton (2015) having a women's team can be considered positive in terms of public relations. For example, Manchester United launched a bid for a FA WSL licence (2018), despite Ed Woodward declaring in 2005 that the women's team was not part of their core business objectives (Wrack, 2018). United, under pressure from the FA to generate a team for FA WSL, somewhat controversially leapfrogged other clubs and secured a place in the second tier of FA WSL in 2018. This is similar to Manchester City's arrival into women's football at the expense of Doncaster Belles

in 2014 (ibid). Despite the controversy surrounding these new teams, both Manchester clubs provided much needed media attention on women's football, economic support but perhaps more importantly, positive public relations by incorporating women into their commercial brand.

Although gender equity is a frequently researched topic, it is often assumed that meanings and understandings are unitary and shared (Hoeber, 2008). Implications of this assumption mean often gender equity policies go unquestioned. Knowing gender equity policy often goes unacknowledged, it would be difficult to dispute sports organisations assume policy to be successful. However, in line with Bourdieu's micro-theory of power, policy-makers do not need to legitimise their decisions (Bourdieu, 1993). Their actions are perceived as natural and self-evident (Hovden, 2006) those people become spokespersons for what Bourdieu terms as *doxa.* This doxic logic involves the transfer of dominant logic to those in subordinate positions - presenting subordinates, in this case women, with situations whereby they actively consent and maintain their position by subconsciously accepting the status quo (Bourdieu, 1993; Hovden, 2006). For example, despite gender equity policies implemented by Sport England women in leadership positions remain underrepresented (Women in Sport, 2017). Research undertaken by FIFA (2014) detailed only 8% of executive positions were filled by women (which equates to 1.1 female per Member Association) (McCallum, 2017). Although there is not one solution to achieve policy targets, a one-size-fits-all approach does not unpick the varied nature of existing barriers (Shaw & Penney, 2003).

According to Bourdieu, there is always room for dislodging doxic attitudes, engaging in symbolic struggle and political action (Bourdieu, 2000; Krais, 2006). Norway, second in the world for gender equality, introduced positive discrimination quotas obligating organisations to ensure that women fill at least 40% of seats on boards in 2004 (McCallum, 2017). Though widely criticised at the time, in 2016 a study was carried out that detailed Norway as the only country in the world to average over 40% of women on boards (WEF, 2017). While organisational policies are a form of structure they are not experienced homogeneously, but, are reproduced through interaction. Consequently, public discourse surrounding policy may alter the in-use form of policy (Kirby & Krone, 2002). Indeed, Hoeber's research in a Canadian athletics department revealed gender equity as an organisation value held multilayered and sometimes contradictory meanings between male and female athletes, coaches and administrative employees (ibid). Moreover, data infers the implementation of gender equity policies must be examined to produce more than simply add women and stir policies (Hoeber, 2008).

2.5 Football clubs as workplaces for women

The implementation of the FA WSL created an opportunity for women to work as professional footballers. There is both a gap in literature and a growing need to understand the workplace experiences of professional women footballers, as women's football continues to grow steadily. While women have made considerable inroads into the sporting world, sport and in particular football remains male centric (Pfister, 2010; Sequerra, 2014). Distinctions between the sexes in football, is not

confined to England. Several lines of evidence suggest in France (Menneson, 2012) and in the Netherlands (Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2003) men largely control the development of women's football practice. Collectively these studies indicate football can be considered to symbolise hegemonic masculinity (Connell & Messerschmit, 2005). Previous research points out, whilst the integration of women into sports deemed masculine can be considered progressive, it is necessary to gain a more thorough understanding of the nature of inclusion (Fielding-Lloyd & Mean, 2008). Woodard (2007) examined football diversity practices within men's professional clubs, data suggests women's teams were often understood as charitable causes. Indeed, despite women and men playing the same game, in the same club, power relations that dominate football clubs and organisations reinforce the distinctions between *real* football and women's football.

The development of football in England reflects a clear and naturalised gendering of work in this overwhelmingly male dominated sports industry: although in the same career, women and men are in quite different career situations. There is a considerable volume of work dedicated to employment policy in the workplace for women, most of which analyses family-friendly policies, domestic responsibilities and flexible work (Epsing-Anderson, 1999; Crompton, 2006; Watts, 2007; Konig and Cesinger, 2015; Landiver, 2015). In contrast to what has been detailed within this chapter so far, there has been relatively little work on women footballers and employment policy. The primary reason for the lack of literature, can be attributed to the recent development of a new career for elite women footballers across the world.

Football, often used to bring people together, can be understood as a social institution which maintains and reproduces male dominance and female subordination (Hargreaves, 1986; Theberge, 1987). Despite the myths of football being open, diverse and meritocratic, inequalities remain and persist for all minority groups. Indeed, whatever indices are considered, pay, access, policy, ratio of employment, women fare less well than men (Conor et al. 2015). Although caution is needed when making such assertions, as there is a shortage of relevant data which both reflects and contributes to enduring inequalities. Further, improvements in the shape of access and opportunity for women in football are steadily increasingly globally.

Today, almost all the 54 member-associations of UEFA have a national club competition for women, for example the 2015/16 season 49 associations had a women's league competition (Klein, 2018). However, a full-time women's league can be considered unique outside of the USA. The majority of elite leagues contain minimal professional teams and largely comprise of semi-professional teams competing in the top tier (Kjaer & Agergaard, 2013). Therefore, it may be assumed the leagues which exist in Europe vary considerably to their degree of differentiation (Klein, 2018). According to FIFPro's (2017) report, the most developed leagues are Germany's Frauen Bundesliga, France's Division 1 Féminine, England's Women's Super League, Sweden's Damallsvenkan and US Women's National Soccer League. Despite these five leagues being more developed than most, professional women's football globally operates within ambiguous circumstances and large disparities exist, from league to league, team to team and player to player.

Contemporary interpretations of women's football in England are convoluted and rapidly developing. The FA announced the FA WSL 2018/19 season would comprise of a full-time professional women's league. The announcement was not without critics or controversy. Proposed changes to Super League licences were approved by the FA and clubs were encouraged to meet new criteria in order to secure professional status (Garry, 2017). New criteria included: a minimum of 16 hours contact per week for players; a minimum investment per club; an academy as part of club and financial fair play and salary cap (ibid). Comparisons can be made to Kjaer and Agergaard's (2013) research on Danish and Swedish women's football, who conceptualised this transition as 'new professionalism'. They explain that professionalism has become a goal in itself, an ideology for the management of women's football, with limited relation to the current state of the game.

The growth of women's football in England has materialised alongside a hyper-competitive football culture, that increases demands on both time and performance. External market forces and expectations mean professional women footballers predominately rely on men's clubs for economic and social support. Whilst much of feminist research on women's football posits women as poor relations to men, it must be noted that women's football and its players have benefitted from the involvement of men and men's clubs (Liston, 2006). To position women as a homogenous powerless group, is an oversimplification of more complex socio-economic developments. Liston argues in her research on Irish women footballers, that many women footballers have notably benefited through improvements in facilities, greater

access to supporters, medical staff and organisational capacities (ibid). Yet, the consequences of this dependence appear largely ignored. One effect of over-reliance means the forecast for professional women's football can be considered unpredictable.

2.6 Developing dispositions at work

Unlike employees in standardised organisations, professional football is characterised by performances at work which are both readily observable and highly subjective (Roderick, 2006). Employers rely on performances of players to generate profits and gain the attention of the media and fans. To achieve success then, football clubs promote certain dispositions towards performances and expectations at work. Individuals, through their formative habitus', recognise football performance is viewed as something necessary to acquire fundamental capital to further their career. A footballers' livelihood depends on their performances, and expectations to perform operate alongside a reduced tolerance for failure (Relvas et al. 2010). Similarly, Tuner and Wainwright (2003) argue in their study of professional ballet dancers, there are few occupations whereby professional status is inextricably tied to the performance of the body. What is more, short-lived nature and necessity to perform in accordance with employer expectations, underlines the fragility of an athlete's career.

The idealism of football is fundamentally rooted in ideas of meritocracy, and the romanticism of working-class success stories in sport (Coupland, 2015). Indeed, men's professional football takes pride of place in the UK often expressed as the

beautiful game (McGillivray et al. 2005). Previous research on men's football suggests footballers participate in a highly skilled, manual labour (Roderick, 2006). Problems emerge for players as their careers and contracts are contingent on performances at work. Both economic and social disparities symbolise contemporary football and elite performers are given celebrity status (ibid). Distinctions emerge between sporting contracts for those who do not possess the skill, capital or gender to acquire celebrity status. These players are left behind, in an increasingly competitive, uncertain and precarious market place (McGillivray & McIntosh, 2006).

Athlete's sporting contracts are a necessary part of an athlete's career and have received increased scholarly attention in recent years (Kohe & Purdy, 2016). Wong et al. (2011) suggest contracts represent more than financial incentives for athletes, prestige, legitimacy and popularity motivate athletes. For the most part, contracts formalise the relationship between the athlete and the club. To secure a contract, athletes must not only perform in training and competitively, but also conform to organisational demands (Kohe & Purdy, 2016). Research suggests women footballers across the world operate on short-term contracts, ranging from one to three years, a factor which augments workplace insecurities (FIFPro, 2017). Similarities can be drawn to research on the creative industries (film, television, music and the arts), for large numbers of women operate on contracts in weeks and months, rather than years (Conor et al. 2015). Gender inequalities are not the only form of segregation and exclusion. Inequality in job quality and length can relate to

class, ethnicity, race, disability and BAME groups (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) or perhaps an intersection of aforementioned minority categories. Similar to footballers, for large numbers of individuals in the creative industries, precarious work is considered the normality.

Football is a labour-intensive industry, with an increasingly mobile labour force (Roderick & Schumacker, 2016). The fragile labour market realities for players with limited transferable employment capital, mitigates against stable working conditions (ibid). The unique skills and talent of players are not easily reproduced, and salaries tend to reflect the 'capital' of individual players (Wacquant, 1995). Roderick (2006; 2016) argues professional football at all levels can be materially rewarding. This view can be considered male-centric, as only a small proportion of elite women footballers have the opportunity to sustain themselves adequately (FIFPro, 2017). Indeed, the capital or value of a player can change dramatically if they sustain a long-term injury or become a mother (Szymanski, 2010). Individualised *risk biographies* (Beck, 2000) mean uncertainties, such as injury or pregnancy costs, are borne by the individual rather than the employer or the state (Sennett, 2006).

A consequence of fundamental job insecurity amongst women footballers is similar to freelance workers who 'cannot say no to a job' (Conor et al. 2015). Arguably this necessity leads to a continuous cycle of competition and playing football. It is not uncommon within women's football to combine two seasons, in two different countries. For example, players in the US routinely finish their season and

immediately fly to Australia to compete in their 'off season'. This can be considered a necessity to continue earning money when their season ends, similar to tour golfers, or migrant athletes who are increasingly constrained to ply their trade in various locations (Fry & Bloyce, 2017). This cyclical effect is characterised by intense periods of work, training, performing and is a melting pot for different issues which impact on wellbeing.

In these settings, social capital is a key commodity. The existence of networks is not a natural given, it is the product of investment strategies of individuals and collectives to produce lasting relationships and secure other forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1991). Pratt (2002) terms the cyclical process as bulimic patterns of work, having to work constantly to ensure financial security. The absence of long-term contracts, combined with workplace insecurity, frequently moving between not only clubs, but also countries, to play football means absent security benefits, such as sick pay, pension, maternity pay, childcare. In these settings it becomes increasingly important to generate more than blanket policies (Dixon et al. 2008), policies which are specific to the women's game and its players.

There is an apparent dilemma for women footballers, who must balance an increased training and commercial schedule, and understanding the prerequisite of education for post-career options. Moreover, as individuals transition to full time professional footballers, formal and standardised workplace policies, such as post-career planning, maternity leave and childcare, have heightened importance.

Structural and cultural demands on players mean an exploration into policies and programmes of football clubs is necessary. Existing policy may or may not be tailored to the unique needs of professional women footballers. Indeed, without the support of clubs and coaches to promote policies, it is pertinent to discuss whether policy exists and how it is utilised. Existing policy may or may not be tailored to the unique needs of professional women footballers. The professionalisation of football in England means increased training hours, inevitably then, the possibility of injuries heightens with each training session and game. Significantly, players must balance the demands of professionalisation, whilst building social and educational capital for essential post-career playing options (McCormack & Walseth, 2013).

2.7 Educational policy

The field of professional football can be described as a relatively autonomous field detached from the real world of mainstream employment (McGillivray & McIntosh, 2006). Within the football bubble, the club is reinforced as self-serving and isolated from other fields that may be influential. In these circumstances, employment and workplace policies become largely redundant to pursing professional status. The changing economic and social landscape of professional women's football in England, provides an opportunity to discuss potential policy issues for women footballers in their new workplace.

The requirements placed on elite professional athletes in the contemporary world are such that they need to dedicate themselves to achieving excellence in their field (Aquilina, 2013; McCormack & Walseth, 2013; Stambulova et al. 2015). Increased requirements placed on professional athletes, implies that the majority of athletes' lives will be spent developing their sporting career and honing practice. A consequence of expected dedication is less time to develop their lives outside of sport, in education, vocation or holistically. The acquisition of educational capital for women whilst playing football, can be considered increasingly important as there are marked difference between elite men and women players. McCormack and Walseth (2013) analysed elite Norwegian women footballers undertaking education in the US. Data highlighted players' difficulty in producing educational capital. Further, differences were highlighted between elite men and women players. Firstly, most women players will not be able to live off the acquired economic capital after they have finished playing. Secondly, elite women footballers have limited opportunity to transfer capital into career opportunities post-career. The absence of economic capital and the psychological overspill of retirement, places importance on the need for a dual-career and/or education whilst competing.

There is a dearth of empirical studies on professional women footballers, and women athletes more generally, education and dual career in England. Comparisons can be made with previous research on men's football in England and pioneering women's football countries such as Sweden, Canada and Germany. Research on men's football, highlights organisational influence of the FA and PFA on English football

clubs to educate players in an effort to develop individuals off the field (Relvas et al. 2010). Football education for young players: 'A Charter for Quality' was introduced in 1997 to provide a structured approach to player development. The FA listed specific operational criteria essential to player development, for example, facilities, staff, medical provision, practice, legislation (ibid). According to previous research, it is a heavily subsidised feature of professional player status (Parker, 2000). Professional male footballers are offered a variety of courses, organised around a loose system of differentiation which ensures a player has option(s) post-football.

As De Knopp et al. (1999) point out, the 1990s saw a rise of initiatives in Europe to combine high level athletic achievement and education. Initiatives were developed in response to an acknowledgement of rising pressures on student-athletes (Aquilina & Henry, 2010). These pressures include precarious economic conditions, a fragile market and limited transferable skills. Indeed, pressures are both related and experienced by women footballers. With this in mind, educational opportunities supported by policy are considered essential to becoming a successful dual career athlete and facilitating a more straightforward transition out of sport.

The notion of pursuing an elite athletic career whilst continuing one's educational development, has been subject to considered sociological research. Many studies exist which address, more generally, the complexities associated with combining elite sports pursuits and the desires to acquire educational capital (McCormack & Walseth, 2013). Sweden, a pioneer of women's football (Pfister, 2010), significantly

invests in women's football and this environment is supported by 'sports schools', which specialise in football. Indeed, sports schools exist in other pioneering countries such as Germany (Baron-Thiene & Alfermann, 2015). Sports schools and the careers of elite women footballers are examined in the work of Andersson and Barker-Ruchti (2018). The combination of education and football is prioritised by the Swedish FA. Although a relatively small sample size (7 participants), it appeared the players did not develop equally in football and education, but rather prioritised football. Further, data highlights the struggles of players to meet increased demand of education and sport.

The reports are similar to that found in Miller and Kerr's (2002) research on Canadian student athletes. Data in this study revealed athletes mitigate constant tension between academic, sport and social time: with social time inevitably compromised most over academic and sport commitments. Conversely, Aquilina (2013) conducted an interview study with 18 university-student athletes from Finland, France and UK. These highly dedicated athletes provided evidence that both education and sports fields can combine effectively. However, data should be viewed with caution as Aquilina's (2013) data involved one retired (41-year-old) male dual career footballer. More typically, education and football are viewed as conflicting, as education is seen as a threat to developing footballers (McGillivray & McIntosh, 2006). Such an approach largely neglects the needs of professional women footballers in England. Whilst both men and women players have a market value based on reputation, most women players cannot afford to make a living out of a game that professionalised

eight years ago (Dunn & Welford, 2015; FIFPro, 2017). For example, FIFPro's (2017) research details 50% of the 3,295 women footballers surveyed received no salary from their club whilst those who receive a salary earn less than $600 per month, which equates to approximately £470 per month. Together, these studies provide compelling evidence for educational policies, centralising the needs of athletes and uncovering a system that works for both club and athlete.

2.8 FA policy

The FA (2018) published 'In Pursuit of Progress' 2018-2021 strategy, the equality, diversity and inclusion plan of the FA was largely based on a recognition to boost diversity and inclusivity within the organisation. The lack of diversification is a well-publicised criticism of the FA, both academically and in the media (Dunn & Welford, 2015). One objective is support for England players, past, present and future (FA, 2018). To achieve this objective, the FA provide a 'dual-career programme' for England women players, in combination with university hubs across the country to ensure they achieve in football and life (FA, 2018a). It is worth noting, educational strategies provided for women by the FA are in contrast to men's education schemes, which are facilitated by the PFA and clubs. Whilst limited documentation exists for the strategy of the programme, a basic explanation was provided in She Kicks magazine (women's football magazine) by the Head of Women's Educational Operations Tony Fretwell (She Kicks, 2018). The 'FA WSL Academy Programme' will be facilitated by the Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme (TASS) and will

support elite players between 16-20. The FA WSL Academy Programme has been developed alongside professionalisation to improve the lives of elite women footballers.

TASS was launched in 2004 by the government to support elite athletes through bursaries in 24 sites across the UK (Aquilina, 2013). The FA strategy shares likeness to a UK government strategy in launched in 2001. In 2001, the UK government set-up high performance centres across the UK, located on university campuses, such as Loughborough and Bath, to support elite athletes in sports science, medicine, physiotherapy, biomechanics, physiology, psychology, nutrition and lifestyle and their career (ibid). Similarly, the FA proposed eleven academies nationwide, and set up at ten university sites across the country to provide coaching and education for elite women footballers. Given the relative increase of professional women footballers, it is important to understand the relationship between the footballer-student more effectively.

The policy implemented by the FA is the first educational policy specific to elite women footballers and therefore can be considered progressive. Although there are limitations to the policy, it appears to be an attempt by the FA to more concretely build learning strategies into the professional careers of *some* players. Vast literature exists on policy implementation theory, and there are several accepted definitions (O' Gorman, 2011). Simply put, 'an examination of implementation, is what happens between policy expectations and (perceived) policy results' (DeLeon 1999: 134). O'

Gorman (2011) argues implementation is a critical but often overlooked aspect of policy making. However, the large number of stakeholders involved in generating and implementing policy, makes successful implementation more difficult. Not only is implementation difficult, the support of coaches and key members of staff can be considered crucial to whether players embrace offers of education (Dixon et al. 2008) and other forms of policy.

There has been an increased effort by individual institutions such as the FA to address the gap between education and football for women. One of the main concerns highlighted in previous research are the demands of education and elite sport, and balance required for athletes to be successful in both fields. A lack of balance often results in failure in both academic and sporting pursuits (Aquilina, 2013). Moreover, questions must be asked of the FA around the generation, development and implementation of policy. A further criticism of education policy within the FA strategy is its apparent exclusionary conditions. Workplace policy should reflect equitable power between players, for all individuals to have the opportunity to secure and improve their own position, moreover, to allow all players opportunity to prepare for their post-career. The key problem with the FA education policy, is that it overlooks FA WSL players, fundamentally focusing on developing England international players. The isolation of elite players is problematic, as it can be suggested non-international players require educational policy based on current capital and inevitable post-career planning. In addition, exclusionary policies can serve to create divisions and tensions within teams, and feelings of isolation.

2.9 Post-career challenges

Perhaps one of the most noteworthy features of professional football as work, is its short-lived nature. Research suggests careers are greatly afflicted by inevitable ageing and a fragile labour market (McGillivray et al. 2005). As Roderick (2006) points out, mature players are increasingly sensitive to ageing and job insecurity, which operate in tandem. It is a haphazard career, whereby opportunity to acquire fundamental forms of capital decreases after the age of thirty. Unavoidable ageing, and high risk of injury compared to standard occupations, prompts players to consider post-career planning and adjust their occupational outlook. Career termination can lead to diverse outcomes and experiences are not homogenous. It has been suggested that the transition out of elite sport is multi-layered and complex (Lavaelle, 2006). Reports suggest associated difficulties of career termination include anxiety/depression, feelings of anger and/or anxiety (Alfermann, 2000) and eating disorders (Brownrigg et al. 2018; Roberts, 2018). A small body of research exists on transitions, retirement and professional football which principally focuses on men.

Professional athletes experience periodic transitions in their career (Morris et al. 2017). Transitions are defined as adjustments or events that go beyond the changes of everyday life (Sharf, 1997). Common transitions in football include, youth to senior teams and retirement (Morris et al. 2017). The male dominance of football globally means previous research can be considered male centric, and while useful insofar

as highlighting transitions prevalent to both genders, such as ageing and injury (Roderick, 2006; Morris et al. 2017), there is a significant oversight of women's specific experiences. Recent research by FIFPro (2017) points to ubiquitous potential career transition concerns of professional women footballers. Predominately highlighted, was a lack of a financial incentive to stay in the game, the aspiration to pursue career opportunities outside of football, and the desire to start a family. It would not be unfair to say these factors are fairly unique to elite women athletes. Yet, investigating the impact of retirement for women athletes, how career termination emerges and defined is fairly sparse.

Previous research examined gendered differences in career termination in Danish athletes, and reported it is women who depart their sport with greater regularity than men for family reasons (Moesch et al. 2012). Similarly, this finding supports Alfermann (2000), who noted women athletes are more likely to discontinue their career to start a family, or due to family obligations. It appears very difficult for women to negotiate these competing obligations specific to their gender. Football clubs, alongside academia, construction and STEM as workplaces, can be considered to be fundamentally built on men's experiences. Indeed, often assumed employees in male centric workplaces have no children or a partner who fulfils domestic responsibilities (Darroch & Hissburg, 2017). Gender roles still exist in contemporary society therefore, gender is likely to influence both athletes' status within their sport and also their experiences of career termination (Roberts, 2018).

Emerging challenges for professional women footballers are often complex and contradictory. Women's football operates in a paradox of growing significance and unstable market conditions (McGillivray & McIntosh, 2006). The stakes are high for professional women players, both financially and with increased public attention. By-products of professionalisation include persistent and important questions about their future position. Professional sport is highly commercialised, and as a result, places emphasis on generating income through marketable assets, in this case professional footballers (Manley et al. 2016). Footballers bodies are valorised according to economic and physical capital (Nesti et al. 2012). Research suggests anti-intellectual culture exists within professional football clubs (McGillivray et al. 2005) for example, players tend to reject educational opportunities despite the documented benefits of post-career preparation (McCormack & Walseth, 2013). For women footballers, it is not only anti-intellectualism that may be perceived as distractions for career development. Women footballers' largely operate within male-structures, with training and competition managed by males and as a result it has been suggested the needs and values of women are not understood, appreciated or even acknowledged (Douglas & Careless, 2009; Roberts, 2018).

Women and men footballers are unlikely to experience similarities in the way their sport is governed, the manner in which they are coached, and the training and support made available to them (Roberts, 2018). These experiences ultimately impact how professional athletes make sense of their post-career life. Professional football clubs are workplaces and as such, it is important for individuals to feel supported to use workplace policy (Dixon et al. 2008). Since football is a new

occupation for women in England, a contention exists as to whether policies are appropriate or suffice for players. Indeed, if policy exists, it is unclear whether players are supported in using them. Research on work family policies suggests organisations that have policy in place, expect their most ambitious and devoted employees to waive their opportunity to use them. Akin to managers and coaches expecting the most dedicated professionals to play injured (Roderick, 2006). It is worth noting, it is not only career-orientated women who underutilise policy, men are also reported to be penalised for using family leave policy (Kirby & Krone, 2002).

A footballer's sense of self is deeply entangled with their sport, as such, sport represents more than other standardised occupations for individuals. Wacquant (1995) argued an individuals' life-world are colonised by their sport, it is what they are, meaning identity is largely formed through sport. Here, the formation of a footballing illusio, is particularly evident, that is the belief in the game and its stakes (McGillivray et al. 2005). Moreover, the footballing illusio becomes part of the players being. It is understandable then, that players would be reluctant to utilise policy, as a demonstration of commitment to their new career, and a rejection of life outside football.

In regular workplaces in England, employment policy for maternity leave essentially removes the mother from the working environment for a minimum of six weeks, and a maximum of one year (Kirby & Krone, 2002). However, the workload does not change for the organisation and must be covered by other employees. Despite a

lack of research on women footballers and pregnancy, it can be argued in professional football clubs the workload would increase and for a longer period for women. Players not only have to give birth, recover and provide for a new born, but also retrain the body to an elite level of fitness and recoup fundamental match sharpness. Whilst examples exist of elite women athletes returning to sport after giving birth (US tennis player Serena Williams, Chelsea football player Kate Chapman) it is more common for women to retire early or pursue a family post-career (FIFPro, 2017).

The low number of athletic mothers, in part, explains the dearth of literature pertaining to elite athlete mothers' experiences. Beyond individual cases, more work is needed to understand the nuanced psychosocial aspects of their athletic journeys (McGannon et al. 2018). Within existing literature, it is unclear if it is a physical reason that prevents women from returning to sport, or societal expectations of a woman's responsibilities for the majority of child rearing (Moesch et al. 2012). Alternatively, whether conflict exists playing the part of the athlete (Careless & Douglas, 2013) and being a good mother (Douglas & Careless, 2009) which renders both identities incompatible. Social constructionist studies exploring elite athlete mother's experiences, highlight how mother's navigate gendered ideologies, i.e expected behaviours of a good mother make mothers vulnerable to guilt and psychological distress (Appleby & Fisher, 2009; McGannon et al. 2018). For instance, research conducted on nine elite athletes in New Zealand, found that mothers experienced extreme guilt when returning to their sport as they spend much

time away from home missing their child's milestones and so on (Palmer & Leberman, 2009). Further, if mothers do not reproduce norms, they risk being labelled as selfish or bad mothers (McGannon et al. 2012). It is perhaps unsurprising that women athletes often perceive there to be an incompatibility between athletic careers and pursuing motherhood.

Footballers depend heavily on their embodied assets and are prone to occupational destitution through the erosion of their bodily capital (McGillivary et al. 2005). In order to preserve bodily capital, footballers are encouraged to follow intense practices of eating, sleeping and resting, to ensure bodily care. In this sense, motherhood and family life is in conflict with expectations of football clubs and significant others (coaches, managers, agents) who largely influence the careers of players. According to Roberts and Kenttä (2018), perceived incompatibility is often a reality as athletes experience patriarchy within their workplaces, that is both intolerant and underprepared for athletes as mothers. Efforts have been made to explain employees' reluctance to voice their opinion on important issues such as workplace marginalisation through policy (Manley et al. 2016). Research suggests employees are unlikely to voice one's opinion if the environment discourages such communication (Morrison & Milliken, 2000), and/or is likely to be damaging to career progression (Donaghey et al. 2011), both apprehensions can be considered to exist within professional football clubs (Roderick, 2006). Career termination is an inevitable step in every professional footballers' career, and research suggests it is crucial to consider both the reason for termination and time point (Moesch et al.

2012). The reason for career termination can be considered important to the outcome of the transition process and individuals' perception of self, including body image. Moreover, existing evidence suggests career termination and its ramifications in many forms can be highly disadvantageous for wellbeing (ibid).

The relationship between post-career challenges, such as motherhood and body image, mental health and the media are analogous under-researched realties which are new for professional women footballers. As such, it is important to examine existing literature pertaining to body image, mental health and wellbeing and the media. Currently, it is unclear from existing literature whether policies exist to support players in their new realities. A career in football is considered to be highly focused on body monitoring (Roberts, 2018) and intense in its approach to quantification, accountability and surveillance (Roderick et al. 2017). Moreover, many women athletes are placed under pressure to subscribe to an athletic ideal within their sport, and a feminine ideal in broader society. Papathomas et al. (2018) label this as a paradox for women athletes. Such an environment may cultivate a loss of autonomy for athletes as physical markers, such as athleticism, or looking athletic, distinguish excellence, adherence and commitment to professional status, that is perhaps absent in other forms of employment and/or retirement (Manley et al. 2016).

Body image is an evolving multidimensional concept (Sobrino-Bazaga & Alcon, 2018). Definitions of body image indicate a complex psychological construct that includes the perception of an individual of their whole body, and its movements and

limits. Perception is important to body image, when an individual perceives their body not to correspond to ideals, for example athletic, or feminine ideals, they have a greater probability of manifesting body image concerns (ibid). Within sporting environments pressures to be thin permeate and can encourage an unhealthy preoccupation with weight in athletes (Papathomas et al. 2015).

In particular women athletes are more susceptible to problems with body image (Roberts, 2018). Women participating in sport not only have to contend with broad cultural pressures to be slim, but additional pressures to conform to a particular body type that relates to their sport (ibid). Some studies have reported eating disorders to be as high as 60% in women athletes (Reardon & Factor, 2010). For example, in sports which have a weight category, pressures exist to be lean, such as boxing, other sports require muscle to gain an advantage, such as rugby or Mixed Martial Arts. Evidence suggests athletes who experience body image issues throughout their career are likely to continue post-career-termination (Papathomas et al. 2015).

Beyond the prestige and celebrity attached to playing professional football (Roderick, 2006) lies a darker dynamic of overexposure to elite sport, such as eating disorders, body image, overtraining and burn out (Hughes & Leavey, 2012). In professional sport, the body is both important and salient (Martin et al. 1997). Overtraining syndrome describes a condition in which an athlete, in the absence of another objective underlying cause, experiences deficits in performance (Hughes & Leavey, 2012). Previous research suggests intensity of training, matches and so on,

increases with professionalism, which generates a higher physical demand on players (Ivarsson et al. 2018). Difficulties in dealing with increased intensity leads to increased injury risk. Training for elite competitions such as the World Cup, the European Championship and FA WSL is a difficult and strenuous balancing act between training and recovery (Hughes & Leavey, 2012). A high level of expertise is required from both staff and players, to achieve harmony between intense periods of competitive action and recovery. Without necessary knowledge, or willingness to implement knowledge, players risk burnout, injury and illness.

Recent research on 18 Swedish women professional footballers identify sociocultural components that influence overtraining and injury (Ivarsson et al. 2018). For example, norms within the team, psychophysiological factors (overtraining symptoms), and interpersonal elements (poor communication with the coach) are highlighted. Two particular narratives of players within the data are of interest, the first player overtrained to prove value to the team, a more-is-better approach. The second player overtrained to please the coach, significantly, this player justified her overtraining by appreciatively arguing 'they do pay my wages' (ibid). One possible explanation for players' apparent readiness to overtrain in order to prove themselves is what Hughes and Coakley (1991: 309) conceptualise as 'positive deviance': meaning, overtraining is closely entangled with football ethic, or 'sacrifice for the game, to seek distinction, to take risks and challenge limits.'

Football managers are able to exercise control over their players through coveted capital, for example, contract extension, building players' reputation and game day selection (Roderick, 2006). Consolidating a position within the starting eleven can be considered a high priority for all professional footballers. Further, many women players' concerns potentially emerge from proving their worth as professionals and *inspiring a generation,* a tag line created by the FA to increase participation figures (FA, 2018). Failure to *produce the goods* can leave players vulnerable to feelings of inadequacy and incompetency. Therefore, it can be assumed, players would be willing to sacrifice almost anything to ensure their position in the football field. For example, playing whilst injured, delaying family or accepting a less than satisfactory work environment. Similar to injuries and working in unsatisfactory workplaces, overtraining has been found to negatively impact players' mental health (Hughes & Leavey, 2012).

2.10 Wellbeing and mental health concerns

Mental health issues and the stigma attached to those who suffer have a long history (Bauman, 2016). One in four people experience mental health concerns during their lifetime (UK Department of Health, 2011). Research identifies the prevalence of mental health in 16-34-year old's as higher than any other age group (Gulliver et al. 2012; Wood et al. 2017). By the age of 24 diagnosable mental health concerns develop in one out of four Americans (Kaier et al. 2015). There is comparatively less

research on, but growing interest in, mental health and wellbeing of professional athletes.

High quality, systematic analysis of physical and visible injuries has led to advanced knowledge how injuries are prevented, managed and treated (Rice et al. 2016). Life as an elite athlete is not easy, there is a pressure to perform on demand. Intense mental demands are a unique aspect of an athletes' career, fuelling expectations for athletes to appear mentally tough (Bauman, 2016). Therefore, athletes exist in a contradictory space as mental toughness and mental health concerns are often viewed as incompatible. According to Bauman, incentives to seek help are often outweighed by negative consequences of *appearing* weak (ibid). Mental health in professional football remains an understudied topic, despite increasing awareness on social media and former professionals sharing their experiences (Wood et al. 2017). Professional footballers typically fall into the at-risk group. The average age of retirement for professional footballers is 34 indicating the majority of footballers fall into the at-risk group (ibid). Gouttebarge et al. (2016) found 26% of current players surveyed were suffering with anxiety/depression. Moreover, current players with low social support are more likely to have mental health problems. Data is supported by Brownrigg et al. (2018) who's research highlighted gambling addiction, drug use and mental health in footballers. Conclusions establish professional associations appear to reject responsibilities for players with addictions.

Taken together, these results suggest feelings of isolation for players', as associations appear to view addictions and mental health concerns as an individual problem. Brownrigg et al. (2018) criticise associations for adopting zero tolerance to drug use and gambling problems suggesting associations entanglement in mental health concerns. The majority of existent data has focused on experiences of male athletes and youth athletes (Newman et al. 2016). While accepting the multiple and nuanced mental health concerns and potential similarities between genders, research largely overlooks women footballers' concerns as professionals. Accordingly, given the prevalence of mental health and wellbeing concerns in the wider population and athletes more generally, it is of interest to understand the potential threats to emotional wellbeing of professional women footballers in the dynamic and changing field of professional football.

Normative views exist that the professionalisation of football is straightforwardly beneficial to players (Taylor & Garratt, 2010). Accordingly, the redefinition of players brings an accompanying demand to not only redefine existing practice, but a reformulation of identities and the acquisition of knowledge (ibid). Entering a new field requires learning new adaptations, with increased social competition there could be social congestion in the workplace (Cant, 2018). Research suggests adaptations to professional football include engaging in a *battlefield* for contracts, and economic security (Wood et al. 2017). Comparisons can be drawn to a study on university students and the assurance of increased graduate places at institutions. Data illuminated similarities between the promises of higher education and

professionalisation to improve social mobility through opportunity for greater capital, are perhaps exaggerated (Cant, 2018). Thus, implications may or may not increase vulnerability and have a psychological price attached to professionalisation.

The number of professional athletes with mental health concerns are largely unknown. Football clubs as workplaces are new realities for women in England. To date, research has largely overlooked football clubs as workplaces, particularly for women. However, quantifiable performance measures are routine to both men and women, and it becomes pertinent to ask at what point do performance-oriented goals outweigh the costs of mental health concerns (Roderick et al. 2017). Previous research suggests prolonged or intense workplace stress can have a negative effect on individuals mental health and wellbeing (Hughes & Leavy, 2012; Fry & Bloyce; Roderick et al. 2017). Indeed, everyday realities of athletes are often disregarded in the media or academia. It would be unsurprising then, the relative neglect of realities result in pre-professionalisation women internalising images of *how it is supposed to be* as a professional.

Professional sport is often glamorised as a care-free occupation with high economic rewards and a celebrity lifestyle (Fry & Bloyce, 2017). Further, professional athletes are believed to love their work and be devoted to practice (Roderick & Gibbons, 2015). Although Roderick's (2006) analyses have not treated the love athletes have for their work with much detail. For women, who until fairly recently experienced relative subordination in football, it is little wonder that becoming a professional

footballer may be a dream to many players. Indeed, whilst much of the above may be true, there are aspects of professional football that are dominated by struggles and challenges. Research on football suggests it is a career characterised by its short-term nature (Roderick, 2006), and ever-present insecurities such as failure, rejection and unemployment (Brown & Potrac, 2009; Platts & Smith, 2010; Wood et al. 2017; Brownrigg et al. 2018). Although not a linear career, Roderick et al. (2017) claim high profile athletes have their career carved out for them through formally prescribed expectations on them to achieve. Indeed, expectations to perform, means football being routinely described as a career that is cut-throat, and those who survive cite using endurance techniques and elucidate walking a tightrope at work (Wood et al. 2017). Therefore, it is questionable whether athletes can formulate and develop individual identities. Images at times may contradict the notion of athletes supposed to living a carefree existence (Roderick & Gibbons, 2014).

There are aspects of women operating within professional football that are relatively unexplored and unfamiliar. Individuals may be compounded by impromptu relocation through unsuccessful licence applications for FA WSL or having an unplanned pregnancy. Roderick (2006) argues that professional footballers have never experienced a working life that is secure. For male footballers this can be considered true - yet in the case of women, operating within a new field, it remains to be seen how players will react to their new uncertain realities. Indeed, uncertain and precarious circumstances may produce an environment whereby individuals feel a loss of control, and a lack of autonomy in their new career. Disempowerment or loss

of autonomy can lead to anxiety and depression in athletes (Hughes & Leavy, 2012). Douglas & Careless, (2009) insightfully position athletic careers as attached to a continuous performance narrative. Two related questions arise here in the context of professional women footballers, firstly, whether players can move away from this performance outside, or in *normal life* and secondly, where *performance* extends to.

2.11 Media and branding of women footballers

Despite significant growth in women's participation and performance in sport, there are striking disproportionate media coverage between the sexes (Bruce, 2016). A longitudinal study from Cooky, Messner and colleagues has shown that over the last 25 years, coverage of women's sport as a percentage of overall sports coverage on network television has actually decreased (Cooky et al. 2013). Indeed, the well documented lack of visibility given to women athletes in the media helps to frame ambivalence to women's sport (Dashper, 2018). The narrow focus on men's sport not only creates a hierarchy for sport within the media, but also permits the media to influence gendered representation and images of *how* a woman athlete should look. Body ideals become influential when they are transmitted and reinforced by sociocultural agents and through the media (Kichler & Crowther, 2009). The influence of both the media and social media on communicating bodily ideals has given the concept of body image more credence.

Scholarly research on social media and its role within the sports industry, is expanding rapidly. Social media are mobile interactive digital platforms which allow users to share content in real-time (Toffoletti & Thorpe, 2018). Social media has had a profound effect on sport (Pegoraro, 2010), allowing for increased interaction between athletes and the general public (Sanderson, 2010). Macro analysis of social media concluded, as a marketing tool, social media has the capacity to build relationships through communication and interaction with consumers (ibid). Similarly, on a micro level, the emergence of social media has become an important platform for athletes to exert control and communicate their brand, ability and skill. However social media is a source of complexity, with a focus on the end user (consumer) (Eagelman, 2013). A greater understanding is needed of athletes' motivations and attitudes towards social media, as it will shed light on current practices and consequences. It is well documented within literature, that when athletic performance is matched with physical attractiveness it can define athletes' opportunity for endorsement and capital (Mutz & Meier, 2016). Research suggests female athletes seem to be compelled to offer potential sponsors an additional benefit, namely a sexually attractive body fitting into societies' beauty standards, which may be perceived as a unique selling point by marketers (ibid).

Social media provides athletes with opportunity to attract followers to their platform, which potentially leads to various forms of capital (Pegoraro & Jinnah, 2012). Building reputation and capital through social media is a key commodity. This affective labour is expected by organisations, fans and agents and is achieved by

updating profiles, tweeting, instagramming and engaging in self-promotion activities (Thorpe & Toffoletti, 2018). There are downsides to social media use, if athletes fail to conform to the values of their club, or counter official messages from sponsors. Interestingly, Geurin-Eagleman and Burch (2015) report women athletes' use social media more frequently than men. A reason for this could be the relatively low media attention afforded to women athletes, in such reputation economies (Conor et al. 2015) wherever athletes go, and whatever they post on social media, represents a work opportunity.

Toffoletti and Thorpe's (2018) findings demonstrate how women athletes are adopting new strategies to market themselves, with social media seemingly presenting a sphere in which women athletes exert control. On one hand, social media does provide a form of power to women athletes, as they are able to regulate their platform. But on the other, as scholars suggest, media visibility is not a guaranteed access to power (McRobbie, 2009; Banet-Wiser, 2015). It is a simplistic view to assume social media affords users with equality of representation by virtue of access. Therefore, visibility can often mask marginalisation and disempowerment as visibility becomes an end in itself (Banet-Wiser, 2015).

Growth in commercialisation and mediatisation of women's football have opened up new spaces to acquire capital for female athletes (Mutz & Meier, 2016). Research suggests, attractive people have advantages compared to unattractive people, in fact they find it easier to find employment, are promoted further and earn a higher

income (Mutz & Meier, 2016; Rosar et al. 2017). In recent research, Rosar et al. (2017) quantitatively tested physical attractiveness using a number of attractiveness signifiers on male footballers, and subsequent effects on monetary success the context of the German Bundesliga. The data highlighted physical attractiveness' capacity to exert substantial influence on their market value. Perhaps, more significantly players received more playing time based not only on their performance but also on physical attractiveness.

New media technologies are now putting the tools of self-representation in the hands of athletes. Enabling space to create their own identity, brand and potentially challenging sport media discourse (Heinecken, 2015). The term *brand* refers to the intersecting relationship between marketing, a product and consumers (Banet-Wiser, 2012). Moving past arguments of commodification, Barnet-Wiser argues branding extends beyond a tangible product - the process of branding is a cultural phenomenon rather than an economic strategy. Therefore, a brand invokes the feelings of a consumer through stories that are unique, and consumers identify with. Moreover, a brand is more than the object itself, it is a perception.

A sports brand is defined by a name, design or symbol which helps differentiate individual products from the competition (Shank, 1999; Arai et al. 2014). While several definitions of an athletes brand exist in the literature, Arai et al. (2014) conceptualised athletes as brands - as someone who must have established their own symbolic meaning using their name, face or other brand elements. Additionally,

Kristiansen and Williams (2015) illuminate emotional attachments as a driver behind athletes as brands. Therefore, athletes are considered not only vehicles for product endorsement, but as cultural products and producers that can be sold as brands (Gilchrist, 2005).

Elite athletes from all sports use social media (Barnet-Wiser, 2015; Geurin-Eagleman & Burch, 2015; Thorpe and Toffoletti, 2018). Research suggests it is especially important for athletes who do not receive mainstream media coverage to take advantage of social media to market themselves as a brand, as it is often their only means of promotion to create awareness and build their personal brand (Eagleman, 2013; Geurin-Eagleman & Burch, 2015). The fastest growing form of social media is Instagram (Reichart Smith & Sanderson, 2015). Instagram allows individuals to share photos - for athletes it allows consumers an insight into their private lives - access sports fans covet. Scholars highlight the swift uptake of Instagram as a marketing tool on a macro level by the world's most popular brands and similarly on a micro level, in particular women athletes (Geurin-Eagleman & Burch, 2015). Marketing scholars have stressed that attractiveness is a defining feature in the marketisation and branding of athletes (Arai et al. 2014). Moreover, research suggests professional women athletes are aware sex sells (Kane et al. 2013). In contrast, social media may allow women athletes access to previously defined and traditional male fields (Olive, 2015).

Previous research suggests the transformative potential of self-branding on social media for women athletes. For instance, Heinecken (2015) argues by creating and controlling their own representations, women are challenging traditional stereotypes. This oversimplification overlooks how women athletes internalise and portray dominant cultural images of femininity. Additionally, Thorpe and Toffoletti (2018) question how women athletes manage complex demands, as feminine athleticism appears to have replaced collective action to transform the gender order. Critical consideration is given to how women athletes regulate and produce a visible self, an element crucial to branding (Banet-Wiser, 2015). Moreover, Barnet-Wiser suggests there has been a shift from politics of visibility, to economies of visibility (ibid). Meaning women athletes are encouraged to act as pioneering subjects responsible for the success or failure of their personal brand, and subsequently their opportunity to acquire capital in the field.

2.12 Marketing women footballers

Women athletes are increasingly branding themselves through the media and social media (Kane et al. 2013; Arai et al. 2014; Barnet-Wiser, 2015; Thorpe and Toffoletti 2018). According to Barnet-Wiser (2015), the empowered woman athlete is now marketable. Within the context of marketability, economic empowerment exists (Shain, 2013) whereby the individual athlete is highlighted as an entrepreneur of the self. To successfully market herself the athlete is encouraged to forgo the collective in favour of the individual (Barnet-Wiser, 2015). The success of women athletes, and

women more broadly, within neoliberalism, ultimately becomes evidence of empowerment (ibid) for example Alex Morgan the US soccer player is the most highly endorsed women's footballer in the world, in 2019, Morgan was listed in the top 100 of Time Magazines most influential people. However, Morgan can be considered unique in women's football, due to her marketability and commercial potential. It is questionable whether society as a whole is ready for emergent, empowered women athletes.

Post-feminism has become a key term in feminist vocabulary (Gill, 2016). Although its meaning, and development has been contested and characterised in many ways, McRobbie (2015) and Gill (2007; 2016) conceptualise post-feminism as deeply enmeshed in neoliberalism, whereby all battles of feminism have been won. This perspective presents a reformulation of feminism(s) through an individualised focus, the muting of collective action (Rottenburg, 2014), and patriarchy reinscribed broadly within the beauty industry, and visibly in women's bodies (Gill, 2007). There appears to have been a growing emphasis on market solutions to the inequalities faced by women in various, overlapping social fields (McRobbie, 2015). One consequence of neoliberal feminism is an individual aware of gender inequality, but whose feminism is so individualised, it has become detached from notions of structural and social inequality. Subsequently, they cannot offer resistance to male dominance (Rottenburg, 2014). As argued by McRobbie (2009), post-feminism can be considered as an *undoing* of feminisms. Emergent neoliberal feminism frames women as self-making, self-managing individuals, displacing collective action in

favour of increased individualisation. Meanwhile, critics of neoliberal feminism point to the heightened visibility of feminist activism (Lumby, 2011). Indeed, feminist questions have been constructed in various overlapping fields, perhaps most visibly with the #MeToo movement on social media in 2017.

Whilst previous research work raises important questions, following McRobbie (2015) in relation to a new occupation within a post-feminism era, women footballers are in competition with each other. Football clubs as a workplace, promote a culture of competition to its employees. Consequently employees, rather than formulating strategies of collective action against their relative subordination, view other women and teammates as competition for capital. Ergo, McRobbie argues competition (re)installs new hierarchies. Within post-feminist times, women are posited as responsible for their own future, through a 'must do better' ethos. A technique which functions to create competition between each other, fundamentally protecting male privilege (ibid).

Further to these points, it is useful to re-contextualise the neoliberalisation/post-feminism. Self-confidence is the new compulsory aspect of our time (Gill & Orgad, 2015) most visible on social media. The quest for perfectionism (McRobbie, 2015) is fundamentally entangled with self-confidence and body confidence. The female confidence discourse operates discursively, in this way, self-help strategies that support women are difficult to criticise, as women understand their position to be enriched, better-than-its-ever-been. Yet, promoting self-help strategies, enable

neoliberalism to commodify women's experiences, as women attempt to take control of their lives. To extend this point, confidence as a commodity can be understood as a form of sub-capital. Confidence capital is something valuable, worth having and can be exchanged for distinction and other forms of capital (Jenkins, 1992), perhaps most notably in a sporting context.

In contrast to conventional scholarly offerings of women subject to the patriarchal gaze in the media, women athletes in a post-feminist era are encouraged to control and own their bodies, as a marker of freedom and choice. Social media therefore becomes a space whereby women athletes cultivate brand-image and identity (Banet-Wiser, 2012). According to Gill (2007) the media (and social media) focuses on women athletes' bodies and presents the notion of the possession of a sexy body is a key feature of female identity. Such pressures can lead to female athletes (and women more generally) feeling inferior and encourage self-monitoring of the body. The apparent shift in the conception of femininity from passive to self-determined, resonates with the contemporary cultural ideals of neoliberalism, individuality and autonomy (Toffoletti, 2016).

2.13 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an examination of the development of professional women's football in England. Football can now be considered a career opportunity

for elite women footballers. The focus on professional women's football in England to date has been fairly minimal, not aided by its low visibility and status. The development of the FA WSL sought to address these concerns and therefore provides an opportunity to address the gap in research on professional women's football. It would be hard to argue against the idea that professional women's football in England is in the ascendancy, with increased media attention, payment of players and the creation of career pathways for aspiring elite women footballers.

The inception of the FA Women's Super League in 2011, emerged as a strategy to find space for women in the overwhelmingly male dominated sports market. Yet, the relationship between women and football can be considered complex and contradictory. The recent unitary professionalisation and restructure of women's football in 2018, has shifted the values and structure of the football field. Increased emphasis on both commercialisation and marketisation of the FA, clubs and players is symptomatic of the neoliberal sports system in operation in England, although there is some ambiguity in this approach for the FA WSL. Prevailing discourses of the FA WSL have depicted the game as culturally distinct from men's football, a fairer form of football (Fielding-Lloyd et al. 2018). In this way, the FA has created a vagueness for the women's game more generally, and its players place within the sports market.

The expansion and development of women's football in England has occurred in an environment where football is increasingly calculable and exchangeable. The FA presented FA WSL as a niche product, separate from men's football. However, FA WSL teams are 'parented' by men's clubs. This contradictory cultural space means women's teams are enmeshed in deregulation and the advancing neoliberal principles that dominate men's football (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2016). Although, women's football cannot be considered to operate in line with neoliberal objectives of turning surplus into generated profit (Gayles et al. 2018). Perhaps, it could argued that women's football teams being absorbed into men's clubs strengthens the club brand and perhaps more critically, public perceptions of the club.

Entangled in neoliberalism is post-feminism, or neoliberal feminism (Rottenburg, 2014). Indeed, while there is conflation between the two concepts, there appears to be a growing emphasis on market solutions to inequalities faced in elite women's football. It could be argued the FA WSL is symptomatic of a larger cultural phenomenon of neoliberal feminism displacing liberal feminism. Rather than challenge structural and cultural concerns of women's football, the FA commercialised and marketised the women's game. Individual performances on the field generate interest, but players are also expected to grow the game and inspire a generation. In this way, the success or failure of women's football in England rests on the shoulders of players. The neoliberal woman is mobilsed to convert continued gender inequality from a structural problem to an individual concern (Rottenburg, 2014). Uncertainty is a product of complex institutional environments and the consequences for players are largely unknown. The introduction of the FA WSL

provides a unique opportunity to situate and investigate contemporary constructions of professional women's football. Currently scant work exists of workplace and employment policy for professional women footballers in England. Little consideration has been given to how professional women footballers cope with their highly precarious careers and work life concerns, moreover, there has been no co-ordinated approach to employment and work life issues. As a result, this research will provide an original critical qualitative examination to address the gap in the literature.

CHAPTER THREE: THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The focus of this chapter is the sociological theory and research methods employed in this study. The first section of the chapter discusses the conceptual thinking tools of Pierre Bourdieu. The second section discusses how the study was undertaken from the initial research idea through to the data analysis. The *thinking tools* of Bourdieu are employed to enable a relational understanding of the complex and precarious workplace and work-life conditions of professional women footballers. At the epicentre of Bourdieu's social practice framework is the fusing together of research and theory in a relational manner. Throughout his career, Bourdieu sought to bridge the dichotomy between structure and agency, by integrating the analysis of social agents' experiences and the scrutiny of the objective structures which permit those experiences in the first place (Jenkins, 1992). This research outlines, examines, critiques and applies some ideas of Bourdieu focussing on a relational approach. Utilising a relational framework allows the objects under investigation to be seen in context as part of the whole. To understand the salient properties of women footballers in context, will allow a new gaze on the world of professional footballers.

In developing a conceptual framework to explore the field of professional women's football, it is necessary to discuss Bourdieu's work. The French social theorist contributed to sociological ventures and was particularly influential in exploring

dynamic social practices, dominant power relations and influential factors which contribute to (re)producing unequal relations in society. Bourdieu's academic enquiries sought to problematise the dynamic, interactive relationship between objective social structures and everyday practices. In theorising the social practices of elite women footballers, Bourdieu's formula of (habitus) (capital) + field = social practice (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) provides a useful way of thinking about women's football, hence the next section discusses Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, capital, field, doxa and illusio. The second section in the chapter specifically discusses the methodology adopted in the research.

3.2 Habitus

Bourdieu's theory seeks to bridge the gap between individualistic and structuralist theories of human behaviour (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). This theory understands individual practices as a result of a mutually defining relationship between agents' learned dispositions (habitus) and social positions (capital) within a specific context (field) (Grenfell, 2008). Bourdieu's construction of habitus is undoubtedly one of his most influential concepts. The notion of habitus originated through Aristotle's philosophy of hexis, that broadly guided individuals' moral character (Wacquant, 2016). Indeed, a more contemporary reading of habitus sees Elias exploring the concept long before Bourdieu (Paulle et al. 2012). Bourdieu's habitus can be understood as a durable set of dispositions which work to shape behaviours, attitudes and responses in any given situation (Bourdieu, 1978). Habitus is acquired through lasting exposure to particular social conditions via the internalisation of

external constraints and possibilities (Bourdieu, 1988). For Bourdieu, social action is neither entirely determined nor entirely arbitrary (Adkins, 2003). The nature of habitus comes to the fore at this point, as it is both structural and generative.

The habitus allows individuals to act in interactive spaces and choices are selected from a range of possibilities whereby individuals' past social histories enable them to perceive what is possible (Coupland, 2015). The habitus acts in such a way, to embed certain cultural trajectories in individuals, accordingly it will appear natural to like certain sports, films and books (McGillivray & McIntosh, 2006). Critically the habitus is embodied and produces both individual and collective practices. The term hexis is generally employed by Bourdieu when discussing the embodiment of habitus and its effects on our ways of carrying ourselves (Thorpe, 2009). More concretely hexis is defined as the 'social made body' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:127) as the actor engages with the social world, the habitus expresses itself in posture and the way the body is used. Whilst the idea of the body as a medium for the expression of social reflection is fairly familiar, Bourdieu portrays the body as a repository for social experience that constitutes an essential part of the habitus (Krais, 2006). The dispositions developed shape how individuals view and respond to the world and are largely intuitive rather than deliberate (Miller, 2016) meaning individuals tend to navigate the world without conscious reflection.

A well-established critique of Bourdieu and habitus is its seemingly deterministic nature (Jenkins, 1992). However, it is a partial reading of Bourdieu and habitus that gives the impression that the habitus is incapable of taking into account individuals'

potential reflexivity, and inability to process social change (Krais, 2006; Thorpe, 2009). While never denying the consistency habitus produces, the problem and objection of determinism lies in the fact Bourdieu is keen to stress the ongoing fluctuation between actors who work with and against the sociocultural contexts in which they find themselves entangled (McGillivray & McIntosh, 2006). When we consider the notion of habitus and its effects on professional women footballers, it becomes particularly pertinent to discuss the potential social and political effects of the socio-historically constructed gendered habitus, partly developed in the male dominated field(s) of professional football.

The habitus imprints and encodes in a process of learning and socialisation in an individuals' early childhood. Bourdieu usefully distinguishes the difference between learning and socialisation as the habitus is imparted largely through *experience* rather than *teaching* (Jenkins, 1992). Through experience then, it is possible to gain an understanding of who the women footballers are in this research. The habitus of players appeared to develop in male dominated fields such as football and other sports. Interestingly, all players cited a male influence in their entry to the field of football. The facilitation of football through a male figure is significant as the generative classification schemes of male and female and position taking in the field of football were embodied by the participants. That is to say, players largely accepted their disempowered position as women in the field of football. The habitus for Bourdieu is a product of history which he describes as a 'present past' as individual and collective practices are shaped by perceptions of history. Indeed, Bourdieu makes clear, history can be considered to take on an active presence in

contemporary bodies. It is here we experience Bourdieu in his most convincing manner in overcoming the dualism of subject and object. It is from this perspective, structural forces are internalised by individuals and are in turn, (re)produced in social practice (Hughson, 1996). The quest to discern the under theorised intersection between gender, habitus and women footballers can be reflected on at this juncture.

3.3 Gendered habitus

A well levelled feminist criticism of Bourdieu was the omission of gender in his framework of social practice (Thorpe, 2009). Despite a nuanced explanation of how the classed habitus interacts with the educational system, and how habitus interacts with specific fields of action, he largely neglected analyses of gendered habitus and how it interacts in different fields. He attempted to address this critique in his publication of *Masculine Domination* (2000). The publication evoked strong criticisms from feminist scholars concerning the ahistorical, androcentric worldview (Thorpe, 2009). However, some feminist scholars saw value in Bourdieu's examination and sought to extend his analysis to include gendered habitus. Krais (2006) understands the gendered habitus as the social construction of masculinity and femininity that shapes the body and define how it is perceived. Huppatz (2012) develops this insight and argues that gendered habitus is developed in such way to draw women into occupational fields such as nursing and hairdressing. Individuals develop dispositions accordingly, reproducing the fields logic, and practice. Thus, habitus and field exist in a reciprocal relationship (Miller, 2016).

Professional women footballers do not operate in a social vacuum; they operate across multiple interconnected fields of action. Bourdieu views the habitus as subtly adapting to changes in the field, and habitus modifies according to the fluctuations of the conditions in fields. Yet according to feminist scholars, Bourdieu's analysis of gendered habitus is fixed and assumes feminine characteristics (Thorpe, 2009; Huppatz, 2012; Miller, 2016). This is problematic as it reduces gender to sexual differentiation, assuming homogeneity of the feminine habitus. With this in mind, it is reasonable to argue Bourdieu does not treat his analysis of gender with the same logical consistency of his understanding of the habitus-field relationship (Miller, 2016). However, Bourdieu's conceptual work has been developed by scholars in the last decade into a more relational, reflexive, perspective (Brown, 2006). With a multidimensional approach in mind, understanding how gender interacts with field, requires a more nuanced approach, in particular to understand how gendered norms become embodied.

To determine the effects of gendered habitus, opportunities and constraints, it is important to understand how the gendered habitus instilled at an early age, interacts with the footballing habitus, embodied in later life via entry into the football field. The cultural unconsciousness that develops through "attitudes, aptitudes, knowledge, themes and problems, in short, the whole system of categories of perception and thought" acquired by a systematic social apprenticeship (Bourdieu, 1971: 182), gathers strength coinciding with time spent engrained in a particular field. In other words, habitus becomes more engrained as one is immersed in the football field.

A central element of habitus is its development in response to a field. A consideration for this research, is how gendered dispositions are reproduced in the field of professional football and across other fields. As suggested earlier in the chapter, early experiences hold particular weight in the construction of the gendered habitus. The dispositions formed, are the products of opportunities and constraints framing individuals' earlier life experiences (Thorpe, 2009). An example of internalisation of gendered dispositions could be located in 1921, and the FA ban on women playing football which was not reversed until 1971. The ban, largely accepted as common-sense in England, could perhaps have been embodied in participants' social environment, for example players' parents, who contribute to the socialised and historically formed habitus. An understanding of individuals asymmetrical position perhaps can be ascertained, as women are predisposed to understand football as monopolised by men. These practical and symbolic acts of masculine domination are what Bourdieu termed as the 'paradox of doxa' in spite of multiple actions performed daily that would suggest a change in gender relations, these actions have a paradoxical effect of stabilising gender relations (Brown, 2006).

In Bourdieusian terms, gender is considered an essential part of *habitus* and a determining feature of an agents cultural and symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 2001; Paradis, 2012). Gendered habitus and practice define masculinity and femininity differently, these differences are reinforced by symbolic dichotomies such as man/woman, strong/weak, passive/aggressive (Bourdieu, 2001; Paradis, 2012). With this in mind, there are two related concerns to consider, firstly, all players interviewed for this study attributed their entry into football to a male figure. Secondly,

players life histories form as young girls competing in a male dominated environment, that until recently had excluded women from professional status. The synthesis of these two points provides value to the oft critiqued determinism of Bourdieu's framework.

Bourdieu assumes the habitus will adapt to the field and agents are inclined to submission since inclination or submission are part of the dispositions of habitus (Adkins, 2003). Most scholars agree Bourdieu's theory of social change requires improving. Here Bourdieu, and this research, may be considered somewhat conflicting. McNay (1999) suggests entrenched aspects of gender identity cannot be easily reshaped. Therefore, despite women's entry into the field of professional football it does not free women from the burden of feminine expectations. This uneven development and entrenched aspects of gender identity are not easily dislodged. This often critiqued, deterministic nature of habitus, is indicative of how Bourdieu's social theory is useful for understanding how gender is played out in the professional football field. Moreover, how inclusion does not eradicate historical marginalisation. Structure is key to this perspective as both *structuring* and *structured,* thought and action are loaded with values, interests and orthodoxies (Grenfell, 2008). Thus, habitus helps explain entrenched gendered identities and the difficulty of change for professional women footballers. Whilst some players are able to negotiate space, acquire and exchange capital, others may be influenced by their gendered identities, and expectations towards their work, and remain determined by a value system fundamentally categorised as male.

3.4 Capital

The second component of Bourdieu's formula - capital - helps us to understand how cultural advantage, distinction and domination is (re)produced in and through social fields (McGillivray & McIntosh, 2006). While habitus concerns transporting of social dispositions, Bourdieu's notion of capital concerns the positions of individuals within social fields (Hughson, 1996). Bourdieu outlined three *species* of capital in *The Logic of Practice*. Distinction is drawn between material and immaterial forms of capital. Social actors struggle over relevant forms of capital to define their position in the field. *Economic* capital is distinctively material, the ownership of material resources; *social* capital, is the power and resources that stem from social networks and valued relationships with significant others, more than that, the added value of group membership – such as a football team; *cultural* capital breaks with the idea that capital must be material to be considered valuable, certain things worthy of accumulation despite intangibility. Including knowledge, skill, taste and qualifications (Bourdieu, 1991).

There are different manifestations of cultural capital; *embodied*, as long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body, for example a muscular physique *hexis (*Bourdieu, 1986); in opposition, *objectified*, in the form of goods for example books; and institutionalised, certified capital, guaranteed competence as formal education (ibid). *Symbolic* capital arises out other forms of capital and is considered the most powerful form of capital (Everett, 2002). Symbolic capital is deemed powerful when it is legitimised in the field by agents, it is found in the form of prestige and reputation

and consequently highly valued by individuals (Bourdieu, 1990). Reflecting on Bourdieu's analysis of a professional with symbolic capital (1984), is interesting insofar as understanding professions as social fields. However, Hughson (1996) develops this point further, recognising individuals endowed with symbolic capital establish both reputation and image within their own group or profession, but also across multiple fields. In pursuing such possible advancements, professional women footballers will naturally experience football in diverse ways based on the gendered habitus instilled during childhood, sexuality, ethnicity and the socio-political contexts in which they operate. Experiences inevitably impact individual and collective strategies to acquire potential capital. Bourdieu himself suggested the evolving potential of capital, when he added symbolic capital and when he proposed each category had subtypes (Huppatz, 2009; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

In line with Bourdieu's proposal, there is an emerging tradition amongst scholars to develop and expand sub-types of capital. Contemporary extensions of capital to consider that are applicable to participants in this study, gendered: physical, educational and erotic forms of capital (Skeggs, 2004; McGillivray & McIntosh, 2006; McCormack & Walseth, 2013; Konjer et al., 2017). All forms of capital are interconnected (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Each capital has varying degree of liquidity and convertibility (Bourdieu, 1986). In a field, the dominant form of capital in circulation governs what is of value and worthy of exchange. Physical capital, a sub-form of symbolic capital, is highly valued in the football field. The legitimated ways of navigating the football field are invariably associated with physical performance, embodied competencies such as speed, stamina and power, are accorded high

value in the football world (McGillivray & McIntosh, 2006). Symbolic capital is at stake in any social field. Bourdieu points out all forms of capital are convertible. Possessing educational capital, a strand of cultural capital, enhances individuals' opportunities for distinction, yet it is not accorded prestige within the professional football field. Whilst in the short term this is understandable, in the long term, it is increasingly unsustainable. In alternative fields, and for some women footballers, in the football field, physical capital is not transferable into economic capital.

Erotic capital, a sub-form of both social and symbolic capital, is conceived as a multi-faceted asset that comprises six elements (Hakim, 2010). Hakim (2010: 500) views erotic capital as, 'beauty, sexual attractiveness, grace and charm, physical fitness, style of dress and sexual competence'. The erotic capital framework receives support from empirical studies tracing the 'beauty premium' in different spheres of society (Konjer et al. 2017). For the players in this study, the football field is an occupational sphere where erotic capital can be transferred into economic capital. Bourdieu makes clear the better adjusted one's habitus is to the field in which one occupies as position, the better ones 'sense of the game' and hence one's ability to acquire symbolic capital and a dominant position in this specific field (Jenkins, 1992). Taking into account Bourdieu's view that it is the sum total of capital that determines an individuals' chance of advancement, it is necessary to consider the fields in which the exchange process takes place.

3.5 Field

The field is the third element of Bourdieu's formula for social practice. The field has an active relationship with habitus and capital, both play a critical role in both social practice and defining capital within the field (McGillivray & McIntosh, 2006). The current organisation of football in England as a particular sports discipline can be considered a sub-field of English sport in general. Despite its status as a sub-field, football is a relatively autonomous field and represents a self-contained territory with its own inner logic, rules and sets certain limits and informs practice (Adkins, 2003; McGillivray et al. 2005).

Fields are defined by the stakes within the field (Jenkins, 1992). The inner logic of competition within the sub-field of football is expressed in several ways as football teams are divided into leagues with the possibility of promotion and relegation. Players who operate within teams are objectively considered as teammates, yet somewhat paradoxically, high levels of competition exist for starting eleven positions within teams. Additionally, media and commercial opportunities reinforce the logic of competition from club to club, player to player. For women's football in particular to be considered a successful product to invest in, players and coaches must produce results and be a commercially viable product to attract and sustain interest from the media and sponsors.

Each field is a structured system of social positions - governed internally by power relations. Positions stand in relation to domination and subordination by virtue of the

access individuals have to forms of capital (Jenkins, 1992). The relevant forms of capital at stake in each field do not occur randomly, but rather, reflect the way in which the field has formed. It is within fields distinct games are played, Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992: 17) note, 'A field is simultaneously a space of conflict and competition in which participants vie to establish monopoly over the effective capital within it'. Within the football field, for example, players contend for various goods and resources which are considered of value within the specific field. Fields are contingent and everchanging, to think of a field requires one to think relationally (Everett, 2002).

The development of the sub-field of professional women's football, means individuals straddling the new commercial demands of the field. Demands are related to the economic field, necessary for the function and competition of the field (Crossely, 2004), and the conventional demands of the professional football field itself, for example performance to acquire capital. Within the field of professional football, players not only contend for capital, but shape the habitus in the field and the forms of action within the field. However, Bourdieu (1977) makes clear this is not done consciously. For the most part, actors will not be aware of their role within the field. The emphasis on actors is an important one, mapping the relationship and interaction between actors allows a recognition for actors as not just individuals but *active* social agents. It is indeed the agency of actors which must be studied to enable an understanding of field(s).

It is through the theorising of field and the conflict fundamental to its function, that Bourdieu underscores the relationship between field and cultural capital. Cultural dispositions, skills, abilities, and preferences that are considered cultivated, or highly valued socio-economically, are only valid in relation to a particular field. Bourdieu makes clear, social agents will employ certain strategies adapted to interest fulfilment (Jenkins, 1992). The positions that agents occupy, and strategies which they employ will reflect both their habitus, and capital borne into the field (Hughson, 1996). Strategies which actors employ for interest pursuit, occur as a result of second nature, or 'practical sense' (Bourdieu, 1990: 62). Using a sporting analogy, Bourdieu (1977) understands practice, competencies, dispositions to operate below the level of conscious and language - it is what he terms 'a feel for the game'.

Adkins (2003) simply describes a 'feel for the game' as something which can be defined as a non-cognitive form of knowledge which often cannot be explicitly articulated. Perhaps inspired by the phenomenology of Merleau- Ponty (1962) before him, Bourdieu consistently used the metaphor of 'the feel for the game' in articulating how the body binds together his central theoretical constructs of habitus, capital, and field (see Bourdieu, 1984, 1990, 1993). Indeed, to continue the sporting analogy, those who wish to acquire the most powerful positions in the field, must be the most successful at playing the game. In sum, the pursuit of the game captures Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, capital and field, through practice. Individuals positioned in fields, struggle for lucrative forms of capital, influenced by what they perceive as achievable (doxa) through their internalised habitus.

3.6 Doxa

Each overlapping field of action has its own practical logic, its own *doxa*. Doxa is the formation and perpetuation of the taken-for-granted in a field. More concretely, doxa is socially and culturally accepted ways of perceiving, evaluating, and behaving in fields which becomes accepted and naturalised (Bourdieu, 1977). It is through the process of construction and embodiment of doxa, that agents develop a specific habitus; a feel for games that are played in the field(s) agents navigate (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Paradis, 2012). That is to say, when the alignment of habitus and doxa occurs within a field, agents assume a 'fish in water' position (Paradis, 2012), the agent is unaware of the game, but nonetheless recognises it as meaningful. Towards explaining the power of doxa Bourdieu (1990) makes explicit: the symbolic power of the taken-for-granted cannot be underestimated. The taken-for-granted rests on both historically developed and socially constructed knowledge which goes uncontested (Skille, 2014). Moreover, the concept of doxa incorporates unquestioned social conceptions into the bodies of women (McGillivray et al. 2005).

For many participants in this study, the field of football was previously inaccessible as a profession due to the gendered hierarchy, perceived as natural and self-evident (Skogvang, 2009). Men's power and dominance of football in England, is taken-for-granted, and men's football is considered the legitimate form of football (Ibid). Similar to the field of boxing (Paradis, 2012), and beyond macro doxa, football as a sub-field of sport, has implicit blueprints that define and evaluate ideal body types of skilled and committed participants. Paradis understands such blueprints as a reflection of

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doxic schemes inscribed on the bodies of athletes (ibid). The ideal-body types described by Paradis, I term as micro-doxa and serve as forms of legitimsation and are defined as bodily doxa to which athletes seek to ascribe.

The field is constituted by a particular terrain, both by the way that the playing field is configured, and by the rules of the game (Colley, 2012). For a field to work, there must be rules, stakes, and people ready to play the game, equipped with the habitus to do so (Moi, 1991). As indicated above, the field is a particular structure of distribution of particular forms of capital. Possessing powerful forms of capital provides agents with legitimacy within the field. Such individuals become spokespersons for the doxa of the field, challengers to their position are considered lacking in capital, as heterodoxa, who have limited legitimacy (Moi, 1991). According to Bourdieu masculine domination of fields represents the prime example of submission to social orthodoxy (Bourdieu, 2001). From here, Bourdieu identifies a conflict between those who defend the orthodoxy and those who generate heterodoxy.

Similarities can be drawn here with Kuhn's (1962) notion of paradigm shift, insofar as the two opposing strategies are related, as one generates the other, the dominant establishment, in this example men, *orthodoxy*, and the subordinate challengers, in this example women, *heterodoxy*, both share an unspoken acceptance that the game is worth playing. Two black women, Alex Scott and Eni Aluko, were included in punditry teams for the men's World Cup 2018 on mainstream television. Both professional players' legitimacy was questioned throughout the tournament, as

Simon Kelner in his iNews piece stated the women were included for diversity, not for their football knowledge (Kelner, 2018). Examples such as this, represent the act of engaging in battle for recognised capital is in itself an acceptance of the rules of the game and moreover, the game is worth playing (Moi, 1991).

The conditions for the submission of social agents are created by what Bourdieu (2001), terms as *symbolic violence* (Brown, 2006). Bourdieu (2001:1-2), defines symbolic violence in the following way: 'A gentle violence, imperceptible and invisible even to its victims, exerted for the most part through, the purely symbolic channels of communication and cognition (more precisely, mis-recognition), recognition or even feeling'. Everett (2002) argues, where doxa or common-sense produces unequal distributions of capital, and legitimisation of forms of capital, symbolic violence will be found. The act of symbolic violence or mis-recognition exerted on a complicit social agent presents itself as the natural order of things. It is important to recognise symbolic violence as legitimate and therefore wholly unrecognisable as violence (Moi, 1991).

In *Masculine Domination* Bourdieu (2000: 30) describes women as 'condemned' to participate in symbolic violence and compelled to comply with both agents, and structures of domination (Thorpe, 2009). A process of subtle inculcations (McNay, 1999), arise out of an acceptance of the underlying doxa and entails a degree of complicity on the part of the dominated (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). As discussed earlier, a common criticism of Bourdieu's work are the implications of determinism. The illusio, which helps explain this, is the tendency for social actors regardless of

their dominant, subordinate, orthodox or heterodox views, to share a common-sense view that their field of struggle is worth pursuing (Swartz, 1997).

3.7 Illusio

The concept of illusio is rarely discussed beyond Bourdieu's work but it can be considered central to his thinking (Wacquant, 1992). The concept of illusio is fundamental to this research, as it highlights how players are taken in by the game and find it difficult to see without its logic (McGillivray et al. 2005). Illusio is critical to understanding the relationship between the social subjectivity of habitus, and the objective determinations of the field. Bourdieu makes clear illusio, explains how actors are caught up in the game, the belief it is worth playing, and their investment and commitment to its stakes (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). In the relatively autonomous field of professional football, multiple illusio exist. Illusio is inscribed deep within the body (Wacquant, 1995). An example of the inculcation of illusio in the body, are dominant forms of masculinity and femininity that are reinforced because gender ideals are internalised within the gendered habitus (Metcalfe, 2018).

Upon entering the field, some individuals more than others, have the habitus that enables a better 'feel for the game' (Bourdieu, 1990), meaning in football, men are better equipped for success in the field, they are like a 'fish in water' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Whereas women struggle to hold contradictory subject positions of women, and footballer (Acker, 2010). Women footballers straddle conflicting expectations of acting feminine, and being a footballer, the initial habitus of women

may not be matched to the expectations of the illusio of the field. A lack of fit between habitus and field becomes obvious, equally this suggests fundamental changes in the field, can disrupt the illusio (see Grenfell & James, 2004). Illusio is powerful, it produces a type of enchantment of a particular field and provides a sense of the emotional attachment that agents feel in the game (Crolley, 2012).

Illusio is a key concept in Bourdieu's theoretical thinking tools (Lupu & Empson, 2015; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Without illusio, it becomes difficult to interpret how and why actors engage in the stakes of the game and their difficulty in imagining their life outside, or without the game. A more developed aspect of the concept is the football illusio. Footballers regardless of gender, ethnicity, ability and so on are told with the necessary sacrifice, dedication and discipline they will succeed in the field (McGillivray et al. 2005). Conversely it is argued, apart from elite players, this is untrue (Ibid). Illusio can be troublesome as success is never clearly defined. The combination of the football illusio and gendered habitus, means women assume the position of a 'fish out of water' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

The game players are not cynical, they are committed to playing the game (Acker, 2010). Bourdieu saw this concept as a means of completing his theory of action and reflecting his on-going fascination with *unmasking* relations of power (Crolley & Guéry, 2015). Illusio offers an important insight into how emotion is linked to practice by detailing how individuals get caught up in the game and invest in its stakes (Crolley, 2012). An example of illusio, in the context of professional women footballers are their experiences at work. Players often struggle with precarious

economic and organisational conditions yet, offer little resistance to the socialisation process. Illusio offers valuable insights into how emotion and ethics are linked to the theory of practice (Crolley, 2012). It is important to recognise the difference between illusion and illusio. Illusio is more conscious, explicit and agentic than the underlying *doxa* (ibid).

Without illusio there would be no competition between agents or the opportunity to reproduce the game (Lupu & Empson, 2015). The strong belief in the stakes, ultimately leads to the game being inscribed in the bodies of agents (Bourdieu, 1998). It is the inscription of the game on the body, which means participants have no answer to questions about their membership or commitment to it (Bourdieu, 2000). In the context of the professional football field, the game is the accumulation of multiple forms of capital, associated with and striving for international status, winning trophies and commercial opportunities. Bourdieu (2000), explains the submission to the game and its illusio is the effects of symbolic power, which is exerted on bodies without any physical constraint.

Illusio is closely linked to emotion and the quest of legitimacy, recognition, or symbolic capital. The illusio of the football field becomes particularly important when we consider the entrenched, often unconscious, conventional notions of football, masculinity and femininity. The result of such conventions, is both men and women, come to embody and visually perceive the self-evident illusio and legitimise their dominated or dominating positions in the football field and occupy the social position which legitimately stem from these naturalised qualities (Brown, 2006). The entry of

women into the football field, has created an unevenness to the football field and the rules of the game. Agents are compelled by the game, accept and internalise the rules of the game, accepting the conditions as taken-for-granted. Therefore, both men and women come to embody the conditions of their own dominating or dominated position in the field, it is here we see the relevance of Bourdieu's theory of practice to theorise football as work for women.

3.8 Methodology

In the introduction I stated that one of the objectives of this chapter is to describe and explain how this study was undertaken. Thus, this section describes each stage of the research process from initial ideas through to the data collection and analysis. Similar to previous research that has attempted to explore and describe hard to reach social fields (Roderick, 2006), and avoiding the subject/object dualism, key to the work of Bourdieu, this section offers a first-person account. It is important to present the personal position of myself in the social field and relate experiences I had during my career and the research process in an effort to bring to life *stepping into the shoes* of the research object.

Accompanying comment on the description and explanation of the project, are reflections of problems common to that endeavour. This study employs a qualitative interpretative framework that allows for an in-depth understanding of football as work for women in England. It is important to recognise, given the gendered inequalities women experience at work, the collective experiences of women will be different to

their male counterparts. However, it is assumed here that the category of 'women' cannot be generalised as such. Women experience gender, and therefore work, differently across, social class, ethnicity, sexuality, disability and cultural background. This section will give an overview of qualitative interpretative methodology and the position of the study. Detailed here, will be the decisions made both negative and positive, and how the study progressed in relation to the research process, by means of a reflexive research diary (Appendix 1).

The focus of qualitative research is two-fold. First, to acknowledge participants' realities, and second, to report realities through interpretations of participants via quotes, and the presentation of themes which reflect the words of participants and actively advance evidence of different perspectives on each theme (Creswell, 2007). As mentioned previously in this chapter, it is precisely this detachment of the subject-object dualism that Bourdieu considers unacceptable (Jenkins, 1992). According to Bourdieu, the epistemological authority accorded to objectivity effectively renders the researcher with little choice, other than to become a detached observer. However, Bourdieu's work suggests a means whereby this problem can be overcome (Jenkins, 1992). Bourdieu's project lends itself to both recognising the position of the researcher *as well as* the position of the research subjects. Attempting to thread a dialectical middle-path between objectivism and subjectivism distinguishes Bourdieu's project and hence this research project. There will be some overlap with the concepts discussed in the previous section, this overlap is inevitable, as the research adopts a reflexive approach which incorporates a dynamic relationship between theory and methods.

3.9 Position of the researcher

In order to research football as work for women, and the work-life concerns of professional women footballers in England, it was essential for me to take an honest and reflexive approach. To effectively reflect on my position, required a commitment to reflect on my own experiences, prejudices, and feelings as a former professional footballer, throughout the research process. Before undertaking the project, I had played professional football for over twenty years. I had played from a young age and competed at various clubs across England and Europe. I had been devoted to the game of football, and subsequently built my identity around it. Not only did I play football, I watched Liverpool F.C with great regularity thanks to my Dad being an ardent supporter of the club. By the age of 10 I was competing in several sports, but football was the centre of my life.

My football participation and attendance was largely facilitated by men and with men, although, my Mum often drove me to football and my brother and her watched me play irrespective of weather conditions, until I reached the age of 12. Support from school for football was varied and inconsistent. I developed a resilience towards inconsistency and casual bullying from boys and male members of staff. I was determined to play, no matter the cost, even if that cost was school work, friends or family. Your teammates become your friends and family, the people who understand the sacrifices you make that are required to make it to the top. My thoughts were evidenced by one senior international when we discussed sacrifices during interview:

"…And we do have a great life, but it takes a lot as well. You miss out on so much with your friends and I didn't really have … like … a childhood. You don't get to go to 18ths, or parties there is no social. And it effects how close you are with your mates and you become a little bit different cos that group haven't got time to fit you in or you haven't with them so … it does take a toll on your personal life" (Interview 15).

My experiences at different clubs and my biography as a player shaped my research ambitions, particularly the emphasis on employment policy and the welfare of players. There were times I understood player welfare to be last on the list of concerns for clubs. Scholars support this notion, suggesting our interests have guided our decisions before the research is conducted (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Therefore, my research objectives could not be described as a neutral instrument. My life and experiences as a footballer underpinned my ambitions for the research, and more than this, impacted my thoughts and feelings towards the object of my research, the players. I set out as a footballer insider, turned researcher outsider. Reflection identified my emotional investment into the data collection, participants were not merely units of data to collect and analyse (Sequerra, 2014).

Indeed, this reinforced the insider outsider dichotomy which appeared more difficult than initially anticipated. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) argue the distinction between insider outsider is problematic as researchers are able to draw on their backgrounds, but at times are positioned outsiders by participants. However, within the data collection, I was reassured on several occasions by different participants

that my position as an insider allowed them to be open and talk without fear, exemplified in the following extract from a senior international:

"Like I bet half the players have said things you wouldn't expect … like I've said stuff that I wouldn't to anyone else, cos you can't say things like this, cos then people would be like … oh hang on why you said that? Like you've been there where I am now and that's why I can open up and say what I've said today. But I wouldn't say half the things I've said today cos you'd be worried and that's the way the games gone" (Interview 17)

Those defined as insider outsiders are likely to have access to different sorts of information, without having to use one or the other strategy in isolation. The relational nature of insider outsider permitted me to combat myths associated with both positions. Myths assert only outsiders conduct valid research through objectivity, whilst insiders contest that only insiders can appreciate the true character of the participants (Hammerseley & Atkinson, 2007). Upon reflection, it became clear my subjectivity was central to the research and it could not be excluded, nothing can be considered objective as my thoughts, feelings and experiences are implicated in a value system. Therefore, questions of validity, generalisability, and reliability borne out of realist and positivist conceptions were not applicable (discussed in detail further in the chapter).

The aim of qualitative research is to frame and conceptualise the researchers' subjectivities (Sequerra, 2014). In this way, I have attempted to *write myself in* as a

key player in the research (Allen-Collinson, 2012). Auto-ethnography is a research approach which draws upon the researcher's own experiences, whilst in part this is true, the second tenet of auto-ethnography is being part of the world you are researching, which I am no longer. As such, the research cannot not be considered exclusively auto-ethnographic, nor does it claim to be. Reflexivity can be considered one of Bourdieu's main methodological considerations (Everett, 2002). Bourdieu emphasises the necessity of the researcher considering their position in relation to the research object. It is critical to acknowledge the way in which my knowledge as a professional footballer and a researcher influences research claims (Everett, 2002). Yet, the research lends from auto-ethnography, particularly embodiment, and lived sporting experience and emotional dimensions of sport culture which Allen-Collinson (2012) addresses. Considering these methodological, and theoretical positions this research is not auto-ethnographic per se, but my entrée into the field and my relationship with participants is similar to that of an auto-ethnographer because of this I am reflexive in my method in the way of auto-ethnography.

The past two decades have seen a rise in auto-ethnographic research that has also been referred to as biographical ethnography/sociology or self-narrative research (Anderson, 2006). As stated above, the research does not claim to be autoethnographic. However, to place the research into context, it is useful to delineate autoethnography to highlight its relationship to the research. Following Anderson (2006) the term auto-ethnography first recognises the researcher as a full member of the research group or settings; second, the researcher must be visible as such in the research and third; the research/researcher is committed to improving

theoretical understandings of social phenomena. There are caveats to the above understandings for this research. Firstly, the researcher is a *former* member of the research group, more specifically the researcher is a former professional footballer and will be visible as such throughout the research. This means the researcher is known to the participants and as stated earlier occupies an *insider, outsider* position. Finally, the researcher is committed to improving not only theoretical understandings of social phenomena, but also substantive subjective/objective understandings of phenomena.

A criticism with an auto-ethnographic approach is that it is an act of self-indulgence, or egocentrism. Yet, as previous research points out, the charge of self-indulgence is based on misplaced assumptions on the nature of self-culture-society relations (Sparkes, 2000; Sparkes & Smith, 2014). To discuss personal experiences, is to discuss social experiences as culture that circulates through our practice. It is with this in mind, we recognise exactly how auto-ethnography is connected to a world beyond the self (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). The notion of our experiences circulating through our practice, provides value to using Bourdieu, and qualitative interpretative methodology. Bourdieu was keen to stress that subjectivity cannot be understood outside social context, as agents are essentially socialised through complex interactions within their field. As a former professional footballer of twenty years, socialisation could be considered inevitable. Allen-Collinsen (2012) suggests auto-ethnography requires a high level of reflexivity and critical awareness. Indeed, critical awareness is something I have attempted in my practice as a researcher. I attempted this through challenging my socialisation as a footballer and questioning common-

sense assumptions I developed through my career, such as the FA's agenda for women's football being only negative.

Bourdieu was not the first, nor the only, social theorist who reflexivity appealed to. The difference of Bourdieu's brand of reflexivity was aimed at increasing the scope of social science knowledge. Other accounts of reflexivity (Giddens 1984), fail to recognise reflexivity as a form of sociological work, a necessity, a requirement. In an *invitation to reflexive sociology* Wacquant (1992) outlines three types of biases which may blur the sociological gaze. Firstly, social origins, or class, ethnicity, gender what may be the influences of the individual researcher. Secondly, is the position of the researcher in the academic field, and the potential positions which may be offered. That means as researchers, we are dominated by the potentiality of the future and effectively, that potential may affect how or what we research. The third bias, Wacquant believes is the most original to Bourdieu's reflexivity the *intellectual* bias which entices us to define the world as a spectacle, rather than problems to be solved practically.

For Bourdieu, researchers must systemically explore their unthought categories which predetermine thought. By communicating the factors that influenced my position as a researcher, it enables the readers to more fully understand the interpretations within the research. To follow Bourdieu's brand of reflexivity, I turned the instrument of research upon myself (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), in doing so, I felt vulnerable to my emotions towards the participants and their narratives. To acknowledge bias provides opportunity to gain sufficient knowledge of institutional

constraints, such as the FA, or the University in which I am fundamentally enmeshed (Everetts, 2002). This can be understood as fundamentally different to reflecting on field notes, by using a first-person account to emphasise empathy, and understanding for the research object.

I want to acknowledge that I have reflected on my social origins and positioning within the field. Perhaps to a degree whereby future research potential and related position to the field of power is conflicted. During the data collection period women's football in England faced a crisis. The England manager Mark Sampson was sacked due to a multitude of allegations which included bullying, racism, and safeguarding issues, both during his management tenure with England and his previous role at Bristol Academy (Magowan, 2017). These issues split women's football, and more specifically players loyalties, including mine; I was particularly vocal in my support of the players in question. Steph Houghton, the England captain, stated the allegations had 'hit the squad very hard' (ibid). For a short period, the conflict impacted the willingness of players to agree to interview. The interview process continued, however, I noted I was fortunate to have completed the majority of interviews at this point. To acknowledge my position in the field as an academic, and a former member of the field I am researching, explains my position in the group and places emphasis on reflection.

To explore the unthought requires a deconstruction of knowledge of the field in which I was socialised. Structures of discourse which have been internalised are often politically charged social pre-constructions. To enable me to deconstruct pre-

constructions the process of reflection involved a meshing of theory, method and empirical research, which according to Bourdieu go hand in hand (Jenkins, 1992). Bourdieu was a critic of using a diary, he advocated subjecting the researcher to the same critical analysis as the constructed research object at hand (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Contrary to these claims, for this project I used a reflexive diary as a means of self-criticism, and examination of my thoughts and feelings towards myself, the project, social conditions and the participants (see Appendix 1). It was the use of a reflexive diary that allowed me to see the social reality properly.

The research stance I occupy allows for both the auto-ethnographic insight of the former 'insider' to be coupled now with 'outsider' knowledge. As a former professional footballer, researching professional footballers, epistemologically it would be difficult to separate the researcher from the researched. A vital part of undertaking the research project is the maintenance of the legitimacy of the researcher in the social world in question. The participants were known to the researcher and of my former status which allowed for the discussion and gathering of detail in particular cases and situations which other researchers may not understand or be able to obtain (Jenkins, 1992). More specifically it is my position as a researcher and my lived experiences, in relation to the culture and the subject of the research which blur the lines between personal and social (Allen-Collinson, 2012; Sparkes & Smith, 2014).

Distinctions then, between myself and others are impossible to make. Moreover, to separate oneself from the research object is unworkable for this research, I was

durably immersed within the field. According to Bourdieu, immersion results in social sensitivity (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), the researcher effectively embodies ways of knowing the realities of the social field, seeing actual worlds more clearly (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). The field did not just appear waiting to be studied, it is through self-reflection and critical analysis I was able to construct the research objective(s).

3.10 Interpretative framework

Considering the position of the researcher then, methodologically, this research project adopts an interpretative qualitative approach, which is the approach most appropriate given the 'insider position' of the researcher (Merton, 1972). The interpretative paradigm is informed by a concern to understand the social world as it is (Morgan, 1980). Therefore, an interpretative qualitative approach, which focuses on stepping into the shoes of the researched, was employed (Jenkins, 1992). The research process was therefore informed by philosophical assumptions and commitments of the researcher, which frame the manner in which both individuals and groups conceptualise both the nature and purpose of the research project (Sparkes, 1992).

With this in mind, it is necessary to outline the alternative ways of making sense of social reality in research and the methodological approach of the current research. The positivist approach in sociology broadly represents the assertion that concepts and methods employed by the natural sciences can be utilised in the social world (Giddens, 1984). It is important then, to discuss one's assumptions. Ontology

broadly refers to whether reality is objective and external to human beings, or whether it is created by one's own consciousness. Epistemology is concerned with knowledge and how it can be acquired. The question then, is whether we see knowledge as a hard body of objective reality, or a subjective experience of reality. The perspective we adopt will affect the methodological approach utilised within the research. Positivists largely tend to argue universal laws govern social behaviour and treat knowledge as objective.

A key tenet of positivism is the ontological perspective that the researcher remains independent of what is being researched and the research phenomenon is an objective reality (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Knowledge, according to realist assumptions, must be attained, through an objective distance from the world. If this distance is not maintained we risk tainting reality with our own subjective beliefs (Angen, 2000). Moreover, the reliability of knowledge and methods employed to generate knowledge rest on repetition of the experiment and the capacity to generalise results (Ibid). As such, positivism lends itself largely to a quantitative project, seeking definitive answers from quantitative data by testing a hypothesis (Silverman, 2013). As mentioned above, due to my position in the field, detachment from the research object would be impossible.

The foundation of the interpretative epistemology is that all human action is meaningful and must be interpreted and understood in the context of social practice. For the interpretative researcher, the world of our lived experience, the *lifeworld* and *life-history* are the fertile ground in which our understandings grow and formulate

(Angen, 2000). More concretely, what we *know* either consciously or subconsciously, is culturally informed throughout socialisation, relations and experiences. This is where the intertwining of Bourdieu's habitus and interpretative approaches become complementary, as our values and beliefs present themselves often subconsciously. For the interpretative researcher to be attuned to discourses in the context of human understanding, means we cannot step outside of our socialised selves into a neutral standpoint (Angen, 2000). Our very being in the world means we are already morally implicated.

For the qualitative researcher, multifaceted, constructed realities exist, and the research process consists of interpreting the understandings of the subjects involved (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Bourdieu's project rested on overcoming the subjective/objective dualism that dominates social science research. Thus, relationally both theory and method should not be severed from one another, one informs the other, both guide and structure the other (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), during the process of research for this study I focused on this idea. Thus, the interpretative process began from one interview, to the next, I attempted to reflect upon what had been said and in what way, and whether I needed to change, adapt or add questions. It was crucial during this analysis phase to remain reflexive. Elliot and Timulak (2005) suggest both, challenging scepticism and self-refection as mechanisms, are often overlooked. I employed these methods by the means of a reflexive diary (Appendix 1) which allowed me to document my thoughts and be self-critical.

Within my criticisms were concerns of my abilities as a researcher and related worries about doing a good job, not only to acquire the necessary data but also in my 'new' career, separate but still intimately connected to my participants realities. It was crucial for the analysis to be systematic and organised, so I could locate information and trace first-level data back to the context of the data (Elliot & Timulak, 2005). I transcribed each interview verbatim, I then read the transcripts multiple times before considering questions and concepts which emerged from the transcripts. Concepts that emerged, were mainly examples of the new realities of professional footballers that included, habitus, illusio, doxa, capital, employment policy, embodied career, social media and welfare concerns. During interviews and when reading the transcripts, I was conscious of identifying emerging patterns of behaviour among the participants.

3.11 Interviewing as a research tool

With the position of the researcher and the field of study in mind, qualitative research, of which semi-structured interviewing is one strand, is particularly well suited to exploring subjective experiences and more generally gaining rich data (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Ireland and Holloway (1996: 94) 'understand interviewing as a technique that involves a conversation with a purpose'. The interviewers' objective is clear, they are to obtain information about participants perceptions, thoughts, feelings and emotions towards the conversation in question. But how straight forward is this objective, there is much to consider.

Bourdieu (1999) amongst others, argues, interviews carry potential for false, collusive information, and suspected falsehoods in interviewing. False because it is unfaithful to the particularities of the life under scrutiny, and collusive as the interviewer goes along with the narrative (Yanos & Hopper, 2008). Bourdieu (1999), refers to data with suspected falsehoods as unusable and encourages it to be dropped from the analysis. This approach can be considered rather hasty, and moreover, given the timeframe and position of the researcher, radical and unethical. Whilst Bourdieu did not discuss the conditions under which false, collusive information is likely to occur, Yanos and Hopper (2008) argue authenticity is likely to compromised when interviewing in context which reflect on individual identity. An example to support this hypothesis, in a manner consistent with the warnings of Bourdieu, are footballers' tendencies to talk fairly robotically, in a manner expected of them. This was highlighted to me in a particular interview, as a player stated they are told what to say in interviews by club staff. The following extract describes the robotic manner expected of players:

"Like you have to say and do the right things to get picked and you're like a robot now" (Interview 15) Or as another player put it – "expected to do more and say less" (Interview 13).

It is important to attempt to eliminate false statements made in the interviews to reveal accurate and genuine insights. To do so, I employed strategies suggested by Bourdieu (1999) with additional caveats. Bourdieu (1999) advocates the following four strategies: *Active and methodical listening;* which involves the interviewer

having complete atunement to the respondents' worlds, going beyond simple experiential knowledge bringing a sociologically informed understanding of the participants habitus. This was achieved through my knowledge of the social structure, drawing on both my scientific and football experiences. *In-Depth Knowledge of the Circumstances Relevant to the Respondent*; that is a requirement of the interviewer is to have 'knowledge of objective conditions common to an entire social category' (Bourdieu, 1999:613). Based on my experiences as a professional footballer, I had expertise and background knowledge to enable valuable data collection. For example, through my insights, I relied less on assumptions which Hammersely and Atkinson (2007) caution against, I understood the expectations and pressures players articulated and how football clubs operated within the FA WSL. Semi-structured interviews often provide information that is challenging and complex (Sequerra, 2014).

My knowledge of the field allowed an understanding for language and 'slang' terms players used, without having to ask for clarification, that meant most interviews had a certain flow and consistency. Meanings are constructed, and knowledge is transferred from the participant to the interviewer (Silverman, 2013). My experiences allowed inside knowledge of subjective interpretations, decreasing the chance of false information, moreover, I understood players feelings of openness as they could talk without fear. Throughout the interview process a concrete picture of FA WSL players experiences of football as work was not achieved, nor was that the ambition of the research, what was gained was individual interpretations of their realities inclusive of bias and prejudices (Sequerra, 2014).

Bourdieu advocated *Repeated Interviews;* although this was not feasible for this project due to time constraints, it is a consideration for further research. *Attending to 'Clichés Behind Which Each of Us Lives,' Including the Interviewer's Own Biases*; considered perhaps the most challenging aspects of the process, Bourdieu is particularly vague on how to detect this process. A strategy of reflexivity was employed to attune myself with stories that appear rehearsed, or where I may have heard them before, in the media for example. *Willingness to Classify Interviews as Uninformative,* as mentioned above this approach would be unethical and radical. Moreover, how would I judge data to be unusable (Yanas & Hopper, 2006). The recommendations Bourdieu makes are not easily put into practice, however, they are strategies to remind us a good interview will require preparation and practice (Ibid). With this in mind, pilot interviews were carried out on recently retired former teammates who did not fit the research objectives but understood and experienced the work conditions of professional football.

For this research the form of interview best suited to acquire intimate knowledge and understand player perspectives was the semi-structured interview (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). A particular strength of the semi-structured interview is its flexibility (ibid). The interviewer uses a pre-planned, interview guide which directs the interaction. The interviews constructed for this research contained predominately open-ended questions, that allowed the interviewer to look at relations of complexities and participants' thoughts and feelings (Ibid). In the course of the interview, questions may be adapted around the basic structure to reflect the personal circumstances of the participant, or additional probing questions may be asked to enable a more in-

depth answer. For the purposes of this study, the semi-structured interview was arguably the only viable option. Focus groups were considered as they may have made the interview process less daunting for participants and saved time (Hammersely & Atkinson, (2007).

While focus groups may have provided insight into team culture, this was not the focus of the research. The use of focus groups was assessed alongside my reflexive position and following Hammersely and Atkinson (2007), it was identified focus groups may have affected both what is said and who speaks. This in part is due to internal competition between players in the same team for various forms of capital, this would likely enhance the possibility of distortion of accounts, as players are unlikely to portray or detail their vulnerabilities or sensitive information with teammates. Fieldwork - a method of rich data - was devoid of opportunity. Whilst accessibility may have been possible at specific clubs, that would have constrained me to one club, equalling a narrow data set. Further to join a club as a covert player would be impossible in terms of match participation and commitment to the team. Finally, physicality may have been a concern to immerse myself seamlessly, a minimum requirement would be a pre-season which did not correlate with my data collection period.

3.12 Constructing the interview questions

The primary focus of the interviews was to identify and explain the work-life concerns of players relevant to workplace opportunities. As mentioned in the introduction,

official documentation such as employment policies of clubs and FA were not readily available. As such, questions were based around personal experience of contract negotiation and problems that occurred for myself and my former teammates. Interview questions explored the career paths of women footballers, clarified their perceptions of the impact of professionalisation, and identified work-life and family friendly policies and practices, and how and if players use them. The initial list of questions was formulated as a result of an extensive literature review and my own experiences as a footballer. I was durably immersed within the field, reflexivity and reflection of my experiences began the loose construction of the questionnaire in terms of important categories.

The process of generating and refining questions is critical in shaping the study (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). As a consequence of this process, questions were added, reformulated or omitted from the interview schedule as new ideas or patterns emerged. This process is advocated by Nunkoosing (2005) who suggested being flexible can deemphasise power relations between the interviewer and the participant. Players generally responded to questions in unpredictable ways, one interview could vary greatly to the next, in terms of order of questions. Accordingly, follow up probes were utilised to enable a thorough understanding of players' meanings and perceptions which included terms like 'can you tell me more about that experience' or 'how did that feel?'

The questionnaire was constructed and divided into six themes: demographic information; football specific information; dual career/education; life in the Women's

Super League; contracts and policy; life as a player/identity and future. The questions attempted to lead players through accounts of their life-history from youth football through to a securing professional status, their experiences of life as a professional and how they understand football as work. Demographic information was critical to both enable an understanding players life-histories, and to gauge a sense of their socialisation and player perceptions of their position in the field. Demographic information was provided by participants; in particular age, education and family education entry into football, clubs they had played for, international status and honours as a player. Drawing out such information was for the purpose of analysis in terms of both habitus and capital.

All players recounted information of their life-history, and understood they were under no pressure discuss any information. The ages of participants ranged from 20 to 34. Five of the players interviewed were minority ethnic, although a factor for habitus development, due to the research objectives of this study, social class or ethnicity were not explored with participants. While women cannot be generalised as a social category as they experience gender and work differently across class, ethnicity and cultural background – women footballers are a category in itself, and therefore, was explored as such. In order to do this, alongside the interview schedule a series of prompts were developed to engage players' in telling their story or giving examples. Therefore, I attempted to make the majority of questions as open as possible to enable in-depth examinations.

3.13 Who were the players and how were they chosen?

The research involved interviews with 27 professional women footballers and three semi-professional footballers. Of these players at the time of interview, all competed in the FA WSL in England. The interviews commenced in March 2017 and were completed in February 2018. The interviews were conducted where participants' felt most comfortable and ranged from coffee shops, training grounds and at participants' homes. Although not always straightforward, locations were decided by the participants. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007), advocate allowing participants to choose the territory, suggesting this strategy allows a relaxing environment and increased likelihood of detailed insight. Equally important for this research, was the schedule of international players, and their growing celebrity. Both of which had to be taken into consideration when devising the locality of interviews. The players were advised before the interview, if they were uncomfortable at any time, they were permitted to omit the question and/or depart the interview. Both stipulations were considered ethical, and in the interest of the interviewee and in accordance with UCLan research ethics policies which were approved by the university committee.

The players who were interviewed were not selected randomly and the criteria was simple, participants must be currently competing in the FA WSL. Therefore, non-random selection cannot be considered to be representative of the population of professional women footballers in England. However, similar to Roderick's (2003) research objectives, it is important to note the rarity of professional footballers to grant their time for interviews, therefore, it would be fruitless to apply strict criteria to

the sample. The players who were interviewed were professional and semi-professional footballers and therefore their careers were ripe for analysis. For the purposes of symmetry, contact was made with players from all FA WSL 1 clubs. Despite contact being made with all FA WSL 1 clubs, interviews were not conducted with players from one club from ten, due to a lack of response from the players at the particular club. Contact was made with players in various ways, primarily through my own contacts with my former teammates (a point discussed later). A number of players did not respond to my interview request which meant my initial target of forty interviews was not achievable.

As mentioned earlier, I encountered problems securing the last 10 interviews due to problems which occurred involving the FA, Eniola Aluko and Mark Sampson. Aluko had accused Mark Sampson, the then England Women's coach of racist language and victimisation (Magowan, 2017). It became clear that players were highly concerned with public perceptions at this time, which invariably led to a 'closing of ranks', particularly with international players. At this time, I believed I was fortunate to have already conducted 30 interviews, as circumstances afterwards could have negatively impacted data collection. All players who responded were asked whether they would be willing to discuss issues related to their life-history and current position as a professional footballer. It was important to give players as little detail as possible regarding the interview schedule to negate opportunity to discuss with teammates or construct appropriate answers.

The research sample was conducted on a *criterion-based sample* whereby a set of criteria was set, and participants were chosen because of that particular characteristic or feature (Patton, 1990). The predetermined criteria were set that all players must be women playing currently in FA WSL. All players who responded positively to the interview request were interviewed. Footballers, on both a national and international stage, are not always willing to give access to their lives and are a notoriously hard group to reach. Therefore, attempting purposive sampling would have been a mistake and potentially negative for the data results.

Before the start of each interview assurances were made to every individual player pertaining to confidentiality, in that no names would be used in the thesis, with participants identified only by number, with some additional descriptive categories employed such as 'senior international'. Interviews were recorded after permission had been granted from the participant. This was crucial as at the time of interview many players could have been considered a celebrity in the outside world. Previous research suggests players have fears of openly criticising their managers or teammates (Roderick, 2006). With this in mind, it was important to reassure players of confidentiality, as questions and their replies would almost certainly involve not only their coach and teammates, but also their clubs and the FA. It was important for players to know their comments would not be traceable to them to enable a free space for responses. The interviews lasted between approximately 45 minutes to two hours and thirty minutes. The interviews generated a large amount of data to be analysed from nine out of ten FA WSL clubs. However, as mentioned above, the

sample was not randomly selected, therefore, cannot be considered to represent the broader population of FA WSL footballers.

To reiterate, I already knew something about all the participants in the data set. For example, the majority had been a former teammate, or I had played competitively against them. Thus, given my background, certain preconceived ideas and knowledge about players and their lives had been formed before the interviews commenced. Whilst I had prior knowledge of participants, which might have influenced the process or demonstrates certain biases, it could be argued that my status as a former professional was crucial to allowing for the interviews to transpire, particularly in such an open manner. This point is important to stress, as there are many ways in which my 'insider' status and my knowledge of professional women's football could impact the research process. However, it was exactly my insider status which granted me 'legitimacy' with the participants.

Legitimacy was reiterated to me in several interviews and appeared to comfort participants when discussing issues around their work-life concerns. Further, my subjective experiences formulated the basis for the construction of the research object. To reiterate, my position afforded me with legitimacy and subsequently allowed me to build a substantial rapport with participants. Of course, it is impossible to say whether rapport and legitimacy was helpful to the research process. I empathised with participants during the interview process, as I had experienced many of their circumstances myself.

At times it was particularly difficult to hear stories of players emotional and mental concerns as professional footballers and remain passive. I was aware showing emotions may affect the participant, yet, I believe passivity would have impacted my capacity to immerse myself into the research and understand player perceptions. Whilst this sample could be considered to fall short of specific methodological standards, it becomes meaningful to place the research into context. While footballers are often interviewed by journalists, it is rare for players to grant access to their lives for extended periods and respond to questions freely and frankly.

3.14 Data analysis

Approaching data analysis interpretatively means researchers assume realities are constructed by individuals (Angen, 2000). There can be no understanding without interpretation. Human understanding then, is temporal, located, and open to renegotiation. It becomes clear we cannot separate ourselves from what we know, both as researchers and the object of our investigation. The researchers' values and morals are inherent in the inquiry and analysis process (Creswell, 2007). The principles of the researcher become a base for judging interpretatively in the methodology, whereby the methods used should evolve from the researchers understanding both theoretically, and through personal experiences.

The interpretative requirement is to contextualise and make sense of claims and concerns of participants. Interpretative data analysis is particularly sensitive to exploring and describing experience across participants (Sparkes & Smith, 2014).

Throughout the course of the research process, I attempted to identify emerging patterns within the data. I followed several steps to analyse the data affording the necessary primacy to participants own understandings of their experiences as a professional footballer. As mentioned above, in order to gain a sense of familiarity with the transcript, I read, and re-read each transcript. I made initial comments on each transcript, fairly loosely in terms of what I deemed to be significant. The comments I made involved one-word comments, descriptive content and conceptual ideas of Bourdieu. Here I started to get a feel for the data, interpreting experiences, largely based on the six sections discussed above. Certain themes emerged, and each theme was identified and labelled.

At this point, I was essentially attempting to capture what was said and make theoretical and practical connections across participants. As far as I was able to judge, I was identifying patterns between and across participants. At this juncture, I read and re-read my notes and themes and attempted to formulate and introduce a structure to the data. I listed each emergent theme and sub-theme that were connected, I probed themes and sub-themes and formulated a table. During this process some themes were discarded, however, I gave conscious and constant thought and reflection to the interpretative process. Each transcript process and analysis were identical. The themes identified in the first instance helped orient the second and so forth. Notes were made of both similarities and differences in each transcript, identifying both repeating patterns and new issues that emerged.

The table consisted of 21 of what I termed *substantive* themes (Appendix 2). To summarise, the substantive themes were grouped into themes that included how players experience professional football as work; employment and workplace policies available and whether/how players use them; illusio; doxa; forms of capital; habitus; employment concerns and wellbeing and mental health worries. The sub-themes attached to each substantive theme ranged from four to eighteen sub-themes (Appendix 2). Many sub-themes overlapped and held shared meanings as I began to make connections between the emergent data. Each number acted as an identifier in the data to ensure I was able to find the original source and organise the data accordingly. Once each transcript had been analysed, I constructed a final table of substantive and related sub-themes.

Interpretative research is utilised by researchers who acknowledge what we know of reality is socially constructed through our experiences within social fields. Despite a growth in interpretative analysis in the last two decades (Angen, 2000), it is not without its critics. Validity within quantitative approaches to research, relies on rigorous adherence to methodological rules. Yet, when these rules are applied to qualitative research complications emerge (ibid). Further, it is argued the ideas of objectivity and truth are not applicable to qualitative approaches (Jardine, 1990). Yet, the desire in academia for legitimacy that is neatly tied to positivism maintains the researchers quest to know we took the rights steps to discern the truth. However, life is not static enough to allow this type of certainty when researching human beings (Angen, 2000). It is here Bourdieu's relational framework springs into action. The

contextual, fluid, relational concepts habitus, and field deconstruct and delegitimise the search for a unitary truth of human action.

As stated earlier, during interviews I was aware of being involved emotionally. When analysing interpretatively, again, I became aware of these feelings, that is to say, my emotional investment in the research. At times, I found it difficult to be neutral towards the analysis. I found interest in what players had to say about their work conditions as I could compare their situations to my own. I had a heightened awareness of my position in the field, my 'feel for the game' - the binding together of habitus and capital. Moreover, my quest for educational capital that would perhaps afford me a small level of distinction in the future. I considered consciously, and reflexively my thought and action, loaded with values and interests and how my individual biography shaped what I wanted to know and what I already thought I knew.

It was important to the analysis I was reflexive and considered my own experiences in relation to the players and data. As someone who had experienced vulnerabilities in my own playing career, I believe I was sensitised to what other researchers may not have considered in their analysis. To treat participants merely as 'data' opportunities, perhaps, would have influenced players willingness to describe their conditions, subsequently affecting the detailed analysis. As stated earlier in the chapter, to foster a detached position as a researcher would have been impossible. I attempted to use my position as an advantage, to gain in-depth insight into the lives of professional women footballers.

3.15 Conclusion

This chapter began with an outline of Bourdieu's theory of practice and its applicability to the study of professional women footballers. Using the thinking tools of Bourdieu, encouraged a break from common traditions in social science between object/subject dualisms. The relationship between Bourdieu's theory of social practice, and interpretative analysis intertwine, to deepen our understanding of individual and collective practice and experience. In summary, my ability to carry out data collection and subsequent analysis to enable a relational understanding of football as work for women will be exhibited in the forthcoming chapters. Readers of this study will judge whether I have sufficiently turned the tools of analysis back on myself reflexively, firstly, recognising the particular habitus as constituted by my life trajectory which has shaped thought and action, and secondly, questioning conventional ways of thought both as a researcher and professional footballer. With this in mind, an attempt has been made to lay-bear the presumptions I developed as a professional footballer. The success of mapping a 'new gaze' (Grenfell, 2008) on professional women footballers will be reflected in the following empirical chapters.

CHAPTER FOUR: A FEEL FOR THE GAME

4.1 Introduction

The next three chapters present and discuss the key findings of the research. The subsequent chapters cover the three major areas of the study. The first results chapter, to borrow a Bourdieusian metaphor, details how women footballers develop their *feel for the game* through their immersion in the field of professional football, that is how they operate as professionals in their new occupation; the second examines the relationship between workplace and employment policy and women footballers at work and the third provides an exploration into the consequences and outcomes of professionalisation on women's footballers in England. First, it is necessary to outline as a whole, the background of these players, to provide a sense of who they are.

The environment in which players have grown up, means they have learned, developed and acquired a set of cultural competencies, including social identity (Jenkins, 1992). Therefore, the accounts players provided are learned and constructed in, and through everyday life. All players in the study had competed as amateurs before turning professional or semi-professional. The average age of the players who were interviewed was 25.4 years and from the 30 players, 25 had played international football at either senior or youth level. Senior internationals are defined as players who have represented senior international team and youth internationals are players who have represented youth team's – under 23's to under 19's.

Accordingly, for the majority of players, playing elite football is all they have known in their lives. Not only are players part of their social world, they form an integral part of it. The majority of players derived from working-class backgrounds and from the 30 players, 21 had completed a university degree, although, arguably educational capital bares little relevance in the field of professional football. The players who were interviewed competed in the FA WSL 1 (now FA Women's Super League).

Over the last decade significant changes have impacted the political, social and economic field(s) of women's football in England. The significant changes include the launch of the FA WSL in March 2011. The FA WSL launched in 2011 as a summer league aiming to provide women footballers with space in the footballing calendar. Within seven years, the FA WSL has undergone four separate restructures. The most recent restructure (2018/19) was significant in two ways, firstly, the FA announced the FA WSL would shift from semi-professional to professional status. Criterion set by the FA meant complexities occurred within the latest restructure. Both established FA WSL teams and incipient teams were expected to apply for licences to be part of women's professional football. Secondly, the FA WSL reverted back to a winter season league, thus returning the game back into direct competition with men's football. Whilst a fully professional league should be viewed positively, we must be both reserved and critical where necessary about the consequences and realities of professionalisation.

The latest restructure is problematic in many ways, not least on the basis of whether there will be a sufficient number of teams with the financial capacity to sustain full

time status. This is due to several reasons which include: an over-reliance on often inconsistent men's clubs - both economically and commercially; low attendance figures; and an inadequate number of elite players with the ability to enhance the competition. The latter two problems are inextricably linked and increase pressure and expectation on players, which are discussed in detail later in the chapter. The expectation and prospect of full-time status has left players, fans and media commentators concerned for the sustainability of the league. However, the most significant and notable outcome of the professionalisation of women's football, is that making a living from playing football in England is no longer the exclusive domain of men (Williams, 2013).

Chapter one detailed the historical relationship between the FA and women's football. Scholars describe the affiliation as volatile at best (Williams, 2006; Welford, 2011; Dunn & Welford, 2015). The FA assumed control of the women's game in 1993, approximately 72 years after declaring football as unsuitable for women (Lopez, 1997; Williams, 2003; Welford, 2008). Scholars have debated the impact of the ban on women and Williams (2013), makes clear the consequences have had a lasting influence on the social, economic and political landscape of contemporary women's football. Further, the relative success of the FA's governance of women's football is widely debated. Whilst there has been increased participation, resource allocation and heightened commercialisation of women's football, these improvements are largely aesthetic (Welford, 2008; Dunn & Welford, 2015). Arguably, acceptance and cultural integration has yet to be fully achieved despite the FA's rhetoric of 'The Fastest Growing Sport' in England. It is thus the perspective

of a liberal feminist idea of change, which focuses on equal opportunities, that participation has increased. Central to liberal feminist discourse is a focus on quantitative rather than qualitative growth to achieve equality (Hargreaves, 1990). The emphasis on participation is problematic as research suggests that increased participation alone has not led to the reform of football more generally (Williams, 2007; 2013).

This chapter contains a discussion of key findings that examine the professionalisation of football for women in England, and the new careers of elite women footballers. It is clear, despite football being a new career opportunity for its elite players, women are faced with increasingly complex and precarious working conditions, based on mixed integration into the existing system of professional football. There have been few studies which analyse football as work for women. It can be argued that a lack of academic focus in this area corresponds to the limited access to women footballers and the partial professionalisation of women's football across the world. To date, much uncertainty exists about the relationship between professional women footballers and their new realities: their work-life concerns as elite athletes and perceptions of increasing professionalisation which this chapter specifically investigates.

Despite the precarious socio-economic conditions affecting women's football in England, a large number of players continue to make significant sacrifices in their pursuit of a professional contract and a career in the game. Currently there are 11 professional women's teams in the FA WSL all with a minimum of 20 players,

meaning approximately 220 players in operation at any one time. There is an apparent paradox for elite women footballers between the growing glamorisation of the game and the increasingly unstable market conditions (McGillivray & McIntosh, 2006) in which the game exists; an over-reliance on inconsistent men's clubs and a football association with mixed strategies to grow the game sustainably. Similar to the male Scottish footballers examined by McGillivray et al. (2005), a large number of women footballers enter the career of football, despite the fragile market conditions in which the game exists - it is clear its elite players will actively seek a career in the game.

4.2 Embodied career

Career theories have generally focused on psychological and social variable measurements that account for narrow understandings of contexts and agency (Coupland, 2015). The focus on such accounts, becomes problematic as career choice is understood as something which is narrowly defined and orderly in an occupational system. In contrast to career studies focused on traditional workplaces, for example, universities, banks and construction sites, this study focuses on professional sports organisations, namely football clubs - more specifically the players that work for those organisations.

There is a dearth of empirical research on the careers of professional women footballers. This research has enabled analysis on the capacity of some elite women footballers in England to consider their career pathways and their 'choice', to take

up professional status. The analytical process attempted to understand how players described their journey into football, and how career decisions were made to stay in the game. Commitment to professional football occurred despite delimited career opportunities, the prospect of the changing context of professionalism and a 'new' career as a professional athlete. In line with a new career for women, the concept of embodiment is particularly insightful. Embodiment emphasises the notion of the lived body and rejects any subject object dualism between body and mind (Haynes, 2008). Embodiment is pertinent to understand the social construction of the professional identity of women footballers. Inevitably embodiment takes place within the context of particular societal contexts and constraints to which the individual belongs or harbours ambition to belong (ibid).

Many footballers begin competitive sport at a young age and consequently sport is reinforced by significant others, namely, parents, teammates, coaches and on occasion the media (Coupland, 2015). To excel in elite-level professional sport, athletes typically form a strong bond with their chosen occupation (sport) (Mitchell et al. 2014). Consequently, the goal of advancement and success is pursued by the athlete and young players form what has been termed an 'athletic-identity' (Wiechman & Williams, 1997). A vast amount of research on sports careers has argued it is a career short in nature, with a high potential of failure and rejection (McGillivray et al. 2005; Roderick, 2006; Roberts, 2018). Research by McGillivray et al. (2005: 107), on male Scottish football players suggests players are 'caught up in the beautiful game' and by that players are infatuated with *making it.* Similarly, within women's football, *life-world* domination is all encompassing as a senior international

player expressed: "I dunno about anyone else but playing football is the one thing I've done above anything else, all my life, so I would chop my arm off to play full time" (Interview 10).

In other words, playing football is the only thing players want to do and therefore being a footballer is something that becomes embodied, something they are. In the same way, another senior international suggested: "I am nothing away from football, it is the thing I do constantly" (Interview 4). As noted in chapters one and two, most research on the careers of professional footballers has been male centric (Parker, 2000; McGillivray et al. 2005; Roderick 2003; 2006, 2016). However, with the recent professionalisation of women's football, the focus on women is necessary, as the women's game continues on an upward trajectory. However, given the bleak economic and social forecasts for the women's game (FIFPro, 2017), women footballers often face added complexities. Women enter a field of employment, which offers little or no economic security, a short career and a *bolted-on* version of the men's game, with little policy consideration for their needs as professionals (FIFPro, 2017). Therefore, it is critical to understand their unwavering desire to forge a career in football, often with little regard for employment policies which are essential to welfare and wellbeing. It is important then, to interpret how football becomes embodied, so much so that it appears to possess players (McGillivray et al. 2005).

Embodiment of football is described in the following extract from an interview with a senior international:

"Your life is structured around football […] you do all the right things to earn the right […] you don't just become a good footballer, you have to put in hours of training to be the best, to get to a certain level, sacrifices" (Interview 13).

Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus is said to be of particular interest to career theorists (Coupland, 2015). Habitus provides a framework which allows an understanding for career choice as something embodied and institutionalised. Accordingly, McGillivray et al. (2005) suggest the field of professional football structures the embodied habitus of its players, so that the football club plays an influential and prominent role in shaping the dispositions of players. Habitus then, is not just a state of mind but a bodily state of being (Wainwright & Turner, 2006). Thus, the habitus, allows individuals to act in interactive spaces and choices are selected from a range of possibilities, whereby individuals' past social histories enable them to perceive what is possible (Coupland, 2015). In other words, the body is a site of incorporated history. Moreover, habitus involves a *practical mastery*. Described by Wacquant (2011) as grasping the pugilistic technique with one's body, a visceral knowledge of the universe under scrutiny. In other words, the production of a specific habitus, in this case footballing habitus. Similar to boxers (Wacquant, 1995), and ballet dancers (Wainwright & Turner, 2006), intensive football training produces a football habitus both in the sense of a particular type of body, and mastery of the football body. This was reaffirmed to me in the following extract from an interview

with a youth international, who referred to athletic *ideal body types* of professional footballers as something necessary to their career.

> "Yeah, the athletic look is something which helps the game. But that is something which is quite a touchy subject in terms of you can go into a lot of… I mean it opens up an avenue of different sorts of pressures. Adhering to the pressures of the club, how you look on social media." (Interview 28).

Bourdieu's concept of habitus illuminates the circular process whereby practices are incorporated into the body and are regenerated through embodied work (Crossley, 2001). The habitus concerns a dynamic intersection of structure and action: it both generates and shapes action. Habitus is composed of durable dispositions that shape our action and perceptions. More concretely described as a 'system of lasting, transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations and actions' (Bourdieu, 1977: 83). According to Wacquant (1995), Bourdieu's relevant schemata of habitus, capital and field are important in explaining broader relationships between the embodied self and the organised individual. According to Hodkinson and Sparkes (1997) schemata are conceptual structures amassed through life. Essentially structuring what a person knows of the world, meanwhile filtering out irrelevancies, such as other career choices.

The habitus thus allows individuals to act in interactive spaces, and choices are selected from a range of possibilities whereby individuals' past social histories

enable them to perceive what is possible (Coupland, 2015). In this way, no-one can step outside their habitus, so decision making can never be context free (Hodkinson & Sparkes, 1997). This is of interest to career theorists and this research, as it enables a greater awareness of social and individual aspects of career choice and structural forces which influence 'choice'.

The habitus operates within fields. Bourdieu conceptualises the social world as comprising of differentiated, overlapping, fields of action (Adkins, 2003). Each field has its own logic and taken-for-granted structure (McGillivray et al. 2005). Although habitus and field are not sealed together, impenetrable, for the most part Bourdieu expresses their compatibility. It is with such compatibility that ensures the viability of institutions (Adkins, 2003). Arguably, concepts are linked where practice(s) occur as a result of various habitual dispositions, combined with acquired capital, activated in the social conditions of the specific field(s) (Crossley, 2013).

A criticism of Bourdieu is the determinism of his framework (Jenkins, 1992). However, Bourdieu argues against this suggesting, while behaviour is not determined by this system, it provides us with a practical sense that effects of ways of *being* (Coupland, 2015). This is particularly evident in the case of professional women footballers and their articulations of career choice. As one senior international neatly suggested "the structure, system, philosophy (of being a footballer) becomes ingrained […] you become blinded" (Interview 16). Utilising Bourdieu's framework as guidance enables us to consider the social aspect of 'choosing' professional football as a career.

Football is often debated by scholars and depicted the media as an occupation which players are devoted to and expect self-fulfilment from. Yet football is a highly precarious occupation, fraught with insecurities, lacking long-term security and career advancement is never secure (Roderick, 2006). In the context of women's football then, uncertainty is increased due to gender, lack of resource allocation, policy provision and an over reliance on male coaches, clubs and board members all of which contribute to women's subordination in their career. It is through this research, we begin to understand players' narrow understandings of their subordination as women. The following extract depicts the insecurities players feel as professional footballers in an interview with a senior international:

"But at this moment in time, it's not particularly great (at her club). Obviously, things could be better but it's just I've been young, and you know the WSL is pro now ... I've been a bit naive really. Cos you accept things cos you think it's a bonus when really, it kinda like... your like, 'oh hang on a minute!' In a normal job that wouldn't happen" (Interview 27).

Extracts of this type were not uncommon. Players have a heightened awareness of their improved situation, and appear at times, discouraged and disempowered to challenge their perceived conditions. Player accounts of their career choice is of interest, as they appear to make ordinary invisible logics, visible and in doing so depict the influence of habitus on career choice.

4.3 Football as a labour of love

Habitus arises from individuals' previous experiences in the context of professional sport. Thus, players life histories develop as young girls competing in an environment which is male dominated, and until recently has not provided an opportunity for women to make a living from football. As one senior international commented "I was one of the boys" (Interview 15). Being one of the boys, facilitated her acceptance to play football, comments of this type were not uncommon within the data and relates to previous research (Scraton et al. 1999). In this way, it is taken-for-granted that women players play football for the love of the game, as little opportunity existed to make a living from the game. In contrast to the realities of working as a professional male footballer in the UK examined by Roderick (2006), who depicted their careers as a 'labour of love' the women interviewed for this study go some way to portraying an *authentic* labour of love. Many of the players interviewed, discussed their young selves playing football and their decisions which were built of their love for the game. One youth international player described her decisions to stay in the game:

"I loved football so much I went with football and never considered stopping at all. There are points when you've had enough, but you just love it that much. I chose my university based around my football, I had no social life! I had training during fresher's week and I didn't really settle because everyone questions you (at university) why you wasn't coming out, and they didn't understand I was playing

football, so I struggled to settle or fit in cause, I was everywhere with football. I was so heavily invested in the club" (Interview 2).

Reinforced by a senior international, who described her entry into the game: "My main focus was football, I kinda picked a shit degree which I wish I hadn't done now - just to play football" (Interview 4). Similarly, a former international explained her motivations:

"Yeah, the only reason I did (make football my priority) is cause of England, I saw it really going somewhere. Cause I was doing really well at England. Teachers wanted me to play other sports, but I chose football, it just took over my life and became everything" (Interview 7).

Another senior international explains her choices in the game when asked what she would be doing if she didn't become professional:

"Good question. Football is all I know. (Interview 19).

Unlike other professions, opportunities for a career in sports are severely limited and short-term. A career in professional football is demanding and for many individuals pursuing a career, often requires relocation to chase career goals as explained by one former international:

"The move to [club] was a big move cause of the distance being at home. My partner still lived at home and so you ask your partner for advice, and whether that's right for you. It was difficult for me, but I was going to play full time football which is something I always wanted and at my age (26) it was a brilliant move" (Interview 10).

Similarly, a youth international player talks about turning professional and the difficulty of relocation:

"It was a massive pressure cause, I've invested so much time literally doing a full-time job for next to nothing. You invest hours an' hours every day, emotionally and physically into a sport … that's why it was such a big decision I was uprooting my norm, ten years where I had spent building a life, I was leaving my family, somewhere I had created my identity as a person and a player and suddenly taking myself away from that. It was hard … suddenly in a new place, you know no one and you question yourself, what you stand for, was it the right move? Was it the best decision? But I don't regret it now, it just wasn't easy" (Interview 2).

In this chapter, thus far, there has been an examination of how professional women footballers interpret their new career opportunity. The focus has been on how women embody career choice, and despite fragile labour market conditions, attempt to build a career in football. Arguably, the women interviewed in this study represent an authentic labour of love. Freidson (1990) positions those irresistibly committed to activities and would participate voluntarily as a labour of love. However, this is in

opposition to the male footballers Roderick (2006) study portrays. In line with this, women footballers have predominately participated voluntarily in their football career. However, changes in the field of professional women's football mean players are now remunerated for their commitment. Inevitably, with remuneration and investment, comes pressure and a shift in priorities. Very little is known about why, despite precarious economic conditions and the constraint of gender, women make significant sacrifices to pursue a professional football career.

4.4 Bound by and to the game

Women's professional football in England, has developed rapidly over the last 10 years and it is now possible to view women's football as an occupational field. It is within the context of football as a career for women, that one must pay special attention to the role of the footballing *dream* for players and how players are bound by and to the game. One consequence of the football dream meant many players gave up other careers to take the opportunity to play professional. All players interviewed believed professional football for women could not occur in their lifetime. As explained by one former international player:

"It was a choice I had to make really, I had played for so long as an amateur, so it was an opportunity to give up work and play full time. I had to take a massive pay cut to do that, I mean it was a tough choice and I had been in my job so long and worked my way up but … I got offered to go full time and I couldn't do two careers, something had to give. It was just an opportunity I couldn't give up and I

thought it was worth it. I had given everything (to football) and to finally be able to get up and just go training and kinda … have the life of a footballer really" (Interview 12).

Similarly, an account of feelings surrounding the first professional contract from a senior international:

"It is something I always wanted (professional contract) … When I signed the full time one … It was special. Up to now I've had to get a part time job which effected performance, you know working all day then training … So, to wake up and literally play football … Is something I've always wanted" (Interview 26).

Indeed, these types of comments were common amongst the players interviewed. Although not all players 'make it', many players are expected to give up careers for often low paid professional contracts. For example, FIFPro (2017) report professional players earning as little as £470 per month. Some players were critical of clubs for taking advantage of players desires to forge a professional career, accusing clubs of "selling you your dream" (Interview 15). Meaning the dream and reality as a professional, can often be contradictory, leaving players feeling unworthy and dejected. For players who have other responsibilities for example, a mortgage or childcare, professional status is impractical and unachievable, players often are left feeling let down or having to exit the game prematurely as one former international expressed: "Football is your life but not your career" (Interview 1). When asked why she stayed in the game:

"Cause, you think it might go somewhere (your career) you have hope. I have thought about (giving up) loads of times. But maybe I regret giving up so much of my time when I was younger. I missed out on so much. But maybe I wouldn't be where I am now? When you reflect you do think why, cause, I haven't got to where I thought … I haven't got half as much out of it, so now I think, what was the point?"

It is clear from the interviews players articulations of agency, appear to be around dispositions unable to do otherwise. This does not mean deliberate choice making did not take place, as players express decision-making processes. The accounts put forward, suggest taking the opportunity to play professional was taken-for-granted, perceived as the natural order of things. It is as if players could not consider anything else. Similarly, in his classic study on boxers Wacquant (1995) found the participants discussed their work in a way that possessed them, effectively impacting their strategies of agency. To summarise this section of analysis, habitus appears to operate as an organising principle. Moreover, it is interesting to note how a professional footballers' world is assembled according to its own relevant logics and defined by *choices* elite women footballers make to choose a career in football.

4.5 Developing professional practice

In the previous section, it was argued for many participants in this study, football has been embodied from a formative period, and as such represents a major part of their identity. This identity is reinforced by teammates, friends, parents and the media (Relvas et al. 2010; Coupland, 2015). This identity is deeply embedded and when

presented with an opportunity to 'turn professional' players articulate, or appear, not to have had a 'choice' at all. It was taken-for-granted players would take up professional status, despite delimited economic security and career opportunities. Women's football in England has undergone a rapid evolution in the form of professionalisation, as such it is can be considered a career opportunity for elite players. In line with this new career, women are increasingly taking up atypical employment opportunities and challenging what constitutes as work for men and women (Watts, 2007).

The relationship between male dominated workplaces such as football clubs and women can be considered complicated. Women who enter a career as a professional footballer, face considerable challenges not least on the basis of legitimacy. Football development in England, shares an intimate relationship between the performance of gender and the cultural legitimacy of a restrictive female/male dichotomy (Themen, 2016). Thus, football as a male dominated sport, increases complexities for women as they bid to forge a career as a professional footballer. It is well known from previous research, that a career as a professional athlete is one inbuilt with uncertainties, yet, women face further complexities, and one may argue, a career inherent with the risk of failure (Roderick, 2006).

The relatively autonomous football field represents a self-contained territory, with its own inner logic, rules and sets certain limits and informs practice (Adkins, 2003; McGillivray et al. 2005). It is within fields that distinct games are played. Within the football field, for example, players contend for various goods and resources, which

are considered of value within the specific field. In doing so, players both shape the habitus of that field and the forms of action within the field. However, Bourdieu (1977) makes clear this is not done consciously. For the most part, players will not be aware of their role within the field. Bourdieu understands practice, competencies and dispositions to operate below the level of conscious and language - it is what he terms 'a feel for the game' (ibid). Adkins (2003) simply describes a 'feel for the game', as something which can be defined as a non-cognitive form of knowledge, which often cannot be explicitly articulated. For women footballers a 'feel for the game' plays a significant role in developing professional dispositions and their feelings of being a professional footballer. The new circumstances in which players operate in, constrain players to behave in a manner which is *expected* of a professional, rather than a way which reflects their own emotions and characteristics. It might be said players are likely to engage with this behaviour to *feel* like a professional footballer. It is taken-for-granted that the introduction of the prefix 'professional', provides players with professional feelings, legitimacy and prestige, however the realities for some players are markedly different.

On the evidence of the empirical data, it is clear players have an unwavering desire to *feel* like a professional. Connected to feeling professional, are feelings of legitimacy for players. Until recently, players have not had opportunity to be a professional in the male dominated world of football. Data in this study uncovered a lack of visibility and opportunity often depleted feelings of legitimacy for participants. All players interviewed in this study have never lived outside the culture of elite sport and yet, had never previously had the prestige of the prefix 'professional'. Jones et

al. (2003) argue players have accordingly built a life narrative exclusively around their bodies and performances in football.

Data in this study confirms increased professionalisation means players interviewed continue to build their life narrative around their body and performance. Bourdieu (1977), suggests it is important to understand how embodied action structures how an individual, thinks, feels and acts. In an environment where occupational security is never protected, and professional status determined by factors which are often out of players control, the data accrued presents a fascinating picture of players professionalism, and their desire for legitimacy in a field in which they often appear to be a collective *add on*. Previous research supports the notion of women simply *added on* to men's clubs often positioned as charitable causes and deemed positive for public relations (Woodward, 2007; Burton, 2015; Fielding-Lloyd et al. 2018). It can be argued this approach, despite clubs attempts to integrate women, simply delegitimises women as professional footballers. As exemplified in the following extract:

> "I feel privileged at (club), cos we're told 'oh the club are investing massively, and everyone is doing us a favour', I do realise how much money (club) lose, so it's kind of like… Wow as if we hemorrhage this money! It's almost like charity!" (Interview 21).

The emerging picture of professional women footballers in this study is of an employment field which offers very little security, and yet players remain highly

committed to *being* a professional footballer. For nearly all players, their career is short, with the possibility of rejection, partial integration within their club and more broadly the league collapsing is never far from their minds. Not only do players have to grapple with their own performance, but also the performance of their teammates, and the performance of their men's parented team both have to be in some ways, successful, for players to survive as professionals. The following two examples from senior internationals provide evidence of the fears of players:

"The game is moving too fast […] we have too much reliance on the men's team that aren't doing well […] women become the scapegoat regardless of how successful we are" (Interview 13).

"You're so reliant on them doing well (men's team) and staying up. Someone who is in charge (at the club) who actually wants to invest in a women's team. There is so many ifs, buts and maybes and that's a downfall. There's so much uncertainty. If the chief executive or chairman decides he doesn't wanna invest in the women's team where does that leave us? Through no fault of our own we may not have a club. The girls have invested their lives here. Quit jobs, family and partners to come here and it can just be gone in one second" (Interview 8).

Both examples elucidate the nature of women's football as *hanging in the balance*. The object of this section is to understand the processes of becoming a professional and the development of professional dispositions. Further, to highlight exceptions made by individuals to maintain their position within a field in constant flux. It may be

argued, from the perspective of the players, that feeling professional encompasses different thoughts and feelings. Moreover, each club and what players have access to at the club, to feel professional, varies greatly. The variation experienced by players largely impacts their feelings towards their new career. The following extract highlights a senior international's changing feelings towards football since professionalisation:

"Yeah, it's changed me, I'm not gonna lie. I feel like … I've been the nice, loyal person and that only gets you so far. It's not about … stepping on anyone to get there but you have to take care of yourself. It is a short career. Otherwise, you get left behind. I feel like its progressively getting like that" (Interview 22).

Comments of this type were not uncommon, with many players both explicitly and inexplicitly articulating changed feelings since professionalisation. This particular player felt she had to adjust to her professional status and had to demonstrate selfishness to do so. It became clear within the data, despite the relative newness of a football career, players operate in an environment where it is well understood that a playing career is short. Indeed, feelings of insecurity are commonplace. It becomes pertinent to understand how players feel about professionalisation and the conditions that generate professional *feelings*. The following extract is from a senior international who describes expectations at her new club and how limited access to resources diminishes professional feelings:

"When I arrived here (club) I was hit square in the face, I had no kit, no towel no food … I asked where to get it and we didn't get those things … It was almost like I was asking for loads of things, but those expectations should be a given. Like that's how it should be (as a professional) … It's a mentality thing, to feel professional, it's like the little things, like getting food (at the club) getting your boots, having your kit washed … it's them little things that change your mentality to a professional mentality" (Interview 17).

Similarly, another current senior international explained her perception of feeling professional at her club:

"…Every woman player should be given boots. No-one (in FA WSL) should be paying for boots for hundreds of pounds … the other week I was talking to (player from another club) and she was saying she gets her boots taken to the game for her, I was like wow, that's another level (of professionalism)! But I do think I'm privileged - I get my kit taken home so I don't need to wash it" (Interview 23).

The two extracts above portray narrow understandings of being a professional. According to these data, we can infer that from the perspective of the players and to understand the process of *feeling* professional, the significance of *feeling professional* or the want to be *seen* as a professional, lies in the fact that players are hyperaware of the status and prestige attached to *being* a professional footballer. As far as some players appear concerned, professional status is imbued with celebrity and players appear to want a piece of the action. The cases presented offer insight

into the often limited or overlooked understandings, of aesthetic professionalism in the women's game, which lacks security and infrastructure.

Previous research supports data within this research insofar as professionalism is hard to define in a clear manner (Everetts, 2009; Schinkel & Noordegraaf, 2011). However, a good starting point for professionalism is a clear emphasis on good work and whether it is a footballer, or lawyer, individuals must have the mechanisms for achieving good work in their field (Schinkel & Noordegraaf, 2011). How professional footballers understand, and demonstrate good work then, can be considered crucial to the advancement of their careers. Moreover, players need to display professionalism in their work, yet it is not a characteristic you are born with. Rather, professionalism or behaving professionally, is socially constructed and reinforced by significant others. Schinkel and Noordegraaf describe a professional as an individual who does not merely work but is trained and educated to exceptional levels; socialised as a member of their occupation and held accountable (ibid). Good work is defined in the following extract of a senior international**:**

"I've played, I've worked my arse off (as women) we train a lot harder to gain recognition […] I was getting the train back from (club) at 2am […] there is a level of commitment, you have to be on it every single day (to be a professional footballer)" (Interview 18).

It is clear from the accounts of all players that behaving professionally, generates and reinforces feelings of commitment and professionalism. Bourdieu's remarks on

professionalism as a sociological concept are fairly scattered. However, Bourdieu sees the concept of *profession* as something socially constructed and able to make a distinction, therefore something which has power and can assert dominance. He proposes to use the concept of field as a replacement (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). The primary reason for this appears to be whilst the concept of profession is susceptible to criticisms, Bourdieu argues the acceptance of profession as a concept implies taking on a certain ideology – which effectively naturalises the concept of profession.

The concept of profession is deemed 'dangerous' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 242) due to its neutral appearance – that it binds people together with little regard for nuances and contradictions. Although Bourdieu's critique of professionalism is useful, it can also be considered as a one-sided account. Indeed, this discussion of professionalism is not so much opposed to Bourdieu's critique, but rather, provides added value and possibility to future researchers using Bourdieu when studying professional fields. It is with this in mind that this analysis follows Schinkel and Noordegraaf's (2011) understanding of professionalism as a dynamic concept - a verb rather than a noun. Professionalism in this research is regarded as a form of symbolic capital which is always at stake for players. Within each professional field, to gain legitimacy players must 'act' in a professional way - as such professionalism is always at stake, often meaning players are controlled by professional expectations.

This is clearly articulated by one international youth player when discussing her feelings at contract negotiation time:

"You have to make yourself look like a team player … so it's like what's the point in being good? You have to be *seen* to be good. So, there is a difference between what you are on a fundamental level and what you want to be *seen* to be. Lots of decisions are made in football based on how you wanna be *seen*, or how you are *seen* to be in training, in a game or social media" (Interview 18).

This characteristic is important sociologically, as this players behaviour is constrained by acting appropriately and confirming to cultural norms of a professional footballer. Whilst it is clear, that players recognise the importance of being seen to be a *team player* many players spoke of the increasing individualisation of women footballers, which would see them align characteristically with their male equivalents. Increased individualisation is exemplified in the following extract from a senior international:

"One thing I've learned is loyalty doesn't pay. I am prepared to move for a better contract […] I've gotta look after myself an' my job security, rather than staying somewhere cause the fans like me! If you go to a different club and they offer you more money, it's a promotion, that's what my agent says" (Interview 17).

Yet this is a paradox for women footballers, who are defined externally by their role-model attributes. Prevailing discourses of women's football has positioned the game

as culturally distinct to men's football, as a game played in a more sporting manner (Fielding-Lloyd et al. 2018). Williams (2013) suggests this discourse is an attempt to normalise women's football – women players with good moral values. Indeed, players reiterated these aspirational values, but many appear in conflict in their role, as one senior international reiterated:

"I think we go above and beyond as players to try and get support and get nothing back […] yeah players have a responsibility to raise the profile of our game, we have to give our time to do that […] but we are forced an' told we are role models for these kids!" (Interview 13).

It became clear from the data many players, often unwillingly, straddle both roles. Performing the *expected* character of a role model woman footballer and the *unforeseen* individualised player, increasingly aware of a short career, and the need to maximise their position in the search for capital.

A field is a structured system of social positions - governed internally by power relations (Bourdieu, 1977). Positions stand in relation to domination and subordination by virtue of the access individuals have to forms of capital (Jenkins, 1992). Bourdieu broadly defines four main categories of capital as outlined in chapter four - economic and social capital - various kinds of valued relations with significant others; cultural capital - legitimate knowledge and symbolic capital - prestige and social honour. As such symbolic capital is at stake in any social field. Bourdieu makes clear, that the better adjusted one's habitus is to the field in which one

occupies position, the better ones 'sense of the game' and hence one's ability to acquire symbolic capital and a dominant position in this specific field (Jenkins, 1992). It is evident within this research, for footballers, the legitimacy of professionalism is based on a shared recognition of its value within the professional football field. The value of professionalism is exemplified in the following extract from an interview with a senior international:

"It comes down to looking after yourself, being professional, limit injuries. For example, we have players who don't want come-in early or stay late for treatment. It is so frustrating. What are they going home to do? This is their job! Like were not even in that much, we should be in more, I think. Like we call ourselves professionals, but we do 3 hours a day we should be doing more. Like I always watch my games back, but our players do not, and I don't understand why? This is their job!" (Interview 14).

The discourse of acting or being professional is common to elite athletes and something which athletes consider necessary for success. However, it is evident within the data in this study something constantly at stake. Football clubs for example, promote certain components of being professional, or acting like a professional, which players must adhere to or face the prospect of not being considered for the starting eleven or their contract not being renewed. As one international player explains:

"There is a lot of expectation really (of a professional) it is your lifestyle, everything you do in your day-to-day life has to work towards being a professional. It is almost your identity. It is what you have to do day-to-day. How you conduct yourself … it makes you a better footballer" (Interview 26).

The data collected for this study, suggests players are aware that those who exhibit control over their diet, health and fitness levels, are considered good professionals which often results in higher levels of footballing capital (Giulianotti, 1999). The term professional, however, remains ambiguous and holds various meanings in diverse contexts, for example, behavioural expectations are diverse between clubs or when players are on international duty. Moreover, being professional within a sporting context, differs to being professional in other professions.

Perhaps, more accurately, a professional footballers work is a calling (Weber, 1965) similar to Turner & Wainwright's (2006) description of ballet dancers and Roderick's (2006) delineation of male footballers. A calling is a systematic pattern of discipline which is designed to produce certain behaviours or self (Weber, 1965). Consistent with the literature, this research found participants who reported a disruption of professional behaviour(s) similar to injury, or ageing, can raise serious questions about the self, and individuals' identities as footballers. One senior international describes her loss of legitimacy and disruption of self after a transfer:

"Looking back now it's easy to say cos I've come out of it… but it really knocked me. Really bad. My confidence went, I wasn't the same player! It took me until the

2nd half of the season until I could actually play how I know I can play! othing

prepared me for it. Like in women's football, normally you'll have a year contract

and it will run out and you go somewhere else, or you stay" (Interview 17).

Extracts of this type were not uncommon within the data. A footballers' sense of self

is deeply invested in their body - but women footballers have added precariousness,

and a disruption of self can arise from experiencing a lack of or a loss of legitimacy

in their chosen field.

4.6 Caught up by the game

Previous research on men's football (Bourke, 2003; McGillivray et al. 2005;

Roderick, 2006), depict players who appear willing to accept the unstable working

conditions of professional football as common-sense realities. Unlike male

footballers, women who enter their new career as a professional footballer, are

unprepared for the occupational fragility associated with professional football.

Moreover, it can be acknowledged here, that most players manifest vulnerabilities in

their new realities as professionals. Within the data it became evident employers, in

this case football clubs, and the FA, appear to have done little to make the transition

a smooth one. In short, the findings so far suggest that players *choose* football as a

career and embody it, despite limited economic remuneration, delimited career

prospects, and with their professionalism constantly at stake. The dilemma for

players in their new realities is clear - players appear willing to accept unsatisfactory

working conditions, and in turn are expected to be grateful for the opportunity.

Many players spoke of the inconsistent working conditions at their clubs. Detailed earlier in the chapter, are club inconsistencies in relation to one another. Inconsistencies vary in terms of players access to facilities; resource allocation; economic remuneration, medical care and so on. What is clear from the data, is all participants spent the majority of their time at the club, with their teammates and coaches, and generally doing football related activities. As discussed in the last section, it is taken-for-granted that players should act professionally at all times or as international player put it: "whenever we are wearing the badge" (Interview 8). Wearing the badge appears to constrain players and their thoughts towards their working conditions which can be considered central to their perceptions. As one experienced WSL player suggested:

"We are quite a big-name club we have decent money and good players … Other clubs are investing as well … Our facilities aren't great, we have no chill out area and we don't get food provided, we all complain as players cause we're getting told to be professional but they (club) don't provide us with the means to be professional. Cause we train at the men's facility as well, they get priority, if they were scheduled for the morning, they can just tell us to move our session" (Interview 22).

Being a big-name club with resources appears fundamental to the survival and stability of women's teams, although prevailing discourses position women's football as culturally distinct from men's football (Williams, 2013; Fielding-Lloyd et al. 2018). It appears the FA encourage women's teams to be parented by financially secure

men's teams, as a means of protecting their viability. However, data in this study contradicts the FA objectives, and it can be tentatively suggested big-name clubs are not always a solution to safeguard the women's game.

Women players appear to be integrated into their clubs on a partial basis which depends largely on perceived levels of success. Players articulate feelings of additional stresses associated with the pressure to be successful. As one experienced senior England international put it:

"Without success we're invisible! We need to get a bronze medal in the World Cup for any recognition. If we didn't qualify for anything, people wouldn't care. If we don't win games with (club) no-one comes to watch - it is (success) something that goes hand in hand" (Interview 21)

Similarly, a less experienced WSL player suggested that women must be successful to be allowed to train at the men's facility:

"We don't train at the men's facility yet, you know in the run up to an FA cup final it was seen as a treat for us to train on their pitches that week. I mean of course we were happy cause the facilities are much better than ours, so in that sense it was a nice treat but then if you step outside and look in, you see it from the view of you have to get to an FA cup final to be allowed these treats" (Interview 11).

When asked if she felt like it was a treat, she went on to explain:

"Yes and no, it's like you're asking for more, but you have to be careful how you go about asking cos it's the person giving you money who you want more from. So, you have to be happy but then know the right times to ask for more. That's what the management do. And as players were told to be as professional as possible and as nice and polite and professional as we can, it is certainly not expected of us to be critical … or publicly do things like that (be critical of the club)"

It is evident from the data collected, players are caught up in the game and that circumstances constrain players to live and act in a manner which is expected of them, rather than a manner which reflects their actual emotions and feelings. As one experienced international explained there is an element of control to contend with at some clubs for players:

"The clubs are very protective over what you say on social media, so if I was to openly say what I thought about the club on social media they'd tear up my contract or get a fine, which I probably couldn't pay" (Interview 6).

This passage depicts how the player's thoughts and emotions are controlled by her employers, whilst this can be said for many employees in various occupations - players circumstances are largely inconsistent, insecure, and at times, unsupported by their employers. When a player signs a full-time contract for a club, they are exposed to the club expectations and values and what it means to be a professional, as articulated by one senior England international: "We constantly get drilled into us,

this is your job now, it's serious, this is where you earn your bread and butter" (Interview 7).

Another England senior international shares her sentiments:

> "There's a lot more pressure now cause it's your job. I feel like our manager makes a conscious effort to explain this is our full-time job and if you wanna be professional, this is it. He wants to win so he tries to embed that into us. I think the girls just think of our situation and how we are paid and think we aren't paid enough to feel that way" (Interview 18).

It is taken-for-granted players are expected to be good professionals. This expectation becomes ingrained into players over time and bound up with her conception of self (Wacquant, 1995; Roderick, 2006). Players incorporate what it means to be a good professional into their identities. Failure to display the appropriate behaviour(s), can generate unwanted reaction from coaches, managers and teammates. Yet increased expectations on players are comprised of contradictions. Players express feelings of discontent as clubs do not repay their professional behaviour accordingly. Close attention is given to the feelings of discontent expressed by players to generate understandings of their position in clubs. The present study raises the possibility of players expected to feel grateful, despite unsatisfactory conditions. Indeed, some players appear to accept their fate and their delegitimised position. As one experienced FA WSL player expressed at her club: "It's like a fake professionalism" (Interview 1).

Being prepared to operate within less than satisfactory work conditions is thus defined as a central characteristic of women's football. Data provides evidence that clubs have placed professional expectations on players, with a desire to attract a bigger fan base, increase media exposure and more generally, increase the commercial product of women's football (Fielding-Lloyd et al. 2018). The problems for players are two-fold. In the first instance, expectations placed upon players are not always matched within club operations, yet players are expected to function and perform within unprofessional circumstances. The second and related problem, concerns the effects on players as they accept their work conditions, and more than that, attempt to display appropriate professional behaviour. A good illustration of players' contradictory feelings towards their clubs is provided by one experienced youth international:

"There is pressure to be professional. In women's football you try and live a perfect life, tick every box, I feel like that's what I've gotta do, otherwise … I'm wasting my time, well not wasting but I feel very privileged to have this position even, though I complain a bit, I'm actually a footballer. I mean my hours are a lot but I'm playing football, how hard is that? But then … you kinda feel grateful but then sometimes you accept things, then I'm like, why am I accepting that? If I had an office job and someone turned around and said things to me (like they do at football) you'd turn around and be like - no that's not okay! But here you're like … Okay. I find this weird mentality in football, isn't it? Like you just accept things you almost wouldn't in other jobs. I look back and I'm like why did I do that? I should have stuck up for myself. At the time I was very vulnerable" (Interview 4).

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Similar sentiments were expressed by another current FA WSL player when discussing disparities and feelings of insecurities for women players at her club:

"The inconsistencies of treatment between players, just means I don't feel valued. Even your life beyond football doesn't feel valued by how they treat you, cause it's like - yeah put your body on the line - but it's not like we're in a good position to fall back on if your career ends via injury! If my career ends, I can't pay my bills. It is that tight. It just causes stress and anxiety. We are so stressed by our job" (Interview 2).

When asked about the increased pressure to perform, or risk losing her job and team she went on to explain:

"There's so much pressure on us, because people put this whole stigma on us that we should be grateful. Grateful we're professional. Grateful we're getting money, any money at all. Part of me is grateful I was part-time and now I'm full-time, but that doesn't mean I can be shit on. People are just running on empty cos we train, train, train and no-one cared to monitor us or take care of us" (Interview 2).

The grateful rhetoric is important and is evident in many players accounts, expressed by two experienced senior England internationals:

"In women's football now people say we don't appreciate what we have. I'm like okay I earn a full-time salary, but we've given so much time and sacrifices to the game, I mean I've missed my whole social life - know what I mean? An' we're only on a normal salary and normal people don't have to do what we do. We do more for less. They don't take their job home or fit their lifestyle round their job. I'm expected to feel grateful or lucky? When you're a lawyer or whatever you've worked hard to get there, you've earned the right to be the best" (Interview 13).

This account is revealing in terms of the way the player feels her status as a professional athlete is undermined by expectations placed upon her to feel grateful, for an opportunity given to her, rather than one she had earned. The second experienced senior international echoes this when discussing uncertainties at their club:

Player: "Uncertainty is hard … But it's like you … or we accept it. Cause, we don't … it's cause, we feel privileged - when we're not really. It's different to working a 9-5 cause in a normal job you'd get warnings before you got fired, or a pay out, here we don't. I feel privileged at (club) cause, we constantly get told the club are investing massively and everyone's doing us a favour, it's almost like a charity"
Qu: Do you feel like that?
Player: "I think that's why I accept things yeah. It's a catch 22. I wouldn't accept what I do at work what I do at the club, no way, you can't! Imagine if I had a family and by the end of the year I didn't know if I could afford to live?" (Interview 21).

4.7 The illusio of professional football

The data collected for this study illuminates taken-for-granted work conditions at clubs, which are unsatisfactory for elite professional footballers. Players appear to be mixed into an existing system of professionalism, that is proving largely ineffective. The FA announced the FA WSL 2018/19 season would comprise of a full-time professional women's league. Proposed changes to Super League licences were approved by the FA, and clubs were encouraged to meet new criteria in order to secure professional status (Garry, 2017). New criteria included: a minimum of 16 hours contact per week for players; a minimum investment per club; an academy as part of club and financial fair play and salary cap (Garry, 2017). However, concerns were raised within the football community about FA WSL club's ability to match criteria and maintain full-time professional status. The expectations of FA WSL clubs are much higher than those in FA Women's Championship (second division). The FA Women's Championship predominately comprises of part-time, semi-professional clubs and players.

In his seminal text, *Good jobs, bad jobs: The rise of polarised and precarious employment systems in the United States, 1970s-2000s*, Arne Kalleberg (2011), identified dominant orientations that have had an important and defining impact upon contemporary job quality in the USA (Roderick et al. 2017). These included greater precarity for all workers, and 'bad jobs' as a central feature of ongoing employment. Kalleburg (2011) goes on to note how neoliberal policy, increased individualisation, and a focus on short-term financial performance, are social issues that stimulate

sociological research. The changes in employment conditions have not been limited to the service industry, and there is a connection between good and bad jobs and good and bad clubs for FA WSL players. What currently remains unknown are the consequences for players who operate within these clubs.

The FA WSL has grown immensely, with the league initially comprising of eight clubs in 2011, to 11 clubs in 2018. Furthermore, FA WSL 2 was launched in 2013 comprising 10 teams (Fielding-Lloyd et al. 2018). Most recently, Barclays have agreed to sponsor the FA WSL (2019) with an initial investment of £10 million over three years. In some ways immense growth appears to parallel the highly individualised and often amoral men's game. Previous research positions the changing dynamics of men's football as removed from its social roots to become a business model (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2016). The business model is dominated by profit maximisation, fans as customers, and exploiting global markets. Indeed, the large amounts of capital investment has opened up the game to new markets, for example, television revenue (ibid). The growth of women's football has emerged alongside the hyper-competitive culture of men's football. This association has been criticised by scholars, who suggest women's football is suffering from the more negative conditions of men's football (Dunn & Welford, 2015).

The football field constructs, promotes and reinforces a particular set of dispositions or values. With this in mind, it is important to consider the changing nature of the field of women's football, and its amplified association with the field of power (men's football) as a result of professionalisation. A consequence of the association appears

to be producing new or different values within the field. Players appear aware of the changing context of the field of football and understand the changing nature of their clubs - as several players expressed: "getting their money's worth". That means the financial expansion in football influences how players experience football as a profession. Research conducted on men's football and mental health, which is discussed in depth in chapter six, suggests a consequence of financial expansion is players perceptions of treated as an asset and a commodity and consequently feelings of dehumanisation (Wood et al. 2017).

To summarise this general point so far, the investment of some men's clubs into FA WSL women's teams in order to be successful, is increasingly short-term and inconsistent. These inconsistencies are leading to increased uncertainties for players who feel clubs are not treating them as full-time professionals and increasingly undermining their status. One experienced senior international described the situation at her club:

"We don't get a break our time isn't managed well. It is important to be able to put your clothes on and get away, we never have two days off … it's like they wanna get their money's worth. Our physio is mind blown by the amount of hours we have to do. Like rather than trust us our manager gets us in at the weekend" (Interview 13).

Describing a similar set of circumstances at her club an experienced FA WSL player told me:

"Yeah, I mean they get their money's worth out of us, it isn't like you're resting while you're not training. They were like yeah, we need them to do be doing something else cause that's too much money for them to be doing nothing! So, we train in the morning and then do appearances or stamp tickets at the ground" (Interview 5).

At some club's players are left feeling devalued as explained by one senior player:

"We get breakfast at our club … all the girls were just getting cereal and the chef said he would make us a cooked breakfast and then all of a sudden a guy who is part of the academy asked 'since when are the ladies allowed cooked breakfast' and the chef said 'first team players get cooked breakfast' and the guys responded and said 'yeah but they're the ladies team' so we were all like are you having a laugh?" (Interview 2).

The three examples provided above typify the central point in this section. Players are undervalued at many clubs and are not treated as legitimate professional footballers. Football clubs essentially position themselves at the epicentre of players lives, by promoting dispositions and values players understand as 'professional', and crucial to career advancement. As the findings have highlighted so far, it is taken-for-granted that players will invest themselves emotionally and physically into football and embody football as their career. It is with this in mind, we attempt to delineate, given their circumstances, why players continue to be inhabited by the game she inhabits (Wacquant, 1995a: 88), and has difficulty making sense of the world without

its logic, language and aspirations. Here we unpack the taken-for-grated experiences of women's football and see the inculcation of the football illusio*; i*lllusio is a belief in the merits of what is at stake within a social field.

In the case of professional women footballers', it is the prefix professional at stake along with the legitimacy that accompanies it. As Bourdieu explains, on the basis of Huizinga's etymological association between "illusion" and "ludus" (game), illusio has reference to a "taking the game seriously," to a belief that a social game is important (Bourdieu 1998: 151). That is to say, a field for Bourdieu is always a field of struggle - a struggle over capital deemed legitimate within the field, as a specific form of status. It is the very idea of profession that Bourdieu describes as illusio (Schinkel & Noordegraaf, 2011). Moreover, the individual *professing* to fulfil a certain task, similar to Weber's description of a calling. *Profession* is a socially constructed term which holds value and prestige for professional women footballers. There appears to be a certain appeal of professionalism which serves to structure and shape certain work identities of players.

As noted earlier, professionalism can be considered a dynamic concept, something which is constantly at stake and the content of professionalism is continuously contested. It is here the comparison with illusio can be drawn. The embodiment of the professional illusio then, is a precondition for the successful entry into the football field. Here, the potency of the football illusio is clear, this is not a group of young women unable to form a career in other employment - as the majority of players interviewed have some form of education or vocation. A more plausible argument is

despite the delimited career opportunities, and the prospect of downward social mobility - this is a group of women immersed in the football dream of professionalism, where the game shapes their attitudes, beliefs and behaviours.

4.8 Conclusion

It is evident, the professional women footballers interviewed in this study are immersed in their new career of football. Therefore, it can be argued players are acting intentionally without intention. These results are significant and offer insight into a different dynamic to career theory and an individual's ability to choose. Indeed, the concept of habitus as an organising principle, highlights an intersection which can be considered potentially constructive of an individuals' choice of career. The data highlights players apparent need to *feel* professional, and moreover, legitimate in the male dominated field of professional football. Professional status has been acquired by players, but there are added complexities and uncertainties which run parallel in their new career. Namely facilities, resource allocation, and economic remuneration. Players are left with increasing precariousness and feeling undervalued. However, the inability to desist or retire from the game is evident despite feelings of vulnerability and inevitable injury and ageing.

Professional football, as it is often depicted in the media, promises to be a glamorous profession which brings much symbolic and economic capital and prestige, yet, for women footballers it is clear the realities are very different. Despite this chapter highlighting the lack of opportunities for career progression, and many disillusioned

players, it is likely most would follow the same path given the opportunity again. The football illusio colonises the life-world of professional women footballers, whereby individuals are caught up by the game. What must be considered, however, is despite their unwavering desire to continue in this profession, career advancement is never secure. To understand potential consequences of their commitment, it is necessary to investigate complex employment, workplace and social policies available to professional women footballers. Employment policy exists to generate security for employees. However, to date very little is known about what policies exist, and how players use them. With this in in mind, workplace, employment and social policy is the focus of the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE: (IN)EFFECTIVE WORK-BASED POLICY FOR PROFESSIONAL WOMEN FOOTBALLERS

5.1 Introduction

Along with the rising integration of women in the UK labour market, women entering male dominated occupations has become more prevalent. The professionalisation of women's football has seen women's entry into football *as work* rise sharply. As of 2018, there are eleven full time professional clubs in the FA WSL, with approximately 20 players in each team (The FA, 2018). There are few pessimistic critiques of the career opportunities for women in this employment sector, even though it is precarious and uncertain work. A large body of research has examined women's experiences of playing football (see, for example Williams, 2003; 2007, Skille, 2008). However, as football is a new career for women the timeline precludes research of women's experiences of working as a professional footballer. Therefore, the focus of this research is to understand how players navigate and negotiate essential policies for career advancement and security in their new career.

Following a call from Pfister (2015) for an increased gendered awareness of policy in the football labour market, this chapter will examine employment policies for professional women footballers. To date, questions of women's football have primarily focused on quantitative data, for example, how to advance both participation rates and match attendances. Whilst both are important to the growth of women's football, this chapter presents a qualitative examination of professional

women footballers in England and their work-life concerns and workplace conditions. In developing a market for women's football, the focus of the FA has been both commercial and aesthetic (Fielding-Lloyd et al. 2018). This study provides new insights into more fundamental understandings of the value of workplace and employment policies, the consequences of deficient policies, and how players interpret and understand policy.

As argued in the previous chapter, professional women footballers operate in a paradoxical work sphere. On the one hand, the expanding and thriving glamorisation of women's football attached to tentative notions of celebrity, for example, increased media interest with BT Sport and BBC covering women's football, and professional women footballers like England captain Steph Houghton a regular fixture on Sky Sports. While on the other, the increasingly unstable market conditions and an over-reliance on inconsistent men's clubs for economic and social support. The contradictory cultural space of women's teams attached and effectively controlled by men's clubs is what the FA and the public accept as common-sense, and further expect to consolidate their professional status. The continued uncertainty which surrounds women's football can be considered a product of a complex institutional environment (Allison, 2016). The precarious lexicon of women's football perhaps reaffirms the necessity for policies which include vocational and educational attainment for players, in addition to their playing careers.

The reality for elite women footballers is markedly different to their male equivalents not least in the context of employment policies which support their needs. According

to FIFPro (2017), 50% of the 3,295 women footballers surveyed received no salary from their club whilst those who receive a salary earn less than $600 per month which equates to approximately £470 per month. Therefore, it is not unfair to assume there are only a handful of women who will be able to survive from the economic capital from their careers. Moreover, very few women can plan to utilise their physical and social capital from their football careers into well-paid opportunities such as working in the media when they retire, which indicates the need for education and skills outside of the game for women footballers (McCormack & Walseth, 2013).

Despite the fragile market conditions discussed in which footballers operate, research on male footballers suggests few players are prepared for their post-career lives or a forced career change (McGillivray & McIntosh, 2006; Roderick 2006). Platts & Smith's (2009) data contends the response of key stakeholders has been to introduce policies around new learning strategies built concretely into players' contracts. This research explores whether women footballers' new careers can be considered as more uncertain than their male equivalents, both during their careers and within the context of post-career. Women are attempting to forge a career in a male dominated occupation, and data within this study indicates they are attempting to join the men's game on men's terms.

The Professional Footballers Association (PFA) established in 1907, is the world's longest established professional sportspersons union. The PFA states its experience ensures the best advice, representation and assistance in all aspects of a player's career and beyond. Whilst the PFA focuses on 'sportspersons' and aims for

inclusivity, a more nuanced understanding is generated through data of a partially visible union for women, largely dependent on capital and offers very little for players in terms of employment policy and post-career support. It is within this context we ask the question, what effective work-based policies exist for women? Further, what are the legal and moral obligations of the clubs and national governing bodies to develop policies more appropriate for women footballers?

Previous scholarly enquiry has established that gender equality is high on the social policy-making agenda of the European Union, as the EU bids to normalise the inclusion of gender equality principles in policy discussions (Fagan & Rubery, 2018). Research suggests tensions and contradictions have emerged from incomplete gender mainstreaming of policy - which reflects the struggle between the pursuit of a social democratic model and the promotion of neoliberal economic policies (ibid). The normalisation and inclusion of gendered polices have been significant for the advancement of women entering the labour market, in terms of flexible working hours. However, crucial issues such as equal pay have been underplayed to reflect and support neoliberal policies (Fagan & Rubery, 2018). Despite inconsistent policy-making, it is evident work-life policies are crucial for the advancement of women in the workplace. Whether these policies exist for women footballers will be examined in more detail later in this chapter.

5.2 Enmeshed in coerced affection

Employment policy is utilised by organisations to provide guidance on organisational and occupational issues that may occur (Cowan, 2011). In the workplace, employment policies are essential to make clear organisational values and ethics. Elite women footballers are attempting to establish careers in a highly precarious occupation, within a structure in its infancy and consequently, highly dynamic. There are complexities associated with this 'new' career for women. Intricacies that concern the employment and wellbeing policies in the workplace and uncertainties attached to whose responsibility it is, to offer security to women footballers. In the previous chapter, data highlighted the social construction of *being* professional for women footballers in England, is something embodied and moreover, a dream for the majority of participants. The strong bond athletes form at a young age with football controls their emotions and feelings towards their workplace and essentially renders them submissive in certain contexts. The data in this study demonstrates a strong tendency towards non-resistance, particularly when it comes to players' rights and expectations as employees.

Uncertainty increases for women footballers because of the ambiguous conditions in which the women's game operates. Recent research on the working conditions of women footballers from FIFPro (2017), the world players union, collected data from 3,295 professional women footballers from across the world. The report provides comprehensive quantitative analysis of the concerns of professional women footballers and recognises women's relative invisibility. The report highlights three

particular concerns which align with data in this study. First, the denial of professional status - professional women footballers are not always recognised as such by stakeholders - or by themselves which means they are not given the appropriate rights or conditions and do not usually ask for them. Second, 15% of players did not know what type of contract they have and only 9% capped players (internationals) know what contract they have. Third, no pay or late pay - 49.5% of respondents are not paid by their clubs, and most of those paid receive low wages. More than 60% of paid players take home less than $600 a month, which equates to approximately £470 per month, only a few make more than $4,000 a month, approximately £3,000 per month. While 37% say they are paid late (FIFPro, 2017).

For professional women footballers', contractual agreements are now part of the participatory process. Indeed, the prospect of elite competition, potential commercial opportunities, equipment, clothing and training support hold much potential for elite women footballers (Kohe & Purdy, 2016). The contract can be considered a formalisation of a relationship between a player and their club or international organisation. The majority of players articulated their primary concern is elite competition, active participation on match day and elite training on a daily basis. Although a symbol of mutual understanding - the nature of a contract is designed to define athlete employment conditions and expectations.

For the most part, contracts formalise the relationship between the organisation (club or National Governing Body) and the athlete. However, data revealed, players' narrow understandings of the nature of their contract and the fine-line between

players recognition of clubs protecting themselves and their endorsers and advancing the security of their employees. Players within this study were asked what type of contracts they were 'on', 97% of players were unsure of contract type and/or the support it should offer past economic remuneration. As articulated by one senior international:

"Haven't gotta clue (what contract I'm on)! There's no information given to you, there should be cause, I haven't gotta clue. I'd like to think my agent knows but I dunno … more information should be given, we need to know our employment rights cause look at Notts County (club liquidated 2017) if we fold tomorrow, where does that leave me? Are my bills getting paid?" (Interview 15).

Similarly, an experienced senior international explained when asked about her contract: "No, not at all. I don't think anyone knows, not even at England I don't think were on a proper contract either. When asked about employee rights she went on: "Nothing, we don't know anything" (Interview 13) these accounts are informative, as both players appear resigned to obfuscation with their contract. It appears taken-for-granted players are uninformed and are seemingly reluctant to question their conditions regarding their employment rights, which leads, perhaps unsurprisingly to increased uncertainties.

A vast collection of research exists on professional athletes detailing uncertainties associated with competing in elite level sport (Parker, 2000; McGillivray et al. 2006; Roderick, 2006; Platts & Smith, 2009). Most commonly researched and presented,

are concerns such as injury and ageing in short career, and more recently, career transitions. Injury, ageing, enmeshed in a short career and career transitions are common to women players and were discussed in-depth within this research, yet, players also discussed contract length, associated complexities and uncertainties.

Work within the field of professional women's football is characterised by highly skilled, ambulatory workers. It was not uncommon within the research for players to have moved clubs several times during the short seven-year tenure of the FA WSL. All players in this research were signed on relatively short fixed-term contracts, ranging from rolling month-to-month contracts to a maximum of three years. The majority of players confirmed reasons for moving clubs frequently was predominately due to economic circumstances. However, the difference between the women interviewed for this research and previous research on male professional footballers, is the unfamiliar reliance on their contract as their sole form of income. Earnings, for the most part appeared barely sufficient to sustain themselves. Market realities detailed in narrative research with a former male professional footballer (Roderick & Schumacker, 2016) suggests a player in men's football earning £400 per week was considerably low. The Telegraph (Wigmore, 2017) detailed 88% of FA WSL players earn less than £18k per year. There is much to be said about a men's player in League Two earning more than an England women's international player in the FA WSL (Roderick & Schumacker, 2016; The Telegraph, 2017).

Participants discussed pre-professionalisation security through part-time jobs which often subsidised income earned from part-time football or university bursaries. It was

pointed out previously, players taking up football full-time as a career, never appeared to be a *choice* despite the precarious nature of their new career. Unlike their male counterparts, who Roderick (2006) argues have always been aware of the uncertain marketplace they are competing in, data suggests women footballers in this study were *unaware* of the limited duration of contracts, subsequent consequences, heightened competition and excessive supply of labour. The next extract explains one senior international's feelings towards her new reality:

"I'm insecure (contract) look at the men's game when they're in their final year they're already negotiating, or they know they're not gonna get offered one (contract) and they can move. In our game they run it down till the last days and you could be out of a job straight away. Cause you're probably expecting a contract and then there's no team what wants you. I've got six months left and the manager hasn't spoken to me about my contract. When asked if she's worried, she continued: "Course I'm worried, I've got things I've gotta pay for and come December if they want me and I haven't already started talking to another club, I'm left without a job! England contracts are only one year, and club ones are one or two years max!

She goes on to explain how this affects her:

"I'm just unclear about it (regarding a contract) it effects performance. Cause the thing with contracts and they're paid, so, before (FA WSL) when I worked and played, I enjoyed football, cos I knew I had an income and football was something

I would play and wanna be the best and perform but I knew there was no … well not as much pressure as now, cause I wasn't gonna lose my job based on my performance. As there is more money, it's more uncertain. I have a value on my head and you have to live up to that value, know what I'm saying?" (Interview 13).

This view is supported by another senior international:

"The England contract is yearly, and my club contract is up soon. If they want me, I'll renegotiate but if not, I'd leave. England is the same, if they want you, you're in, if not … like you're out, so then I dunno what to do? It literally halves my income - how do you get told a month before your income is halved?" She went on to explain uncertainty: "Uncertainty is hard. But we … accept cos we feel privileged when were not really!" (Interview 21).

The above extracts describe players recognition of their external market value based on reputation, their capital. Bourdieu describes capital broadly as a tradable currency within a specific field (Jenkins, 1992). Within the field of professional football, research suggests physical capital is of particular value (McGillivray & McIntosh, 2006). The techniques and highly sought-after physical competencies (Adkins, 2003) of elite professional footballers, for example, speed and strength, are accorded as the dominant capital. They are also attributed to male competencies (Allison, 2016). Physical capital is central to players productive relationships with their clubs (Giulianotti, 1999). However, this outlook is short-term in nature and highly problematic for several reasons. Firstly, reliance on physical capital is

unsustainable due to de facto ageing and high probability of injury due to players over-reliance on an ever-diminishing bank of physical capital (McGillivray & McIntosh, 2006). Secondly, in alternative fields, footballers practical labour is often of little value and thirdly, compounding the reliance on physical capital as tradable currency - players' gender.

A salient difference for men and women footballers in terms of their physical capital, is the opportunity of transferring physical capital into economic capital. In the field of women's football, to acquire physical capital, being an elite football player (those who play FA WSL), research suggests players have spent tens of thousands of hours accruing their physical capital (McCormack & Walseth, 2013). However, the opportunity to convert physical capital into economic capital is partial, due to the limited opportunity for women footballers, both in terms of number of clubs with the capacity to remunerate players adequately, and the value placed on highly masculinised forms of capital within the football field (Brown, 2006). Studies have found conflation between traditionally male characteristics, such as verbal and physical aggression, and perceptions of competence (Allison, 2016). In short, the capital value assigned to masculine characteristics in football, gives women less opportunity to convert their physical capital.

The growing commercial glamorisation of women's football means the roles, remits and intentions of contracts are increasingly complex, as clubs attempt to mitigate between employment conditions and commercial obligations (Kohe & Purdy, 2016). A detailed study on professional women footballers has enabled analysis on

increasing complexities related to players contracts and employment conditions, which appear to leave many players feeling ambivalent towards their employer. Data suggests players recognise a shift in ethos for some clubs from a community focus, to a highly commercialised focus. The shift of increasing commercialisation and clubs as business enterprises described by some players, is interesting, both micro and macro-structurally. On a micro level, players recognise an increase in pressure and expectations. In their experiences of increased pressure, many players discuss the need to *produce the goods* (Roderick, 2006) or face rejection or unemployment. It can be argued here, players recognition of increasing commercialisation, has led to an embodiment of business-like objectives, often resulting in heightened individualisation. Individualisation and its consequences will be discussed later in the chapter.

The shift in the prerogatives of women's football clubs and the FA to prioritise their commercial interests effectively places the employment needs of their players as secondary. The shift, as data will show increases uncertainties for players whilst simultaneously increasing individualisation. The players interviewed for this research, refer to this as the 'cut-throat' nature of the game and many players readily accept this as a taken-for-granted aspect of professional football. Wacquant (1995) describes players acceptance and narrow understandings of the operation of the dominant logic that constructs athletes' realities, as the natural order of things as coerced affection. That is to say, players accept the natural order as taken-for-granted - an unquestioned part of their new realities as professional athletes.

To summarise, professional women footballers are attempting to establish careers in a highly precarious field. Employment concerns and whose responsibility it is to offer security to players, highlights player uncertainties. Data revealed narrow understandings and submissive tendencies of many players in their attempt to forge a career and build capital. The changing culture of clubs who adopt neoliberal, business-like objectives, increases players ambivalence towards their employers. Consequently, the shift, although not explicitly articulated by clubs, impacts individuals' loyalties and perceptions of themselves as players, their coaches and their clubs. The next section will discuss in detail the consequences of inadequate employment policies for women footballers.

5.3 Changing rules of the game

'Cut-throat' was highly prevalent among the descriptions of professionalisation commonly recounted by players, in relation to the changing rules of game. Many players recalled situations they referred to as 'cut-throat' and articulated meanings they attached to their experiences. Professional football is a short-term career and the labour market for players is highly competitive (Parker, 2000; Roderick, 2006: Wood et al. 2017). Players who refer to their work conditions as cut-throat can be said to align with Wacquant (2001) in his study on boxers and the language of exploitation used to describe players consciousness of the way they are undervalued in their club. As explained by one experienced senior international who pertinently explained the changing nature of women's football:

"Loyalty? It's not even limited, there's none and that's something I'm learning there's no loyalty, cause when it comes to it, when a club needs to do what a club needs to do, they'll do it" she went on to explain how a lack of loyalty effects players "I think it is increasingly individualised - players need to be selfish. As a women's footballer we have always played the game for the right reasons. For the passion and love it, but now, I mean, we've given so much of our time that we forget that actually […] we have to look after ourselves, but clubs capitalise on that. They manipulate players, the standards [long pause] players just accept it for what it is, cause they just wanna play football' (Interview 12).

Unpacking the notion of *just wanting to play football* and consequences of cultural changes, such as; increasing individualisation and a lack of loyalty, one former senior international interprets her new realities:

"People move all the time, so dynamics change […] it doesn't feel as much of a team game anymore. It's like that old cliché we play cause, we love it not for money, but it is very different (now) players are literally playing to survive. To get that next contract, that bit of money […] playing for each little bit of their career. You know, are they playing for their international contract? Once they lose that the money, incentive has gone. A lot of people are staying in it (football) for that now and not the sporting environment. Sometimes you go to training and it's not enjoyable cause people just wanna get their session done and go home. They're not there to enjoy it" (Interview 7).

This was confirmed, in part, by a senior international who explained her experience of 'cut-throat' in reference to her transfer from one club to another:

"Well, I understand it's a cut-throat business … and it is a business at the end of the day, but I didn't wanna leave and I didn't have anyone who understood the emotion I was going through … there was so many times I wanted to ask the club why they did it, but I couldn't" (Interview 17).

A contrasting interpretation of the cut-throat nature of the game is brought out very clearly in the following extract. The player highlights complex emotions attached to clubs and perhaps indicates vulnerabilities of some players in their new reality. The former youth international describes her transfer and how clubs appear to have adopted characteristics of the men's game:

"I don't know why it was so hard to take (transfer). You invest so much and then it leaves you thinking - is that all I meant to you? So, you think why did I bother? It's brutal. To some extent, I can understand it, the game is more professional and is more cut-throat, so if someone's not doing their job pay someone else to do it. But on the flip side women's football, to try and compare it to men's football it is a challenge. Yes, there are comparisons what can be drawn but we are paid below minimum wage for what we do […] and for them (club) to turn around and be like 'off you go you're not part of my plans' I just thought, wow. You have made a mug of us for how long? Paying us next to nothing, but we do it for the love of the game the least you could do is acknowledge me" (Interview 2).

On the question of the cut-throat nature and relocation, it appears players had very little support from clubs, their agents or the FA. Players relocated sometimes significant distances to sign contracts that could be as short as six months. The above extracts exemplify dilemmas for players. It is clear, that some players appear to reject, or are seemingly unprepared for the diverse culture change that manifest itself in professionalisation. Yet, the majority of players appear to accept their new reality and embody individualistic characteristics. Similar to the male players interviewed by Roderick (2006), it was not uncommon for players to express tensions which exist between personal and team successes. Yet herein lies a paradox for professional women footballers. Financial viability was at the heart of the latest restructuring process detailed in chapters one, two and four. The focus on financial criteria whilst simultaneously depicting players as morally good athletes playing for the love of the game (Fielding-Lloyd et al. 2018; Williams, 2013), is slightly confusing. Therefore, it is little wonder many players appear caught in a dilemma in their new career.

Allison's (2016) ethnographic research on US women's soccer revealed two dominant macro-logics competing in the league. On one hand, a 'business' logic - defined as the pursuit of corporate sponsors and commercialisation, and on the other, a 'cause' logic - detailed as empowering women and girls through soccer. The contradictory cultural space of US women's soccer exists in a persistent state of uncertainty, how to define and achieve 'success'. Similarities can be drawn to the objectives of the FA WSL clubs. As a result, many players articulate and appear to have internalised contradictions and uncertainties.

In an attempt to locate women's football as culturally distinct from men's football, women are positioned as keen to give back to the game - professional footballers playing for the love of the game - football in its purest sense (Fielding-Lloyd et al. 2018; Williams, 2013). This narrative is exemplified in the following extract from a youth international:

"if you say 'I'm not really into this, is this part of the job? (Being keen to give back) Is this part of the package?' It's a double-edged sword. You do have to keep face more. You do have to not only be a footballer as a woman... you have to be a smiling, engaging, passionate footballer that people like to interact with and I don't think the men have that weight on their shoulders" (Interview 18).

In this way, women's football maintains its othered position in the field. Fielding-Lloyd et al. (2018) argue women's position as outsiders merely perpetuates inequalities and does so in covert ways, often legitimising disparities. Effectively organisations characterise women footballers as untainted by money. This research goes someway to contradicting these gendered social and cultural markers as players appear attached to notions of celebrity and are in competition for capital. A more nuanced understanding of players perceptions - it is not the intention of the data to speak for all FA WSL players - highlights some ambiguity and change in attitude towards *playing the love of the game* discourse. Research of men's sports note the highly commodified model of sport, yet we know little about the environment in which women operate as professionals (Allison, 2016).

This research examined taken-for-granted notions, elucidating how professional women footballers negotiate their new cultural contradictions, employment concerns and how they operate in their new professional environment. The transformation of player perceptions is exemplified in the following extract from an interview with a senior international:

"Yeah I mean it (professional football) just opens your eyes to … who or what you're working with? Or the environment you're working within. Like you have no-one to talk to, either teammates or staff or whatever so, you realise who you're working with or around and maybe in the past you'd put trust into people, whereas now you lose all that. People change cos of money, yeah. Some do. Dynamics change of the team if it's allowed to. I think before at (club) we were a team we knew the value of work as team. Whereas here, we don't - some players are seen as more valuable to the team than others. And you can see it, which develops insecurities in players, you lose people who are needed. In any job, you know your worth of course, and there's different salaries in the same role but when it's so far gone, and it gets highlighted then it becomes a problem" (Interview 22).

Understanding the changing rules of the game, as football becomes work, through the lens of professional women footballers can be understood as a field which is increasingly commercialised and focused primarily on delivering short-term results. A focus on short-term results appears to influence most managers in football to be successful, as quickly as possible. Ephemeral ambitions can be tentatively suggested to contribute to players complex movement patterns and increasing

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individualisation (Blair, 2003). The emphasis on short-term results often constrains managers and coaches to overlook long-term objectives such as the education, wellbeing and welfare of their players (Roderick, 2006; Platts & Smith, 2009).

5.4 Educational policy

In the previous section it was argued all participants in this study are experiencing new realities as professional footballers. Throughout Europe, the professionalisation of women's football has been increasing over the last ten years. This is exemplified through increased competition, in the shape of World Cups in multiple age groups, UEFA European Championships and the UEFA Women's Champions League (McCormack & Walseth, 2013). Additionally, globally women's football is experiencing increased marketing potential (Allison, 2016) and growing participation rates (The FA, 2018). Despite increased participation, women are less well represented than men moving upwards into the professional field (Anderson, 2009). The inception of the FA WSL and subsequent restructures (2017/18) enforced all clubs who wished to compete in the FA WSL to become full-time professional by 2018 as indicated in the FA's 'Game plan for growth' (2017). A strategic priority of the FA is to build a comprehensive education programme to ensure the dual careers of athletes are prioritised (The FA, 2017). As a result of professionalisation, elite women footballers are being placed under increased pressure to deliver results, giving rise to a significant increase in time spent training, preparing for games, recovery, game analysis and commercial opportunities.

Data in the previous chapter highlighted individuals' articulations of agency around habitus dispositions and the ability to *choose* otherwise in their career. With this in mind, the emergent opportunity of a career as a professional footballer, seemingly leaves players managing tensions between often contradictory demands in the fields of education and elite sports (Bourke, 2003; McGillivray et al. 2006). Players must attempt to balance the demands of accruing physical capital and value as footballers, whilst building educational capital in preparation for post-career planning (McCormack & Walseth, 2013). This study confirms the dilemma in attempting to manage tensions between a dual career - education and football - articulated in the following extract from one senior international:

"I'm constantly thinking how will I fit this all in? It's that quote isn't it? Work hard while no-one is watching and that's it really, people don't see and don't understand the sacrifices you make to try and be successful" (Interview 24).

A plethora of studies exist on the economical and mental wellbeing of elite male footballers in the context of dual careers, education and post-career planning, yet little research exists on women footballers. Whilst the opportunity to play professional football for women has increased, the overall number of professional women footballers globally remains particularly low, for example, FIFPro (2017) identified from 3,295 players surveyed, 18% identified as professional. It is important to note that the term 'professional player' is defined by FIFA, but there is room for interpretation, it is likely associations utilise different parameters when determining what and who constitutes as a professional player. As detailed in the introduction,

the category of semi-professional does not exist within official FIFA definitions but in fact, describes many women footballers globally. According to FIFA, 'making a living' in the game for women, is only possible in 23 out of 136 FIFA registered countries. This means 84% of women in FIFA registered countries must leave their countries in an attempt to convert physical into economic capital (McCormack & Walseth, 2013). A growing body of literature examines migration for women footballers and highlights a handful of African players who are able to send money home to their families (Agergaard & Botelho, 2014). For the most part, it appears women footballers earn meagre salaries, with little opportunity to conserve funds (FIFPro, 2017). As such, the need to prepare for post-career becomes fundamental to their future.

In the past, professional football apprenticeships received criticism for their non-standardised format (Parker, 2000; Platts & Smith, 2009). Previous research suggests, that of particular concern was the failure of governing body policy to meet the educational and vocational needs of young male footballers (Parker, 2000; McGillivray et al. 2006; Platts & Smith, 2009). More specifically, clubs demonstrated almost exclusive concerns with producing elite footballers, often with limited consideration given to education and welfare provisions available to players. Indeed, clubs have responsibilities to not only produce talented footballers, but recognise players welfare, safeguarding and educational needs (Platts & Smith, 2009). Further scrutiny revealed a concern for players employment rights under European Union law (EU) (David, 2005). According to Platts and Smith (2009) the FA's response stipulated 'the advent of Football Academies has seen the mandatory appointment

of a full-time Education and Welfare Officer to each [Academy]'. A more measured response from the FA was the introduction of the Football education for young players: 'A charter for quality' in 1997. The charter for quality, aimed to provide a more structured approach to player development and effectively challenged clubs to be responsible for player development, on and off the field. The charter continues to provide a framework for clubs today.

A more recent example of policy with particular emphasis on employment rights of athletes is the white paper (European Commission (EC), 2007). The white paper was originally presented by the European Commission in an attempt 'to give strategic orientation of the role of sport in Europe, to encourage debate on specific problems, to enhance the visibility of sport in EU policy-making and to raise public awareness of the needs and specificities of the sector' (EC 2007: 2). Further, the white paper makes recommendations on several matters related to the welfare of young athletes. These recommendations attempted to impact the political, social and economic environment of men's football, offering players the opportunity to develop their post-career options and increase wellbeing through education (McGillivray et al. 2006; Platts & Smith, 2009; Ralvas et al. 2010).

The effectiveness of the white paper has been examined by Platts and Smith (2009), who argue the educational provisions made available to players had a marginal impact. Moreover, success on the field far outweighed educational commitment. However, this examination of education and player wellbeing policy does not extend to women's football and is subsequently, narrow. This narrow view can be attributed

to the relative absence of a method of comparison. Women's football has developed, with a reported 29 million women and girls playing some form of football across the world (Scott & Anderson, 2013). A question could be asked regarding the reliability of these figures with organisations propensity to exaggerate participation figures (Williams, 2006), nonetheless, greater attention is now being paid to the development of women's football, and by extension women footballers both current and aspiring. Considered alongside the growth and development of women footballers, a greater understanding of players' educational considerations and organisation's policies of clubs and National Governing Bodies, is necessary to build a picture of players holistic development and life-chances post football.

The emerging picture of professional women footballers - it is not claimed this picture is all players perceived realities - is of an employment field which offers very little security, no occupational pension and a little more than ten years tenure (McGillivray et al. 2005). For nearly all players, educational advancement is essential to their post-career options. The following extract describes one senior international players perception towards the combination of education and football at her club:

"I think it's all well and good when you're in it (football) but after it, what am I meant to do now? And you feel like it has to relate to football cause, it's all you've been around for your whole life! Not many people would have a job for eight years and then have change career, to start again […] there's absolutely nothing in place for us to develop a career during football. Even at our club, lads who aren't kept on are given options. The prime example is when they ended our contracts here,

they (players) were given three weeks to find a job, or a new club. Our general manager told one of our players either go to university or play full-time football - there is no in-between, but you need both" (Interview 4).

This view is supported by a senior international who has recently taken up an educational course late in her career:

"Cause, I thought to myself, bloody hell, football isn't gonna … I mean, I'm struggling, I'm playing well but I'm not getting anywhere with it. So, I had to plan for my future […] things happen for a reason and it is probably one of my regrets, instead of focusing so much on football cause, I thought it would get me far, like if you put the work in, but the games about opinions and you can't make up someone's mind for them. You know? Now I need to put some roots down for the future" (Interview 30).

As mentioned in chapter two, in 2018 the FA published 'In Pursuit of Progress' 2018-2021 strategy. Part of the strategy is to provide a 'dual-career programme' for England women players, in combination with university hubs across the country to ensure they achieve in football and life (FA, 2018a). This approach is problematic, not least on the basis of exclusion of non-international players. This exclusion was elucidated by a senior international: "There's a culture in the women's game that if you're not an England player, you've basically fallen off the end of the earth" (Interview 12). The data collected in this study characterises women footballers' education as inconsistent at best and at worst, non-existent. The political, social and

economic changes which appear to have improved conditions for male footballers, are noticeably absent in the careers of elite women footballers. Of particular significance is evidence to suggest the production of educational capital is a crucial component of a smooth, post-career transition on a psychological level (McCormack & Walseth, 2013) yet, club strategies to employ related educational policy, are concernedly absent.

The majority of players interviewed for this study recognised the importance of their education - but most were unsure firstly, of whose responsibility it was to provide education and secondly, how education combines with footballing demands. One senior international expressed her feelings on educational capital:

"100% it should be compulsory. I don't think you should be able to get your professional deal without education behind you. Players are getting their contracts and are thinking they don't have to do any work (education)! But I think clubs need to do more to support players. Like we need an education. If we get injured tomorrow and are left with nothing - clubs don't have a responsibility with us anymore were left high and dry. I mean I had an injury and they said I might not play again […] I've done a little course but haven't been to uni. If I was giving advice to a younger player it would be go to uni and get as much education as you can […] you just never know what's gonna happen, do you? All clubs want you to think about is football. There's a kid in our team now revising for exams, she's shattered, struggling to train and not eating properly so where does it give?" (Interview 15).

A detailed study of women footballers has enabled analysis of the educational policies in place for players. It is well understood that a professional sports career has a large degree of uncertainty about it. Data for this study understands the new careers of professional women footballers to be no different. Unlike the research completed on male footballers, data in this study reveal that from 30 participants, 21 had either completed a degree or were currently in education. However, in line with previous research (Aquilina & Henry, 2010) the majority of degrees which were completed, appeared to have been undertaken with a view to prioritise football. For example, most players cited undertaking sport-focused degrees which they viewed as impractical for the future. As exemplified in the following extract:

"I have a degree in coaching which I regret doing anyway. I do regret it a lot. I just though oh I'm good at sport, that's what I'll do" (Interview 4).

Extracts citing similar concerns were not uncommon within the data. Subsequently, many players were concerned about their opportunities to transfer educational capital. In the following extract, a youth international talks about the difficulties she's experienced balancing expectations of education and elite sport:

"I did wanna do something in psychology, but I thought it would be a lot more work so kinda went for an easier degree to work with football. It was really difficult to balance cause we were full-time players and we trained in the morning […] I'd be running onto the pitch, missing the warm up or I'd have to leave the lecture 10 minutes early - my university tutor didn't get on with my manager, cause my

manager said football first and the university tutor was very much - university first!
Girls in my team as well, who were doing their dissertation and playing full-time,
really struggled" (Interview 22).

The results of this study indicate in general, players opted for *easier* degrees to
combine with football. My data correlates with previous research on both elite men
and women athletes (McGillivray et al. 2005; Aqualina, 2013; McCormack &
Walseth, 2013). Despite the importance of accruing educational capital, for elite
footballers, the balance of contradictory demands of education and elite sport, gives
rise to lower examination results, drop out and mental health concerns (Christensen
& Sorensen, 2009; McCormack & Walseth, 2013).

Data in this study elucidates players in a whirlpool of compromises between
education and their football career. Players become familiar with, and are expected
to place education as secondary, as the field of professional football regardless of
gender often orchestrates anti-educational practices. The development of
student/athlete-friendly degrees that seemingly prioritise sport over education and
therefore sport over athlete wellbeing, suggests clubs and organisations such as the
FA, place a higher value on athletic endeavours rather than academic abilities or
future vocation. Indeed, data in this study is supported by Gayle et al. (2018) analysis
of African-American student-athletes, who generate large sums of money for the
NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association). They conclude that neoliberal
practices mean student education is less of a priority than market interests and
success on the field.

Given the precarious nature of professional women's football, players are particularly vulnerable to occupational fragility (McGillivray et al. 2005). The changing nature of the field of professional football comprises of increased commercialisation, greater remuneration and pressures on players time, appears to be changing the relative importance of educational capital, particularly in the case of younger players. Emerging from the data is a product of perceived anti-intellectualism culture (McGillivray et al. 2005). As one senior international confirmed: "half my teammates sit on their Play Station! But that's the culture, the club just want you to play, recover and play again" (Interview 10).

In agreement, a senior international gave an example of anti-intellectual culture at her club:

"I mean too often now we see a club putting themselves before a players education. I've seen it too many times. You're told to miss university to attend a training session. Whereas it should be the other way around, like if a player is studying, for something outside of football they should be encouraged, and we should work football around that. So, clubs need to play a bigger role. I mean their priority is to get the player on the pitch but it's not a 9-5 job, especially for younger players they should be given time or pursue another career, in my opinion" (Interview 24).

It is clear that the capital ascribed to academic qualifications, is of little value to prospective clubs and consequently of little value to younger players, who did not

experience amateur or semi-professional status. Therefore, those players who have only operated in the "football bubble" (Interview 21). Consequently, professional women's football and the struggle for dominant positions, renders players academic qualifications as secondary.

Concerns were raised by one senior international:

"Kids dropping out of education to pursue a football career is not right - education is so important! They have to stay in education. We have a brilliant younger player at (club) she doesn't go to university now, she's a clever girl so she should be at uni. She just trains every day and watches Netflix. That's her life now but if it all ends tomorrow what are you gonna do? I think education helps with not being narrow minded which some players are. The pressures associated with professional football, so players, just want to train, recover and play but clubs should let you think outside that. Younger players need to mix with normal people outside of football to develop as human beings, not just footballers. You have to be able to cope with life both as a player and after playing" (Interview 16).

The above extracts identify similarities between men and women footballers and their perception of education. Interestingly, in this study there appears to have been a shift in the value women place on education. As noted earlier, similar to the male professionals examined in Scotland (McGillivrary & McIntosh, 2006) it appears as footballing commitments increase, educational attainment, or the value placed on education decreases. Previous research on male professional footballers suggests

involvement with a football club, places significant restrictions on educational attainment (Parker, 2000; McGillivray & McIntosh, 2006; Roderick, 2006). When compared to other sectors, male professional footballers leave school earlier and with fewer qualifications (ibid). Although, instead of players being incapable of acquiring educational capital, it reflects players pressures to commit to their football clubs, rather than education. Using Bourdieu's notion of *doxa* the values and meanings of the club are articulated and subsequently internalised by players from a young age. It is clear players who opt to continue in education are considering the unthinkable in football, career failure. As a result, academic pathways are deemed unthinkable (Bourdieu, 2000). This is reinforced by the club, through a particular doxic knowledge (McGillivray & McIntosh, 2006).

As a consequence, despite increasingly unstable market conditions and diminished post-career prospects, professional footballers reject the educational field. It is taken-for-granted that professional footballers reject education. It is an accepted condition of *being a professional.* As a result, footballers are commonly depicted in the media as uneducated. It appears women footballers are internalising this concept, as part of *being a professional* - subsequently rejecting education - as one senior international confirmed: "The lads do it (reject education) say I'm not doing me work cause, I'm getting a pro (contract) anyway - the girls do it now" (Interview 15).

Similarly, another senior international confirmed:

"What does happen (in women's football) is kids dropping out of school/university to pursue a career and that's not right. For younger players they think they can just pie off education cos all they can see is that professional contract, pending" (Interview 16).

Professional footballers internalise the rules of the game and are effectively complicit in their own oppression, accepting their position as common-sense (McGillivray & McIntosh, 2006). As the culture of women's football changes to mirror the highly commercialised men's game, educational capital becomes irrelevant to those pursing the football *dream*. Moreover, a rejection of education serves to perpetuate social inequalities (Wacquant, 2011).

The concerns of the life-world domination players experience are detailed in the following extract of another senior international:

"It's not real-life football. It's such a bubble. Clubs should have responsibility. They ask you what you wanna do after football and the PFA have courses and stuff but there's no awareness (of reality) and you can't teach that. Like we come in, have breakfast, train, have lunch. So, say your 18 and you're gonna have a long career, why is she gonna go to school? Why is she gonna think about that when she's comfortable and no-one is pushing her? […] Players are lost now without education" (Interview 21).

It is clear from the above extracts that the value placed on education is decreasing as professionalism increases. The data in this study demonstrates a clear divide between older and younger players articulations on the value of education. The following extract from a senior international explains the importance of education:

"The drop-out rate is extreme and it's not even just about … Like look at the rate of mental health issues now, there's probably a lot of people in the game who are coming to the end of their career and they can't cope. They're scared. They're terrified of not being a footballer cos they've never thought of doing anything else. Clubs have a responsibility to say yes, you're a professional footballer but you need to do a course and we will help you, we'll fund you, younger players you can't come to training unless you've completed the course, make it difficult and part of the policy of clubs. Clubs are responsible for people's lives, players are at clubs for years. So, it should be a government thing, a lot more mandatory. Like if you're not playing, you'd be annoyed but you would have a different outlet. I feel really strongly about that" (Interview 12).

The data collected for this study highlights concerns of players and positions these concerns as urgent policy issues for clubs and governing bodies. Both clubs and governing bodies must provide support for professional footballers to accrue educational capital for current and post-career opportunities.

One of the issues that emerged from the findings is the significant educational policy concerns to be addressed for women footballers. A central concern here, is what

Williams (2006) posits as organisational discrimination. Broadly, this philosophy of discrimination is seemingly justified by an organisation or association, such as the FA or football clubs against a particular group, in this case FA WSL footballers and their education. Bourdieu writes extensively about the central role education plays in reproducing social inequalities (Mills, 2008). Bourdieu (1973) argues against a meritocratic illusion, contending instead it is the culture of the dominant group that controls the economic, social and political resources, embodied in education. This means the demands within the system defines success within it.

Although, an inaugural FA educational policy can be considered progress. Data in this study directly contradicts the FA's 'Game plan for Growth strategy' (2017) and 'In the pursuit of progress' (2018-2021) tentatively rejecting the educational objectives set out by the FA. Data in this study suggests the combination of education and elite football is challenging and as such, more robust policy and effective communication methods must be considered to place particular importance on educational policies in organisations and clubs. With this in mind, the strategy of the FA appears too simplistic. FA WSL clubs' emphasis and prioritisation on results and dominant discourse which expects 100% commitment from players as "it is your job now" (Interview 7), leaves players managing conflict between club and FA discourse. As such, it is crucial to formulate strategies which bring about change in players lives, who are seemingly constrained by subcultures around football. It is clear that the discourse of professionalisation appears to be contradictory and complex. Professionalisation for women appears to be based on partial integration, which can be considered problematic for players, not least on the basis of players

post-career playing options, family considerations and wellbeing. Failure to prepare for retirement heightens possibilities of future wellbeing concerns. With this in mind, it is important to examine consequences of overlooked and neglected educational policies.

5.5 Hitting the panic button: Post-career considerations

Having discussed the importance of educational capital, the relative lack of opportunity to transfer capital, and the absence of effective educational policy, it is necessary to explain how workplace and employment policies impact the post-career of professional women footballers, which will enable an unmasking of common-sense assumptions pertaining to individuals post-career options.

Retirement from football can bring about dramatic changes in the lives of athletes. Adjustment to their new and often unwanted realities, is typically not an acute event with a clear beginning and ending, but a process over time (Barker-Ruchti & Schubring 2016). This is particularly significant in the lives of professional women footballers, as it is evident from the data in this study clubs and governing bodies do not have strategies in place and are not perceived to prioritise players education during their career. Moreover, players confirmed clubs and governing bodies appear reluctant to develop their understandings of the challenges' players face post-career. Consequently, the challenges inherent within this transitional period can transform or lead to chronic implications which go beyond the immediate retirement period, such as depression, eating disorders and substance abuse (Cavallerio et al. 2017).

The formation of women's professional leagues such as the FA WSL had until recently, been thought of as unlikely, due to the male dominance of football, financial commitments and concerns relating to the entertainment value of women's football. In line with previous research, this research confirms the stakes are incredibly high for elite women footballers, not only financially, but in relation to perceived popularity, prestige and recognition (Wong et al. 2011). Moreover, being attracted to perceived greater opportunities, individuals may be confounded by an array of (mis)information from conflicting sources regarding crucial components, such as post-career options. To put it another way, two distinct sports organisations, the FA and football clubs that operate within the FA WSL, hold significant monopoly over the lives of their employees. As one experienced FA WSL player discussed:

I just see the FA as a badge, I don't see support, I don't see anyone coming to our club saying: 'this is brand new to you, these are your rights and what you can expect from clubs' there's none of that" (Interview 6).

The illusion of choice in the context of players current and post-career is of particular significance here. It is taken-for-granted the majority of players are highly invested in 'making it' as professional. Increased demands on their time is often offset with limited time outside of football demands, leaving players with little time to consider post-career options. This is highlighted in the next extract from a senior international:

"Yes, you may be earning 40k (per year) now, but that instantly goes when you retire, you don't taper off. Players aren't prepared. I dunno who's responsibility it

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is, but it's gonna get to a stage where we all have to retire. Like when I talk to players now who are gonna retire, it's keeping them up at night with worry. And they're the ones who are aware, not all players are! There will only be certain amount of jobs for certain players. To coach, or the media, there is limited options, not everyone can have those jobs" (Interview 21).

The new realities of professionals who are unprepared for inevitable retirement is highlighted in the following extract from a senior international:

"I don't have a mortgage or a house, I don't own anything. I'm 30, how has this happened to me, my contract is up soon […] all of a sudden like … I dunno you have to keep yourself busy cos the busier you are, the more you don't think about all that shit" (Interview 8).

This is view is supported by another FA WSL player:

"If I didn't have my degree, I would be really worried. Loads of players don't and it's worrying for them […] the ones who don't have the education and are older, they've hit the panic button, it's like what can I do now? And what can they do? Coach? Half the time that's not what anyone wants but they have no other options" (Interview 9).

Both injury and ageing presented persistent and important questions to professional footballers about their identity and their future position. By 'hitting the panic button'

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many players articulated a short-career and insecurities which are generated by their discernible uncertain futures. Data suggests the performance of sports work is embodied in players attitudes and dispositions, as such, it is all but taken-for-granted to have a high athletic identity (Coupland, 2015). Research suggests injury, competitive failure, ageing, retirement from sport and other psychosocial stressors, precipitate depression in athletes (Hughes & Leavey, 2012). Mental health and wellbeing concerns are inextricably tied up in players sense of self. Despite a number of high-profile reports, there remains a tendency among governing bodies such as the FA and the PFA to downplay the significance of mental health and wellbeing concerns among the sporting population (Roderick & Gibbons, 2014).

While the PFA focus on 'sportspersons' aims for inclusivity, a more nuanced understanding is generated through data in this study, of a partially visible union for women. Similarly, there have been calls for the PFA to reform by ex-professional men's footballers to encourage fair and impartial representation for its members (The Telegraph, 2018). The low visibility of the PFA leaves women isolated and vulnerable, both whilst playing and in their post-career. The reasons for the construction of players attitudes towards their post-career are complex and by no means uniform. This is presented in the following extract from a young international:

"Apart from my undergraduate funding, I don't actually know what else they do (PFA). It isn't something were educated on. I have never heard from them, they haven't been to the club […] I know they offer support, but I believe the club should facilitate that, rather than me go to them (PFA)" (Interview 26).

All participants were members of the PFA and membership costs £130 per year. However, it was evident from the data, the PFA was largely inconsistent and offered very little in terms of proactive employment security - rather it appeared largely reactive, in support when players experienced contractual issues, contributing to players already precarious working conditions and subordination. In short, whilst the PFA offer support and often lucrative deals for professional footballers, for example discounted offers on exclusive holidays and cars, the majority of women footballers, simply cannot afford the luxuries on offer, meaning they are often not the priorities of women footballers.

On the question of PFA support, it is clear, that women footballers require employment policy, security specific, to their own game. Emerging from the data, are women footballers, bolted on to the men's game with limited consideration for their employment needs. This is articulated by one experienced FA WSL player who is also a player representative for the PFA and discussed 'selling' the benefits of the PFA to her fellow professionals:

"If you're a men's club, the PFA do workshops about post-career and life worries, I don't understand how they're still 'working on it' (for FA WSL) we've had a professional league since 2011. Why is it taking so long? If anything, women need information about post-career, education, maternity. We need specific stuff, like if we get injured and your club can't support you, we need the PFA, yet they can't do anything for you! […] Although the PFA have done lots for the men's game

they either don't offer enough to women or they don't make us aware" (Interview 2).

In summary, working within liberal parameters, professional women footballers are left in limbo by clubs and organisations such as the PFA and FA. Data within this study highlights inconsistencies which lead to increased uncertainties for players post-career playing options.

5.6 Maternity policy

There is a growing body of research dedicated to the exploration into elite women athletes and motherhood (Douglas & Careless, 2009; McGannon & Gonsalves, 2018). The discursive discourse surrounding pregnancy is fairly contradictory (Darroch & Hissburg, 2017). Women contend with reinforced common-sense constructions that stress social roles. Often, the consequences of social expectations mean women putting their careers on hold whilst they raise a family. However, athletes' careers are short, as such there is perceived incompatibility with women having a family and an athletic career (Roberts, 2018). Pederson's (2001) research on identities of Danish international athletic mothers demonstrated a perceived clash between home life and elite sport. More recent research on elite athlete mothers in New Zealand competing in both team and individual sports highlights the necessity of organisational policies such as child-care resources and networks to support their return to sport (Johnston & Swanson, 2009).

The number of professional women footballers who are mothers in the FA WSL is particularly low. Data from FIFPro (2017) states from 3,295 women surveyed, 2% of respondents were mothers. Data correlates with findings from this research. Indeed, within the data, perhaps the most problematic omission in employment policy for FA WSL footballers is maternity and childcare support. It was not uncommon for players to be unsure of their rights as potential and current mothers, or in the majority of cases state the absence of maternity and/or childcare support from clubs. In an interview with the Telegraph (Dean, 2017) Emma Hayes (manager of Chelsea Women FC) described the lack of childcare support offered to players as a disgrace (Dean, 2017a). It is clear, maintaining a career in women's football is particularly difficult for those who have children. Data elsewhere suggests 61% of women were offered no childcare support from their National Governing body or their club (FIFPro, 2017). Previous research on individual sports, including long-distance running and golf, suggests a meshing of cultural discourse and sport constructs elite mother-athlete identities and associated meanings in different ways (Douglas & Careless, 2009; McGannon & Gonsalves, 2018).

The problems for women footballers concerning maternity and childcare support are twofold. In the first instance, women are operating in a sport which is almost exclusively dominated by men its administration and organisation of sport (Theberge, 1985). Recent quantitative gains achieved by women in participation figures, seem to have had little impact on decision making positions in the upper echelons of football (Williams, 2013). The second and related problem appears to be players perceived acceptance and complicity of their position. From one situation

to the next, one player to another there appears to be an ad-hoc and arbitrary approach to women's employment rights and expectations as mothers, or potential mothers. This is exemplified in the following extract of an experienced international:

"How long clubs pay you for is another matter! I don't think there's enough information out there, for players getting pregnant and maybe that's not the clubs' fault cause, they don't necessarily know themselves. Cause it's not that common. It's something clubs need to get a hold of, cause, men don't need time off, but we do!" (Interview 24).

This extract exemplifies how this player internalised the rules of the game by shifting the blame of the clubs onto the player - this player accepts her disempowered position as common-sense. Indeed, a plausible interpretation is how the power of gender categories have organised meaning into individual lives (Jenkins, 1992) as the individuals' socialised dispositions generate practice, moreover, learned acceptance of disempowerment. The combination of short-term contracts and pregnancy are highly problematic for elite women footballers. Despite the legal obligation for policy to support women in their maternity rights, players recognise the short-term contracts in which they operate do not support their needs. Data suggests players do not trust clubs to support them in family endeavours which appears to lead to mistrust of clubs and staff as articulated by one senior international:

"If I'm thinking of contract length and my future I wanna have kids at some point in my career and still play football. I need the security of maternity leave. […] You

can be a woman, have kids and play football. But I'm not sure that exists. Like if he gave me three years (contract) and I turned around and said I was pregnant what would he do? (manager). We need longer contracts, so we feel secure! I shouldn't have to think I need to sign a four-year cause, I wanna have a baby, so I know they'll pay me. I wanna be honest to my coach […] I wanna have kids and carry on playing (Interview 15).

It was not uncommon for players in this study to describe similar circumstances. It appears taken-for-granted women footballers will not have children whilst they are playing competitively. These notions concerning motherhood and cultural expectations appear to have been internalised by players and accepted as common-sense. Discourse which circulates certain meanings attached to motherhood, becomes difficult to challenge as it is inherently tied to gendered ideologies, such as a woman's true calling is to have children (McGannon & Gonsalves, 2018).

Motherhood was not something all players considered. Some interviewees acknowledged concerns with losing their 'feel for the game' that it is to say, perceived diminished capital through an extended period out of football. Exemplified by the next extract by one senior international:

"I guess there's fear of not being able to get back where I am before I have kids, being fit. The fear of not getting a contract again. There are too many pressures you know? Babysitters, childcare and we're always away!" (Interview 13).

A handful of players considered motherhood similar to having a long-term injury or medical condition. Players feelings towards motherhood ties in with previous research, that argues athletic identity is so strong, athletes believe motherhood to be incompatible with their careers (Douglas & Careless, 2009). Still, despite mixed feelings towards compatibility of their career and motherhood, it is clear, that the omission of maternity and childcare policy within club contracts is highly concerning. It is worth noting here, central contracts issued by the FA to 30 elite senior internationals have maternity cover as a policy and contracts are renewed annually. Therefore, on one hand, central contracts offer maternity cover and some security, whilst on the other, a key problem is the restrictive capacity of annual renewal. Annual renewal based on performance could subconsciously discourage players from considering children due to the short-term nature of contracts and emphasis on performance. In sum, it is clear professional women footballers are operating in an occupation which offers them very little security, tangled up in contracts whereby they are considered as assets. There are a triad of concerns here. Firstly, why do women appear complicit in their own subordination, secondly, whose responsibility is it to offer moral and legal security to professional women footballers and finally, what are the consequences of insufficient policies to support players.

5.7 Conclusion

This examination has attempted to expose the current working conditions for professional women footballers. Overall, these results indicate that the lack of information available to players effectively contributes to their subordinated position.

Players were seemingly unaware of what security contracts should offer, other than in terms of economic remuneration. In contrast to research conducted on male professional footballers (Roderick, 2006), women's new working conditions were unfamiliar, and players assumed the role of 'fish out of water' (Bourdieu, 1984). Central to the new working conditions for players appeared to be a shift in priorities for clubs and governing bodies from a community focus, to a neoliberal, commercialised one, which seemingly increased uncertainties for the majority of players. Data in this study highlights a dilemma at this juncture for individuals. Emergent from the data were two categories of players - one who embodied neoliberal, commercialised, values, and another who appeared to be unprepared and reject commercialisation. Interestingly, both scenarios increased individualisation and consequently presented a heightened awareness for players' short careers.

Critically, this chapter highlights the omissions and inadequacies of employment policy in professional women's contracts. Notably, the overly simplistic strategies of governing bodies and clubs that have overlooked the voices and needs of women players. Consequently, strategies do not deconstruct the real issues surrounding education, post-career planning, maternity and childcare policy. Evidence in this chapter provides comparative data to counter the common-sense view, that gender-specific policy is not needed. There are very real concerns for the diminished career prospects of professional women footballers. It is clear that an embodied short career which, as data suggests, can lead to wellbeing concerns and interestingly,

leads to emergent new strategies employed by players in the shape of individualised,

contingency strategies to combat their career uncertainties.

CHAPTER SIX: IMPLICATIONS OF PROFESSIONALISATION

6.1 Introduction

Women's football has undergone significant transformations over the last decade in England. Arguably the most significant development is the reconstruction from amateur to professional football, creating the opportunity for football as work for women. The relatively fragile nature of playing careers of professional women footballers, has been highlighted in chapters five and six in relation to inefficient and ineffective employment policies. The dilemma for players, in relation to adhering to moral codes of professionalism within their clubs, which assume players willingness to embody codes of practice and performance in an uncertain workplace, becomes problematic, as players have insufficient employment policies to support them. During interviews with the players, however, it became clear that the majority of players had narrow and limited understandings of their subordinated positions. Further, it materialised, women's football operates within a field of misinformation. Misinformation appears to be related to the legal and moral policy obligations of clubs, who appear reluctant to offer security to their players' already precarious career.

The central focus of this chapter therefore, concerns understandings of agents subordinated positions, the meanings players attribute to, and perceptions of their new work conditions. This examination will frame strategies employed by players, in an attempt to discern how they negotiate their position within the field, and their

search for capital in their short career. Therefore, this chapter examines key assumed understandings of professional women footballers as they navigate their new career in the male dominated field of professional football.

The aim of this chapter is two-fold. Firstly, to present and analyse how and why players appear to legitimise their uncertain position, often with little consideration for employment policies. The majority of players interviewed appeared to be increasingly individualised and recognise their successful position in the field as *earned* in a meritocratic operational system. With this in mind, it is important to understand how individualised behaviour influences gendered social relations in football, and how this individual behaviour structures certain gendered dispositions. The high levels of competition in football teams are well documented and evidenced, players recognise the stakes are high in order to *make it*. The second objective of this chapter is to connect players increasingly individualised behaviours in their new controlled environment, with changing dynamics and expectations placed on the players. More specifically, in terms of commercialisation and marketisation of individual players and the women's game more generally. This examination is focused on detailing individual strategies of players and to look more closely at taken-for-granted commercial expectations and consequences of increasing aesthetic and athletic pressures. An important point for this chapter, therefore, is the understandings of player perceptions who are fully emerged in the game, often with a loss of autonomy and high levels of commitment, and how that relates to increasing wellbeing and mental health concerns.

6.2 Individualised practice of women footballers

The changing modes of femininity have been debated extensively by scholars (McRobbie, 1993; Gornick, 2004; Gill, 2007; Jeanes, 2011; Musto et al. 2017). The rise of hegemonic neoliberalism has shifted the conditions in which women operate (Gornick, 2004). To be effective, hegemonic neoliberalism must be operational at a common-sense level, taken for granted within social fields. Whilst neoliberalism can be described as a doctrine of political economy, it is also diffused more broadly and shapes individuals through socialisation processes. This is argued in more concrete terms by Williams who argues that neoliberalism is a structured feeling, meaning people do not learn it from each other but rather it is inscribed into habitual modes of conduct and routine (Williams, 1961: cited in McGuigan, 2016). Through market forces, neoliberalism promotes the inescapable principles of competition, individualisation and supply and demand (McGuigan, 2016). It is within a neoliberal context, that the achievements of women are more broadly celebrated within cultural discourses which frame women and girls having limitless opportunities (Barnet-Wiser, 2015). Concurrently it is presumed that within a socio-political context, women and girls are presented with situations in which they can simply achieve anything boys and men can (Messner, 2009).

Women have made inroads into realms once considered appropriate only for men, for example sport, education and the workforce (Musto et al. 2017). It is within this post-feminist context, an assumption is made that gender equality has been achieved, consequently feminism becomes redundant for many young women. It

can be argued neoliberal influenced, post-feminist notions of freedom and choice for women have infused contemporary society and impacted our ways of thinking, acting and our practice. Whilst the advancements of women and girls must be celebrated, the progress towards gender equity is uneven (England, 2010). Men have not moved into traditionally female-dominated fields at the same rate as women have moved into traditionally male-dominated fields (ibid). While in sport, research suggests men dominate coaching and leadership positions (Musto et al. 2017) and women professional athletes earn a fraction of their male equivalents, despite their workplaces being much more unstable and uncertain (FIFPro, 2017).

The professional football field operates relatively autonomously (McGillivray & McIntosh, 2006). Data collected for this study demonstrates a rise in individualised actions for many women footballers. The rise in individualism may be explained through the field of professional football, subconsciously constructing and promoting individualised behaviours in three significant ways. Firstly, high rates of player movement between teams, secondly, players seemingly to prioritise individual needs before the team requirements and finally, the willing, single-mindedness of players to acquire capital. The heightened individualisation and readiness to move clubs is highlighted by one senior international:

> "Loyalty has gone in football. I can't sit here and say I'll be at this club for the rest of my career, cause, I can't guarantee that! If a club come in and said - 'this is what we can offer' I can't sit here and say I'd turn that down cause I don't think I would!" (Interview 15).

It is necessary to stress that this data does not claim to speak for all FA WSL players. However, it is clear from the above quote that the football field constrains and manages the kinds of practice which takes place within it. In this way, agents are not fragments floating within a social field, their bodies bare capital. It is the position of an agent within a field that orients them towards preservation of capital, or alternatively capital subversion (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). The forms of capital available within each field do not occur randomly, but rather reflect the way in which the field takes formation.

Bourdieu consistently emphasised the improvisations and strategic decisions that actors are forced to make in their practice (McGillivray & McIntosh, 2006). Data in this study is revealing in terms of players making increasing strategic decisions to improve their economic conditions and active participation in the field. As such, what individuals do in their everyday lives is an outcome of their interaction with habitus, as opposed to a direct product of it. In agreement with McGillivray and McIntosh, (2006) the data in this study understands social practice as something which is temporal and spatial and not taken outside the social context in which it is a viable outcome. This explanation is useful insofar as understanding the changing nature of individualised players, and how players live the effects of neoliberal discourses of individuality in complex ways (Gornick, 2004).

Scholars contend the unravelling of collective feminisms and the rise of female individualism commenced in the 1990s (McRobbie, 2004; Gill, 2008). The concept of female individualism is of particular interest here, as women consider themselves

free to compete in education and work as privileged subjects of a meritocracy. This study confirms that a wider societal rise of female individualism can be linked to the emergent rise in individualisms of professional women footballers. Data in this study indicates many players have internalised new gender regimes re-regulated by the language of choice and independence (Gornick, 2004; McRobbie, 2004) integrating individual feminism into their practice. There is a relationship with players interviewed in this study and McRobbie's (ibid) research. McRobbie argues, through education modern women are gender aware, they know of the existence of feminist critiques, yet the new 'woman' subject, despite her freedom is called upon to be silent and withhold critique and crucially, hold hostility towards assumed feminist positions.

Sociologically speaking, this dynamic social change can be suggested to be attributed to individuals being called upon to invent their own structures in which they operate. This is evidenced by data in this study, as participants revealed their internalisation processes through self-monitoring, for example training diaries, career pathways and career goals. Data within this study, elucidated players who hold themselves personally responsible for both success and failure of their career and more broadly the FA WSL, with fairly narrow understandings of complex gendered working conditions. Moreover, comparisons can be made with the professional football field, as players are compelled and pressured to be the kind of individual who can make the right choices. Data collected for this study suggests that the majority of players have a broad understanding of feminist meanings, but mostly, do not make a connection with their gender, gendered work conditions, or

precarious career. These specific understandings were underlined when players were asked if they considered themselves a 'feminist', or accepted feminism as a concept; the majority of players did not. While this study does not contend women take up football to promote a feminist agenda, several players appeared to have limited understandings and were indifferent towards the use of the word *ladies* to describe their team, as an alternative to adopting *women's* and its potential social significance. Similar to players interviewed in Roderick's (2006) study, most players appear to 'be in it' for themselves with heightened individualised attitudes. A difference between men and women however, is the change in attitudes discussed in the previous chapter, and the clear, uncritical relation to their subordinated position.

While it is not suggested here the field has *imposed* itself on professional women footballers, but rather, players to an extent, are complicit in their own oppression and disempowerment (McGillivray & McIntosh, 2006). Similar to male Scottish professional footballers, women footballers, in their acceptance of the established social order, are subjected to symbolic violence. This is not a physical form of violence but rather, forms of violence that treat players as inferior, deny resources or limit their social mobility. Yet, players do not perceive it in that way, their situation appears to be the natural way of things (ibid).

The following three extracts are examples of many players' perceptions of feminism and perceived realities as one senior international describes her opinion:

"Er I dunno, for me, I'm not a big feminist like, I think if you're good enough to do the job regardless if your male or female (Interview 8). Similarly, another example from a senior international supports the previous statement when asked if she is a feminist: "No. I'm not arsed about things like that. People are always like female power, but I don't care" (Interview 13).

The two extracts can perhaps in part be explained by another senior international: "I play football to be a professional, not to support women. So, I'm not a feminist no" (Interview 15).

The above extracts were not uncommon within the data. It became clear that freedom and choice were inextricably connected and embodied by many professional women footballers, which rendered feminism and collective action to improve work conditions redundant. As highlighted by one senior international:

"We have raised the profile of the game, but we were being paid below minimum wage! It was so difficult to get people together to get our voices heard. A lot of players were just like, no! […] there's too many players who just think - 'it's all right' (work conditions) […] or I'm getting paid, I'm all right" (Interview 10).

This example is in contrast with action taken by teams in several leading countries in women's football. For example, the Danish women's national team, who in the summer of 2017 went on strike and cancelled a World Cup qualifier to improve their employment policies in their contract. The Danish players requested to be official

employees of the Football Association and to be remunerated adequately. Similar action was taken by Sweden women's national team, and perhaps most notably, the USA women's national team, whose improved collective bargaining agreement rested on the women's team being much more successful both economically, and in competition than their male equivalents. The USA and Scandinavian women's teams have been amongst the pioneers of women's football. Moreover, Scandinavian countries in particular, have wider societal gendered equality. Perhaps, the Danish strike can be tentatively attributed to their long history of challenging narratives of feminine ideals and promotion of gender equality policies (Agergaard et al. 2013).

The data in this study contradicts ethical codes of behaviour within football teams and taken-for-granted assumptions, that all footballers should be team players (Agergaard & Sorenson, 2009). This data is revealing in terms of how players are seemingly withdrawn from ethical codes of behaviour. The majority of players, appear to have been taken in by the game, losing their ethical safeguards and reinforcing the illusio of the field. The illusio of individualisation and emancipation attributed here to post-feminist notions, serves to normalise practices, as they become embedded in players daily lives and routines (Bourdieu, 2000).

Further analysis provides detailed insight of the way players are socialised into football and thus, the development of illusio. All thirty players interviewed for this study attributed their beginnings in football to a male figure. Father, brother, uncles, cousins and male friends, were examples given, and the majority of players started their career in a *boys'* team, although playing in the boys' team was not suggested

to be problematic and perhaps can be considered significant in terms of socialisation and corresponding acceptance of players asymmetrical positions in their workplaces.

The significance of this data cannot be understated in how players gendered dispositions are formed, whereby men are assumed to have more knowledge in football. The following extract is an example of how dispositions and practice can be formed by a youth international:

"If we compare us to the under 12 boys were at training and we've had to wait for the under 12s to come off the pitch before we could train (women's first team) […] we would be training at 20:00 sometimes and there's like 20 pitches free but the women just aren't allowed to use them! Blows my mind!" (Interview 11).

Only a handful of clubs where players worked promoted inclusionary practices, however extracts of this kind were more common in the data. Individuals retold stories of not being allowed to use the gym if the men's/boys team were in the gym, or strict separation between men and women at lunch time as articulated by one senior international:

"You're not even allowed in the gym here. You've gotta come in a certain way (into the training ground), park in a certain car park. Its heavy surveillance […] why is it always just about the men? We're not even allowed to go near the men […] eat with them nothing, they're really strict when we can go and eat […] we get

called a distraction. We're not trying to distract them, were all doing the same job! I dunno why they think the girls are there to interfere with the men's training!" (Interview 25).

Further exemplified by the following extract from an experienced international:

"You don't feel like it's your club or ground. We go to train there when were allowed. If I have physio I have to go before any guys get in there. I asked once to use the gym, but that's the thing, you have to ask! So, I went in and 20 lads walked in, I kinda thought I shouldn't be here […] just done my session and left quick […] you automatically feel as though you shouldn't be in there" (Interview 7).

The concept of surveillance is an important one and will be explored in greater detail later in the chapter. Outsider experiences, such as the above examples, heighten players' subconscious awareness of the gendered hierarchy and the gendered conditions of their workplace.

Of particular significance within this study is the embodiment of habitus, that includes all manners of moving the body - such embodiment becomes to indicate a certain hexis that further indicates a membership to a certain sex or class (Mennesson, 2012). As football is still considered a male sport and considered to involve masculine ways of moving, women footballers' hexis can be perceived as masculine. By contrast, data presented in this study, differs from Kristiansen et al. (2014)

empirical research on US professional women footballers. At the elite level, US women's soccer has been the dominant force in world football since they won the first Women's World Cup in 1991. Accordingly, professional women's soccer in the US has been operational since 2001. Socially, soccer is considered an appropriate sport for women in the US and "being a jock is considered cool" (Interview 2). Kristinsen's data revealed that all players were socialised into their sport by their mothers from an early age and accounted for female sporting role models. A direct contradiction to data uncovered in this study; as highlighted earlier all players interviewed for this study attributed their socialisation to a male figure. Consequently, both the socialisation and hexis of US professional women footballers differed from the FA WSL players interviewed in this study. Early socialisation, combined with female role models seemingly provided US players with opportunities, in some cases, to 'de-gender' themselves, appearing to manage the gender binary so explicit in football in England.

In agreement with Mennesson's (2012) research on women footballers and boxers in France, this research suggests dispositions are formed and reflect the socialisation process of athletes. However, in opposition to Mennesson's data, the majority of players in this study were ambivalent towards the struggle between men and women in football and the distinctions made between the sexes. Despite players heightened awareness of women's lack of visibility in coaching and leadership positions many players had tentative approaches to the power relations in favour of men. The following extract describes one FA WSL players feelings towards women in leadership positions: "Maybe as someone to talk to […] but on the flip side you've

gotta think if a woman was in a role like that would they have the respect? I think there would be speculation" (Interview 9).

With this in mind, it becomes clear that women's entry into football, facilitated by men forms a central position in the lives of players. Early learning of masculine hexis and the centrality of male ideologies and subsequent positions of power, reserved primarily for men, appear to have influenced women's construction and legitimisation of their relative position in football. Effectively, the historical construction and influence of measurable physical differences between men and women, the visibility of men and relative invisibility of women has marked players dispositions in a durable way. The data within this study demonstrates that some players had trouble modifying their strong dispositions. Moreover, some professional women footballers appear to accept their disempowered position, and perhaps, gives some indication of their reluctance to challenge their uncertain workplace and employment policies.

In summary, women have made inroads to previously inaccessible fields. However, as Schultz (2014) argues, we must cheer with reserve, sport and particularly football, is still largely dominated by men. The rise of post-feminist concepts refers to the active gains made by feminism in the 1970s and 1980s being undermined (McRobbie, 2004). A consequence of post-feminism, from passivity to agency and self-determination, resonates well with more general cultural neoliberal aspirations towards individualism and emancipation (Toffoletti, 2016). Further, data here suggests this shift has impacted FA WSL footballers' habitus and practice. Within this context, successes and failures are a product of individual action. Therefore, the

subordinated and disempowered positions of women footballers are tentatively attributed to players individual circumstance and self-responsibility. In their acceptance, it became clear that players recognised their positions as taken-for-granted and common-sense.

The rise of individual feminisms and individualised expectations, as discussed in the previous chapter, appear to have situated collective feminisms as 'other'. Freedom and choice are inextricably tied to the category of young professional woman. Of significance in this section, is the socialisation process of women footballers. Football entry was facilitated through methods of strong emotional ties and males in positions of power. The centrality of male ideologies, and relative positions of power, appear to have influenced many players construction and legitimisation of their weakened position in their new occupation. The data presented could indicate players reluctance to challenge their position, or, inability to see their position as anything other than *the way it is*.

There are considerable pressures on players to make the most of their short-career, and the evidence, both in this study and studies of men's football (see McGillivray & McIntosh, 2006; Roderick, 2006), suggests footballers operate in a controlled environment, which all players accept as normality. The pressure exerted, places players in situations whereby they often feel a loss of control. Social media is an uncensored broadcast medium of empowerment potential that facilitates invoking new and particular forms of persona. It is largely assumed by players and the public that individuals are free to choose how they present themselves online. By

understanding social media as a space of individual freedom, once again places public perception responsibility on the shoulders of women footballers in both work and non-work settings. What remains unquestioned is whether there are social and organisational pressures associated with social media presentation for players and if so, what are the consequences?

6.3 Distinction and the media

There are a large number of both qualitative and quantitative studies which have analysed media representations of women athletes. Typically, these examinations can be loosely divided into research which surveys the quantity of coverage and research which examines the quality of coverage (Toffoletti, 2016). Rhetoric which has dominated women's football, such as 'no-one watches women's football' and 'women aren't very good at football' has largely been discredited in England, predominately through successful campaigns of the England women's football team. According to Petty and Pope (2018) success has equalled a shift in media reporting of women's football in England. Contrary to this argument, Black and Fielding-Lloyd (2017) suggest, the media positioned women's players as inferior through comparisons to a male standard of football.

Media self-representations of women athletes serves as analytical ground to gain information of the way athletes manage, perceive and understand relative tensions and expectations which exist (Kane et al. 2013). This is complex sociologically as, while athletes in this study recognised the importance of visibility, many players

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spoke of the conflict between how they would like to be presented, what distinctions could be generated in the media and what representations generate capital. Perhaps the crux of the challenge for women athletes is the continual negotiation of what Krane et al. (2010) describe as a dual-identity. Firstly, involved with managing their role as a footballer on-the-field, a physically powerful elite athlete. Secondly, managing performing femininity outside the sporting context, particularly how her body, which is constructed and reconstructed to perform as a successful footballer, will be perceived away from the football field. There is extensive evidence to suggest, that performances tied to dominant ideologies and hyper-sexuality, are essential to sell women's sport (Kane et al. 2013).

Evidence would suggest that in highly masculinised sports such as football, women appear to have internalised messages of sexual provocative images and narratives of success, as opportunities to 'sell' women's sport. An example of internalisation of sexualised images, is perhaps the German and French national players, who prior to the Women's World Cup in 2011, appeared in the German edition of *Playboy.* It is taken-for-granted that sports-women need to be presented in ways that reaffirm traditional notions of femininity and heterosexuality (LaVoi & Kane, 2011). To reinforce this argument, an experienced senior international articulates her understandings of players *selling* themselves for commercial opportunity and economic capital:

"If they wanna get commercial stuff? I mean if you've gotta nice face and a big chest it always goes far!" however, she goes on to discuss how that potentially

affects players: "There's pressure (commercial opportunity) and you see it in players, you have to look nice, and they do all this stuff (to look nice) and it's like, do they even know they're in a game of football right now?" (Interview 11).

The way in which women footballers present themselves on social media will be discussed in this section. Previous research suggests digital media platforms are increasingly important as a medium of communication and presentation for athletes (Hutchins & Mikosza, 2010; Thorpe & Toffoletti, 2018). Women athletes' decisions to pose in a sexual way has received considerable scholarly attention. There are two main arguments presented by scholars. On one hand, portrayals of female agency and the ability to transcend conventional notions of the female body, and on the other, female athletes are complicit and commodify their bodies for the male gaze (Bourdieu, 2000; Kane et al. 2013). A significant shift in the way women athletes are presented in the media, has been identified by Bruce (2015) as 'hot and hard discourses', which can be broadly described as a change in depictions of women athletes, strong and powerful whilst simultaneously highly sexualised.

Similarly, new discourses have emerged on social media using the hashtag #StrongistheNewSkinny depicting women who work out in the gym as strong and powerful women. Data in this study demonstrates online social media use is of high value to women footballers, with all players articulating their various uses and need for 'handles' including Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and Snapchat were all used by FA WSL players. These results reflect previous research in various sports, substantiating social media as a mode of communication as highly valued by

athletes, in terms of building an individual fan base, increasing visibility, building their brand and fostering fan-athlete interaction (Kassing & Sanderson, 2012; Toffoletti & Thorpe, 2018). Although in their research Toffoletti and Thorpe claim to analyse *why* elite athletes regulate and produce a visible self on social media, there is an inconsistency with this argument. Their research fundamentally relies on analysing the social media accounts of five elite athletes. This approach does not account for the perceptions of individual athletes through empirical research, nor the athletes' intent when using social media. As opposed to traditional media outlets such as broadcast media, i.e the print media, which in the past was considered an athletes' main source of communication, the rise in the use of social media platforms for athletes is largely under-researched.

The following extract from one senior international describes the importance of social media to players career and accruing of capital:

"As the game goes forward, players have realised that's what they need to do. A little bit. To get something from it, like a sponsor or boots, kit, not modelling but, things like that. People are taking more care of their appearance cause, they're out there, Instagram things like that. The more attractive you look, the more people wanna buy into you a bit […] in that way, you do it on match day (look good) when the camera is there […] when BT Sport comes, everyone has their eyelashes done, its bizarre […] I just do it now, don't even think about it. I mean people take pictures and they're on the internet the next day" (Interview 7).

Another former youth international player describes new expectations and conditions for professional women footballers and social media: "Course they are (pressured to look a certain way)! The camera is there. You get people going 'is that a man or a woman' players hear things like that, see it on social media, so they're gonna feel more pressured to look feminine" (Interview 6). It is clear from the above extracts how, when exposed to feminised images and the precarity of a professional football career, players appear to have internalised these images and in turn incorporate images into their practice to gain commercial opportunities. In the following extract a senior international describes the emphasis placed on commercial opportunities and how brands select players:

"I think brands like Puma and Nike have subconsciously come in and handpicked pretty girls. So, to other players, they think they need to look like that, so no-ones said it, but there is an element of subconscious to it […] I think social media has done it […] look at (player), she moved club with no followers (social media) to over 100k followers. What happened there? She's pretty, she's blonde, got a good figure, men find her appealing, that image is constantly being reinforced. I think look at Alex Morgan, she's the face of women's football. Is it cause, she's a good footballer? Not really. She's the girl next door earning seven figures from sponsorships. […] Women's football is where it is now cause, it's become socially acceptable. Women players look the way men want them to" (Interview 10).

The new athlete portrayals identified within this study are conflicting, on one hand, they can be been viewed as somewhat progressive, in terms of moving beyond

gendered stereotypes (Toffoletti, 2016) and on the other, they can be criticised for maintaining a focus on the image of women (Kane et al. 2013). Correspondingly, social media's perceived benefits have been highlighted as favourable to athletes acquiring increased economic and symbolic capital. Yet whilst acknowledging gendered representations are operating in increasingly complex ways, several issues remain under researched and undiscussed. Firstly, how women athletes internalise complex imagery and what strategies they employ to acquire capital. Secondly what are the consequences of such strategies and finally, does schemata become internalised as part of their practice? The empirical findings in this study provide a new understanding of these under reported concerns.

6.4 Players as brands

A brand in sports is defined as a name, design or symbol that allows us to differentiate its product from alternatives (Shank, 1999). The term brand is typically applied to organisations, products and their services, and in general it is accepted that brands maybe described in terms of quality, image and so forth (Thompson, 2006). The concept of athlete brand has emerged from their multi-functional, multi-platform nature. Indeed, many athletes have a name, or perhaps a distinctive appearance (Arai et al. 2014). The data in this study and previous qualitative and quantitative studies, have reached conclusions that indicate media outlets appear to favour attractive female athletes who represent bodily ideals of femininity, youthfulness, attractiveness and muscular tone. Critically, when attractiveness is

paired with outstanding athletic ability, it appears to increase public attention (Weber & Barker-Ruchti, 2012; Mutz & Meier, 2016 & Konjer et al. 2017).

Given the popularity of football in England among consumers, footballers have become human brands. With this in mind, social media as a self-controlled channel, footballers or their agents, have the opportunity to strategically control players 'presentation of self' through mediums such as photographs, videos and relatable content (Abeza et al. 2017). Social media can be considered as a significant opportunity for athletes, particularly women footballers, who have notably less media attention to enhance their reputation. Social media can influence their reputations, not only as a footballer but also a likeable, attractive, trustworthy individual, to create the necessary emotional attachment needed to become a brand.

In the following passage a senior international articulates the increasing importance of social media for players:

"We always talk about building your brand. I'm very into social media, but you kind of think at times it takes over your life. I've found myself like, everywhere I go I have to Instagram, or tweet, do a video, take a picture of yourself doing something. Sometimes you wanna live your life without showing the world but then, you don't realise … to open up avenues, sponsorships, you have to do that as a player […] I mean I do feel pressured to do it! At times I wish it was just how you perform dictates what you get […] I do think people have made a living through social media, by having a face […] players who aren't the best in the world

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but have the face or physique get the sponsorship deals […] look at Alex Morgan"
(Interview 19).

This view is supported by another international player:

"I think about it now more than I have ever done. Like whereas in the past, you
scored goals or played well to get your deals, now, you have to think about style,
what clothes you wear, what pictures you put on […] managers probably go off
what they see on social media, how many followers you have, rather than see you
in a game" (Interview 20).

Another senior international describes the emphasis and importance placed on the
relatively new concept for women footballer of building a brand "Oh yeah, you
definitely are a brand. You have to sell yourself in any way possible! Whether that's
through the media, or through your football!" (Interview 23). Selling themselves in
any way possible, compares to previous research, insofar as the sexualisation of
women athletes is a by-product of increased commercialisation of high-performance
sport (Mutz & Meier, 2016). However previous research does not account for what
influences players decisions; are they active decisions and are athletes *choosing*
their self-representation?

Therefore, the findings in this study raise important questions regarding the nature
and extent of branding. Interestingly, most articulations of branding from participants
proposed   multifaced   influences   and   pressures,   much   of   which   appeared

subconscious, meaning when asked to provide examples individual perceptions were varied. Three discrete commonalities emerged amongst players' interpretations of branding including pressure from agents, social media and football clubs. On the question of branding, it appeared a strategy of participants for establishing capital and a desire for brands to attach themselves to individuals. Athletes in particular can become brands because they can be professionally managed and sell a particular message, which consumers attach themselves to. The relative newness of branding in women's football was evident, all players discussed it and recognised its importance.

Within the data, two interconnected themes emerged related to the new careers of professional women footballers. Firstly, the elevated emphasis placed on branding by players, and secondly the increasing prominence of agent's effective efficacy on the brand, both contributed to increased distinction for players. Data in this study indicates symbolic conditions which have given rise to agents in women's football include but are not exhaustive; increased social acceptance of women's football, significant investment from Premier League clubs such as Manchester City, Arsenal, Chelsea and Liverpool, 'Lionesses' success and subsequent turning points of 2015 and 2017 and finally, the growing importance of social media. The importance of an agent was emphasised by the majority of players. Although players appear in a contradictory space with agents through mistrust and the fear of being branded 'big-time' by teammates and fans through the use of agents. The concept of 'big-time' is an important one, in relation to the control of players, and will be discussed in later in the chapter.

Unlike men's football, the role of agents in women's football is a relatively new phenomenon (Roderick, 2006; Kelly & Chatziefstathiou, 2018). There is some homogeneity between agents in men's and women's football, such as typically renewing contracts for players, scouting of players and managing players' image rights. The branding of players' image rights and commercial rights are new concepts in professional women's football. A sharp rise in the importance of being a 'brand' and how that is reinforced by agents in relation to players' capital, cannot be understated as explained by one youth international:

"I feel pressured to do it yeah (social media). Even my agent tries to pressure me, like telling me to put stuff on social media. Basically, that's the way to earn more money. You can earn money through it definitely" (Interview 14).

The pressure emphasised on the player from the agent is important to consider, as players admitted they are not educated by their clubs or union on agents and their relative level of expertise within football. The deregulation of agents by FIFA in 2015 can be considered significant, effectively agents are permitted to self-regulate and require no qualifications to advertise their service to professional footballers. Perhaps as a consequence of deregulation, some players referred to their experiences with agents at work as unsavoury and feel they were exploited by a rogue agent. As articulated by one senior international:

"I ended up getting stitched up by the agent, instead of them paying a fee, I ended up paying it, I've been shafted. I could have got […] without them but they made me feel like I needed them" (Interview 17).

It appeared as the influence of agents increased, the levels of mistrust from players increased. Similar to Roderick's (2006) data collected on men's professional football, women's football appears endemic in mistrust. Implicit in the data was players urgency to get a 'good' agent. It is clear, in the main, that the majority of players consider a 'good' agent as someone who can provide them with increased commercial opportunities. Yet significantly, employment policies discussed in the previous chapter, which are crucial to increased security in the workplace appear to be overlooked by most players. It can be suggested that the misinformation which surrounds employment policy is problematic, as players are uncertain of their agents' role in contract security, other than economically. Players operate in an uncertain environment without a previous generation of professional women footballers as a method of comparison, consequently, players consider the conditions of male footballers as their criterion. This is dangerous, not least on the basis of misrepresentation in the football field. The notable lack of expertise of some agents becomes highly problematic when we consider their influence of branding of players, the strategies employed by players to become brands and the reaction of players to insecure work.

6.5 Problems of branding and access in the search for legitimacy

There is a growing body of research which analyses female athletes' social media use as a tool of self-promotion (Barnet-Wiser, 2015; Toffofetti, 2016; Toffoletti & Thorpe, 2018). The reach and acceptance of social media platforms has contributed to the increased available capital in terms of product endorsement for footballers, agents and businesses. New media technologies are putting the tools of representation into the hands of athletes and their agents (Heinecken, 2015), enabling footballers to construct new online identities as footballers. The data presented so far, elucidates how individuals develop dispositions and the legitimacy afforded to men in positions of power. To combine those dispositions with the way in which sexualised images of female athletes, are generally normalised in the media, it is perhaps unsurprising that many women footballers are presenting themselves, in ways which are deemed socially acceptable which includes being sexually attractive. Data in this study proves consistent with research on young women who use social media and replicate cultural and gendered norms, despite having control of their output (Jefferies, 2011). It is questionable if young women do have control, or whether they have internalised dominant images, which they replicate in their practice.

A dilemma occurs for players who seek legitimacy as professional footballers. There are new and emergent pressures linked with increased commercialisation of women's football, players are encouraged to be self-sufficient entrepreneurs and articulate feelings of responsibility for promoting the women's game. Dominant

discourses such as 'inspire a generation', create images of women footballers who are accessible and expected to give back to a game, which has enabled them to be considered a professional footballer. The majority of players discussed the problems with being accessible to fans. The accessibility described by players, is one of the pillars which the FA WSL is built on. FA marketing strategies include a focus on differences between female and male footballers. In the following example a youth international describes the problems with accessibility, as the profile of the game has developed rapidly:

"You are expected to promote the game […] appearances are sometimes loaded with the view that it's our duty to promote the women's game. If you are a man, in the same position they don't have the weight on the shoulders of inspiring a generation […] there is a slight dark dynamic under it all that the game is on the shoulders of the players […] the strategy of women's clubs to set themselves away from the men's club is that players are accessible, something men can't offer […] there's a lot more close contact in our game. After the game I'm expected to sign everyone's autograph in the stadium. It's questionable whether that's the right thing for a professional to do. But then you risk sounding self-entitled […] you have to keep face more" (Interview 18).

Describing a case in point of the 'dark dynamic' referred to in the above example, is an experienced senior international:

"What's sad is, people will be enticed to watch the game if we look better. Which is really sad. And I think the way to get more twitter followers is to put a picture up in a sports bra, which is really sad, there's no moving away from that. And it's a shame. But it is a culture thing" (Interview 16).

The two examples above typify two general points, namely players acceptance of what it *takes* to acquire legitimacy and capital as a professional woman athlete and the internalisation of imagery into practice. The uppermost consideration of players use of social media and match day performance, is to retain, maintain and acquire fans, gaining support for the women's game. The strategies employed by women footballers to enable them to be accessible, appear to be constructed around taken-for-granted notions of freedom and choice. Strategies are manufactured in hyper-sexualised social conditions, in which women athletes are informed, largely by male agents, on how to build their brand and capital.

A central point being made by all players was a problem with over-accessibility. Access is concerning, in terms of their safety and legitimacy as professional footballers. "Cause, that's the thing to distinguish between what's acceptable and what's taking the piss. And to keep people onside we feel we have to be accessible" (Interview 8). Another senior international affirmed this in the following way:

"We're far too close to fans […] I'm not saying take that away but there has to be a barrier, fans think they know you and they don't […] people putting their arms round you getting a picture. It's uncomfortable not cause, I'm better than them,

but I'm a footballer and they're a fan. If you don't go over, they'll think you're big-time […] some days you don't wanna talk after the game" (Interview 15).

The concept of big-time is emphasised in the following extract from a senior international:

"At times it's a bit, exploitative. The accessibility is good, but it needs to be balanced - they squeeze everything they can out of us. They bleed it dry […] again it's about reminding yourself of your value. There's this thing where like, if you came up to me as a fan and I thought you were a bit weird, and I said no to you there's this shout of 'oh she's big-time, she's got too big for her boots' but like I'm just not comfortable with that […] then people see you as arrogant and it's like no […] people are obsessed with keeping you in your place" (Interview 12).

Data in chapter five revealed players implicitly describing organisations as 'getting their money's worth', is again depicted here. The creation of an environment that expects women footballers to be accessible to fans regardless of emotion, or context, delegitimises them as professional athletes, as it appears their footballing endeavours may not suffice to keep fans interested. Moreover, the use of the phrase 'big-time' by fans, teammates or coaches in football characterises players that are not considered to be 'team players' perhaps, it can be considered the most abhorrent term you can use in team sport. To avoid being characterised as big-time, players act, and do as they are instructed by clubs and the coaching staff. The way in which individuals discussed being portrayed as big-time, was in fear of repercussions

which could impact their career negatively. This can be considered as a form of control by clubs, the governing body and agents, who are keen to ensure positive public perceptions of women footballers. A danger here, is the extensive nature of control through the possibility of future contracts and commercial opportunities, players appear willing to embrace the conditions of organisations and clubs. Players are keen to maintain, or retain authenticity as professional athletes, and in doing so, they accept others' claims to control, observe and survey their working bodies (Shogun, 1999). Retaining control in this body-centred career, ultimately becomes problematic for players and there appears to be blurred lines of autonomy, which constrain players ideas of who they should be as an athlete.

The data collected for this study reveals players entangled in a paradox. Players are increasingly individualised and have more access to self-promotion through social media and recognise the opportunity to utilise it. Yet the pressures and expectations to inspire a generation are articulated as weighing heavy on many players shoulders, in their attempt to carry women's football forward. However, the majority of players admit to using social media to brand themselves and recognise the potential of branding to acquire economic, symbolic and social capital in their short, precarious career. Acquired capital also drove players in their thoughts towards post-career planning. As articulated by one senior international:

"My agent is now about making us more digitalised and visible is after football we can live, people can attach their products to you […] rather than falling out the game and clutching to anything you can" (Interview 8).

The centrality of legitimacy in the professional football field was highlighted in chapter five. With this in mind, it is unsurprising that players use social media as a vehicle into their private lives, enhancing visibility on their own terms. Similar strategies are employed by male footballers' social media, and other high value athletes, for example Cristiano Ronaldo has over 124 million 'followers' on Instagram. It is clear, images of high value athletes are internalised, taken-for-granted and normalised by women footballers, despite outcomes that potentially conflict with their legitimacy.

The interrelated concepts of legitimacy, self-promotion and branding highlight the dynamic, interactive relationship between social structure and the everyday lives of professional women footballers. The identities of players are formulated and reformulated as professionalism and expectation increases. It is within this context that professional women footballers do what is expected of them, use their social media platform to promote themselves, their brand and their team. This discourse leads players to becoming increasingly familiar with what is expected of them, on and off the field. One may add here, that some players appeared to connect and only see benefits of social media use. However, during interview it became increasingly clear that the effects of social media expectations, combined with body perceptions and bodily feedback, heightened insecurities of many players. The following extract describes how a senior international feels towards "being able to be touched by fans":

"It's gone too far […] our marketing strategy at (club) is always about making people come back and that stretches to how you appear on social media […] how we appear from the outside […] but that is a touchy subject, it opens avenues of different sorts of pressures. Without going into too much detail, I've really struggled with the pressures of how you look, how you feel, how all that makes you feel on the pitch, how you look on social media […] I actually don't enjoy being out there right now. It's mad how it makes you feel" (Interview 16).

The above extract demonstrates an individual who appears to be experiencing a loss of autonomy. Research suggests a perceived loss of control or autonomy can be considered a key factor in wellbeing and mental health problems (Hughes & Leavey, 2012). The processes described by players are considered taken-for-granted and players appear to rationalise their position, understanding they are in a position of privilege, and for that privilege, they must love their work. Fuelling expectation in a contradictory space, that players must be mentally tough.

In summary, it has been highlighted that there is an increased expectation on players to become brands in order to acquire capital and enhance their career. Strategies of players include increased use of social media to be accessible to fans. Dispositions developed and formulated in practice, are reinforced as players acquire *followers* and capital. Through historical practice, the repetitive articulation of taken-for-granted images and expectations of women footballers in the professional football field - constrains, manages and coordinates practices that are valued. Invariably practice supports the notion of women devalued as footballers but can be considered

an attractive individual (McGillivray & McIntosh, 2006). However, this is dismissed by many players based on neoliberal assumptions of freedom and choice for women.

It became increasingly clear throughout the data collection that the growth of women's football has resulted in a large influx of agents, who to a large extent, control individuals' images in order to maximise their short, precarious career. The FA and clubs expect players to be accessible individuals and emphasise discourse which encourages players to retain and amass fans. Players have little choice but to embody discourses of organisations that control their career. To that end, increased individualisation, elevated emphasis on branding and the need to acquire capital, appears to have increased pressure on players, resulting in a loss of autonomy. Whilst there has been an increased interest, both academically and in the media of wellbeing and mental health, there has been very little attempt to understand and explain the conditions in which concerns for individuals arise and subsequent recognition and strategies of players.

6.6 Wellbeing, isolation and a loss of autonomy

"You need a bit of a punch bag sometimes. That's what we need here, the game is moving 100mph. If you ask some of the girls here about mental health, they'll think it just means you're insane, you're nuts!" (Interview 17).

Research on mental health, wellbeing and athletes has been dominated by androcentric, quantitative, psychological approaches. It is the contention of this next

section to frame sociological investigations of wellbeing and mental health in footballers as necessary if we are to engage in a better understanding of football as work for women. To understand wellbeing concerns of individuals in their new career, we must examine taken-for-granted understandings of women footballers, as individuals seemingly under less pressure based on gender and economic value. It is well documented within this research and other scholarship, working conditions for professional footballers are defined by uncertainties. The data in this study characterises the working conditions of professional women footballers, as more uncertain, unstable, peppered with precariousness in the form of insufficient employment and work-life policies, social gendered expectations and the pursuit of legitimacy. It is necessary to identify the consequences of this new career and how players deal with increased celebrity and scrutiny.

In football, physical injury and illnesses have tended to receive more attention from the media, scholars, coaches and athletes themselves, than mental illnesses (Frank et al. 2013). This focus can be considered imbalanced. The imbalance can be suggested to be attributed to the stigma attached to mental health in society, and more specifically, in football. Football players' achievements are almost entirely reliant on their performances at work (Roderick et al. 2017). It becomes increasingly important then, not only for players to be physically conditioned, but also mentally conditioned. Data has portrayed players who are entangled in a career which is uncertain. Findings uncovered in this study are consistent with Frank et al. (2013), who highlighted a paradox which exists for elite athletes. On one hand, athletes are vulnerable to developing depressive symptoms due to status and pressure, whilst

on the other, considered resilient and less vulnerable to mental health concerns. Further, a perception exists of athletes being immune to mental health and wellbeing concerns (Hughes & Leavey, 2012). Despite this perception, previous research indicates elite athletes comprise a population at risk of mental health and wellbeing concerns (Newman et al. 2016). Success in football is closely related to mental toughness, as such mental illness or wellbeing concerns, are seen as contradictory to success (Bauman, 2016).

It was established from the interview data in this study, that players expressed multi-layered strategies focused on performance enhancement and making the most of their short career. The majority of players had a heightened awareness of their position and most felt *grateful* for the opportunity to play professional football. Players articulated their feelings of playing football professionally, and in most cases, it appeared to possess them, similar to Wacquant's (1995) work on boxers, football has impaired individual strategies and players are highly invested in the game. An implication of this is the possibility of a lack of agency in professional football. Players appear hyperaware of perceived professionalism at all times that conforms to organisations, club and agent expectations who facilitate their career.

The loss of autonomy discussed in this chapter, contributes to feelings of uncertainty and wellbeing concerns for players. As detailed in the following extract from one senior international:

"We can't have our own opinions […] cause we're so privileged, or we feel like that. Players can't express how they feel cause, they're worried about non-selection, or money […] they're constrained" (Interview 21).

The following example from a senior international describes a loss of autonomy and impact on her wellbeing:

"If you're injured (manager) will play you or make you train. But as an athlete you know your body. No-one wants to miss training, do they? To say those words (I need help) is difficult enough. You're at risk of a complete deterioration of the relationship and you don't play again […] I think like if you step out of line once, they'll never forget it. You have to be a robot that they mould you into and you've gotta be like that person they want, turn up to training every day and behave in a certain way, you don't get the chance to express yourself sometimes […] football has lost its enjoyment factor" (Interview 25).

Similarly, another senior international describes the environment at her club: "One of the girls (teammates) is having issues at our club, said she didn't wanna kick up a fuss in case they take her off her contract" (Interview 30).

The erosion of autonomy was not uncommon within the data. A perceived loss of autonomy and disempowerment has been established as a key factor in athletes developing depression and anxiety (Hughes & Leavey, 2012). The reality for professional women footballers is that they lack control over their lives, and are

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regulated by a schedule, controlled by organisations and clubs. All players reported two main issues with scheduling, match-day rescheduling via the FA, which leaves players unaware of their next competitive fixture: "…Like if I don't promote my game, who's gonna look? No-one knows when we're playing! Sometimes I've had tweets saying good luck against Arsenal and were playing Chelsea" (Interview 15). Further scheduling issues arise as coaches change their teams schedule for training, often reported as a control mechanism. Explained by a senior international:

> "Your schedule is your schedule. You plan around that. Yeah, you live your life by a schedule, a timetable of being here and there and I think when you retire that's what you miss more than the football, the structure" (Interview 23).

Among contemporary portrayals of professional footballers exists a widespread perception that modern players spend very little time at work, and the majority of their time, spending the vast amount of money they earn (Roderick, 2006). However, it has been established within this research the majority of women footballers earn meagre salaries. Further, players are engaged in a battle for legitimacy in the football field and aiming to prove their worth. With this in mind, players in this research report to spend the majority of their time at the club, with many players claiming approximately 5-6 hours per day. The control exercised over players lives in part extends to other areas of their lives, as one senior international explains:

> "That stretches to how you appear on social media, we get trained in that. It makes a big difference how we appear outside" she then moves on to discuss on the field

structure "We kinda realised we need to move away from that structure […] Cause you're so structured, how do you feel free again? I think the structure in our play doesn't allow you to be yourself […] I did a run where I shouldn't but so what? I felt liberated" (Interview 16).

The perceived control detailed in the previous extract extends to on and off the field activities. Passages of this kind were not uncommon. As discussed throughout the data, players are trapped in a battle for legitimacy within the football field. In the quest for legitimacy, players experience and accept an intense approach to accountability, surveillance, measurement and quantification (Roderick et al. 2017). Little scrutiny has been afforded to those women footballers entangled in the pressures of 'doing the right thing', a phrase which was used by multiple players in various contexts. The control afforded to this phrase is exemplified by one senior international: "I always felt like I was being watched, not on purpose, I just felt like I constantly had to impress (manager) by doing and saying the right things" (Interview 19). The drive for perfection in women's football, appears to be a very real pressure faced by players as they fear the reality of losing their professional status, consequently players appear vulnerable and accept control explained by one senior international:

"As players were expected to do more and say less. I mean if you go for a drink with friends, you have to be aware of what you put on social media […] you are being watched. I feel like I'm being watched the whole time […] I think we're judged more than ever before. What you eat, what you look like" (Interview 13).

The data presented so far indicates the changing requirements of women footballers, as professionalism increases. Transitions in the workplace encourage players to have high levels of commitment, resulting in professional women footballers entering the 'football bubble' whereby little else matters in their life-world domination. Players discussed being unable to 'switch off' and rarely leaving their work in the workplace. Discussed in the following extracts of two senior internationals: "We do more for less. They don't take their job home with them (non-footballers) they don't fit their lifestyle round their job (Interview 13) "It's really hard for people to have a social life cause, they don't know how to! There has to be time to detach yourself, but people don't do it and people find it difficult" (Interview 17).

The findings in this research correlates with previous research that characterises taking-your-work-home as *work spill* (Patricia, Moen, & Batt, 2003; Sanderson & Clavio, 2010). Such work spills are highly problematic, as players are unable to switch off, often resulting in wellbeing ill-health (Michie & Williams, 2003). It must be noted work spill may be common within other professions. However, unlike other professions, data portrays professional footballers as having intense training schedules, sponsorship commitments, living away from home and high surveillance of their lifestyles outside of working hours. As articulated in the following extract by one senior international:

"You can't really put a foot wrong. You're constantly trying to be in the game and that is hard when you're going through emotions of not playing […] you don't wanna show any sign of weakness. You want your team to know they can count

on you […] when you get back to your room you can relax, cry, shower do whatever you want but when you're around the team it's pressured (Interview 23).

In combination with taking their work home, players articulated feelings of 'being watched', as described in extracts within this chapter which can be termed as surveillance. Surveillance appears indicative of individualism and accountability associated with neoliberal values whereby mechanisms for monitoring and producing appropriate behaviour are administered (Davies, 2005). Increased exposure via new media forms and the growth of commercialisation in women's football have led to increased surveillance and the critique of athletic bodies and the meanings players ascribe to their bodies (Kohe & Purdy, 2016). Professional footballers enter a body centred universe which requires field appropriate capital (Coupland, 2015). In this instance physical capital and 'looking athletic' was high on the agenda of agents. Consequently, players find themselves engaged in behaviour which is deemed appropriate and are aware of being watched. The following extract describes one senior international experience:

"We have no privacy at all […] you always have to look the part […] when you're eating and drinking. Like you'll stand there on a night out holding a bottle of water and you might not be drinking that water, but you say to your mate 'pass that water' just so you don't get caught out. Some people are out there to catch you out" (Interview 23).

It is clear from the above quote, and from interviews conducted, players are hyper-aware of public perceptions and looking athletic and behaving in a way deemed professional in football. Therefore, the preservation and promotion of a footballers' physicality and image are highly important for organisations, in terms of the product of the athlete and specifically, for the athlete in terms of capital and legitimacy.

6.7 Wages over welfare

As detailed in chapter five, professional women footballers embody their careers. This is further demonstrated in this next section through the scrutiny players give to controlling their lives at work and in their life outside of work. The attention given to their bodies and how such focus can control players is detailed in the next extract from a youth international:

"If you get a comment on your weight or people say: 'you don't look like you play football' people take offence yeah. Players feel as though you have to look athletic - pulling their shorts up to show massive quads or whatever. Players feel pressured to do it. Look at men, you can instantly tell they play, muscly with a six-pack […] women have to work harder, perhaps too hard cause they wanna prove a point, like they can look good" (Interview 22).

This example was typical of players who discussed their ambition to look athletic "I think we have to try and look athletic […] myself I wouldn't wanna look heavy and non-athletic" (Interview 28). It was clear self-regulation occurred as a response to

looking athletic. 'Looking the part' demonstrates the importance players attribute to legitimacy in the football field and how they embody their new career. Embodied careers include feedback from the body around appropriate levels of capital, which will enable both legitimacy and capital exchange.

One predominant area of concern with the highly regulated culture of surveillance is the control over athletes' bodies and personal freedoms. The following example from a senior international, highlights control over players bodies and the potential consequences for individuals:

"Physically we are made to feel like we have to be a certain way, a certain body shape to be accepted [...] it's worrying when your sat in a dining area and the whole team won't have carbohydrates after an intense session cause, carbs are the 'devil'. I dunno where it comes from but when your forever being fat tested, over tested. Clubs are aware and they're the ones who want it. At (club) we're told we have to be a certain body fat or you're in fat-club and you have to train by yourself!" (Interview 13).

The imposition of body fat testing, body shaming, treatment of players professional bodies and its effects are exemplified in the next extract from a youth international:

"We do body fat testing and the information got sent to the board! How is that information getting sent to the board? They wanna know that the investment is

worth it! […] I'd put on a little bit but was playing better but the coach had to write an email to the board saying why I had put on x amount of fat" (Interview 4).

Overtraining is a physiological and psychological state that may occur in response to insufficient recovery following overload (Rearick et al. 2011). The literature of overtraining is largely dedicated to psychological analysis of youth athletes. The prevalence of over training in athletes has been reported to be between 20% and 60% (Hughes & Leavey, 2012). What is less clear within previous research, is how individuals embody expectations, scrutiny and how that impacts individual wellbeing. This is critical as we consider mental health to be the leading cause of long-term absence from work (Roderick et al. 2017). As discussed earlier, professional athletes are not exempt from mental health concerns. Within the data it was clear that players are less likely to report concerns as they are caught up in professionalisation and are reluctant to risk their career. The central point is that players are expected to deal with high levels of intense scrutiny and loss of control over their bodies. It became evident in the data, players accept this intense approach to accountability. The following extract from an experienced WSL player describes the routine in her workplace:

"Sometimes we're doing three sessions a day, we were shattered there is no management of our training whatsoever. If we're not getting results, we have to train more. The week leading up to my injury I had ran three times what I would have in a game, complete overload" (Interview 2).

Similarly, two senior internationals describe experiences of overtraining: "You're constantly compared to players all the time and I feel pressure from that […] it's a long day […] your constantly under scrutiny" (Interview 25) "We have to be pulled back in the gym […] that leads to managing yourself […] don't settle, be better, be better. And it's affected me cause, I think I've gone overboard with it" (Interview 17).

The above examples of overtraining were not uncommon within the data, as players appear to accept the taken-for-granted expectations in their workplace. Increased competition, intense scheduling and scrutiny were cited as reasons for acceptance. At some clubs, players were seemingly encouraged and expected to over train as part of their commitment to the club. A handful of players felt compelled to over train, to meet increasing demands and expectations placed upon them. Research suggests depression as a symptom of overtraining. Moreover, previous research infers tentative links between overtraining and severe depression (Schwenk, 2000). Therefore, those who appear to immerse themselves into their training, should be monitored to prevent further negative consequence (Newman et al. 2016).

Newman et al. (ibid) suggest athletes' lives should be monitored at clubs and organisations, ensuring athletes have support for any wellbeing or mental health issues within, or external to their sport. For professional women footballers this can be considered as a romanticised idea. The majority of players in this study detailed that their club is under intense pressure to improve performance and results in the short-term. As such, there are ethical dilemmas that compromise treatment of athlete wellbeing from clubs who have limited funding and high expectations. Players

appeared to have a heightened awareness of such dilemmas and as a result, felt that they couldn't trust their club and developed feelings of isolation and in some cases, helplessness. The following extract describes one player's feeling towards growing economic disparity between teams: "How are clubs supposed to compete […] all the things they miss off to compete in terms of player welfare" (Interview 4). Similarly, this way of thinking is expressed by another senior international:

"The welfare of women's football is non-existent […] we need someone experienced to help look after players, the way the game is going, with players not getting contracts and then all of a sudden their world comes crashing down players feel isolated and they don't wanna talk to managers cause, they think it will effect this or that!" (Interview 14).

In terms of player welfare and wellbeing, it was identified within the data that clubs have limited understanding, support or focus on concerns of players. To gain an indication of how many organisations structure facilitates for wellbeing concerns, is detailed in the following extract from a senior international:

"Things are constantly expected of you and you're away from home, away from family. People struggle. I struggle. Like if a system was in place, I would be back playing now. I shouldn't have to wait for months for the club to sort things for me. There needs to be a budget set aside for these things […] at our club, its wages over welfare" (Interview 25).

In sum, the specific understandings of wellbeing issues are understood through a desire for greater attention towards mental health. Despite many players recognition of the PFA as an organisation that can support wellbeing concerns, there was an apparent reluctance to seek help. These examples present players who have constructed specific meanings around their disempowered and oppressed gendered position within the football field. The football club occupies a powerful and influential position in the lives of professional women footballers. Recruited at a young age into a sport, that until fairly recently has devalued women. It is perhaps little wonder then, that these players are reluctant to question a lack of welfare and wellbeing policy within their clubs.

Whilst the findings did elicit evidence of a critical lack of wellbeing policy in FA WSL football clubs, many players appear to simply accept their disempowered and devalued position. Whilst not always made explicit in interview data it is fair to say, that players are left in little doubt by clubs and other organisations that their professional football career should be their priority. The apparent acceptance and routinisation allude to the determining structure of habitus, and the power of the football illusio. Coming into contact with a field that further reinforces gendered notions of hierarchies in football, it is clear how a particular form of social practice is produced.

6.8 Conclusion

Women's football has undergone significant transformations in the last decade. It is argued within this chapter that the most significant transformation is the professionalisation of the game. The fragile nature of women's football careers is highlighted throughout the data, as women face increasing pressures and expectations. A central focus of this chapter was to understand the subordinated positions of women footballers and the meanings players attach to their position. Data revealed increasing individualised behaviour of players, as commercial opportunities become a very real chance to acquire capital. Heightened individualisation was attributed to the rise of neoliberal feminisms, in the form of freedom and choice. The present study raises the possibility that gendered dispositions were formed in an androcentric context, as players attribute their beginnings in football to a male figure. It is argued, within this chapter these beginnings have influenced women in relation to their relative acceptance and legitimisation of their disempowered position.

The findings reported here shed light on the considerable pressures associated with players making the most of their short career. Players appear to be actively branding themselves through commercial and marketing strategies, via the medium of social media. The influence of social media is a particularly powerful outcome within the data, as players understand it as a tool to acquire capital. It became clear players are branding themselves through socially appropriated methods of hyper-sexualisation and in a way that players feel women athletes *should* look if they want

commercial opportunities. The data uncovered is significant, as the power of building a brand appears to have dominated players understandings of professionalism. A career as a professional women's footballer is a new concept and until now, we have been largely unaware of the consequences of branding in the field of football for women. Dark dynamics shaped players understandings of over-accessibility as the FA WSL and Lionesses brand continues to grow.

The search for legitimacy for women footballers, is again evidenced within the data. The access afforded to fans as part of the FA's marketing strategy, becomes problematic as players are hyperaware of public perception. Players are left with little choice but to be accessible in the expectation of inspiring a generation. To date, there has been very little research on the consequences of increased expectation, and data within this chapter examines taken-for-granted notions. Players are increasingly aware of wellbeing and welfare concerns but appear reluctant to seek help, or to question seemingly non-existent policies of their clubs. The wellbeing concerns articulated within this chapter can be considered the tip of the iceberg for women footballers, as associated pressures of social expectations and professional expectations continue to grow.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

Football as work for women in England is a new reality. The main focus of this thesis is on women's experiences in their new occupation as professional footballers. To date, little empirical work has been conducted on women's professional football, mitigated by low visibility, status, and the recent development of a new career opportunity for women. This research sought to address this gap, as the women's game in England is rapidly developing. Consequently, this research set out to contribute new insights related to professional women's football. The study set out three objectives, first, to analyse how women footballers experience professional football as an occupation and how their work is gendered. Second, to examine whether, and what type of workplace and employment policy exists for professional women footballers. Finally, the research assessed and detailed the implications of professionalisation. The professionalisation of women's football in England has created insecure and precarious work for women. For all players in this research, the erosion of amateur practice meant the creation of new rules of the game and a reconfiguration of the football field. Through the theoretical lens of Pierre Bourdieu, this research analysed how players have internalised new professional expectations and enact expectations in their practice.

A key contribution of this research indicates that the work of professional women footballers is highly gendered. While the historical embeddedness of masculinity and football does not determine the gendered work of professional women footballers, its cultural and symbolic power are influential because of its naturalising effect, or its

doxic effect. Football as work for women carries with it a gendered history, reflecting aspects common to the work of professional football. FA WSL clubs have been mixed into an existing system of professional football, as women's clubs have been absorbed into men's clubs. This absorption means women players are reliant on men's clubs, who have mixed strategies on how to grow and support their women's team sustainably. The inception of professional football for women means the forms of dominance have changed, as women's football can now be considered a work opportunity for its elite players. Yet, women do not hold positions of power, and uncertainty in their career is increased due to gender. Past social histories of women's subordinated position in the football field has been incorporated into the practice of FA WSL players, meaning players are unaware and therefore, unwilling to challenge their gendered work conditions.

The prefix of 'professional' was expected by players to provide them with professional feelings of legitimacy, prestige and acceptance into a profession that has devalued women for so long. However, the realities of players were markedly different. The evidence presented in this research clearly demonstrates the majority of players in this sample, based on their gender, are undervalued at their clubs and are not treated as legitimate professionals. Football clubs promote certain components of acting or being professional, that all players adhere to and recognise as fundamental to their career success. The conditions players considered necessary to *feel* professional varied greatly, yet to feel, and act professional was essential to all players. Many players included in the sample, have narrow understandings of professionalism, primarily associated with aesthetic

professionalism. In other words, players in this study perceive professionalism and develop professional feelings through the various and indifferent trappings afforded to them by their clubs or the FA.

The data collected for this thesis indicate that professionalism and behaving professionally, is central to the new careers of professional women footballers. Professionalism in this study is understood as a form of symbolic capital, something valuable, exchangeable but it is always at stake. Crucially, players have embodied what it means to be professional into their identities. Despite their subordinated position, players clearly articulated dispositions unable to choose otherwise in their career. The opportunity to play professional football was all consuming, their strategies of agency were impacted, as football appeared to possess them. Despite entering a precarious career, the structure of opportunity (or lack of) represents both the gendered work of professional women footballers, and football's historical divisions between men and women creating insecure work for women. In a manner similar to male footballers examined in previous scholarship, many women enter the career of football, despite the fragile market conditions in which the game operates (McGillivray & McIntosh, 2006; Roderick, 2006). Unlike the male footballers examined in previous studies, professional women footballers are largely unprepared for their chosen career. Enmeshed in the new realities of professionalism are paradoxical, unstable labour market conditions, and the growing glamorisation of women's football.

The evidence presented in this thesis clearly demonstrates that the gendered experiences of the majority of players included in the sample, mean players feel grateful for the opportunity to play professional football. That sense of gratitude was evident and important in many players accounts. Players attempt to make sense of their uncertain work conditions by expressing gratitude for the opportunity some believed would never be possible. However, players indicated contradictory feelings towards their work. On one hand, players recognise the unpaid, hard work and dedication to football pre-professionalisation, so it becomes difficult to criticise their current work conditions as they are better than they ever have been. On the other hand, many players perceive their work conditions as less than satisfactory, and moreover, they are expected to feel grateful in such conditions.

While players appear to accept their work conditions, it can be argued players feel ambivalent to their employers, resulting in high levels of mistrust and movement between clubs. Compulsory gratitude means many players feel their status as professional athletes are undermined and devalued. The problem of the contradictory space in which women footballers operate, therefore, is particularly serious, given the fact that players operate in uncertain work conditions, keen to develop and maintain public perceptions that often result in players feeling constrained. In sum, players are walking the tightrope at work. The exceptions made by players in both football and non-football settings appear to be taken-for-granted, and consequences neglected.

A key contribution of this research identified that within professional football clubs, employment and workplace policy varies greatly, and misinformation is commonplace. While the study identified employment policy to be crucial to women in the workplace, it appears largely overlooked by professional women footballers, clubs, agents and the FA. The interview data collected for this study highlights the gendered experiences of professional women footballers at work, and the exceptions players were willing to enact, in order to *make it* as a professional footballer. Such assimilation occurs when women internalise the rules of the game. That is when the values and dispositions of the intrinsically male football field, are internalised by women and acted out in their practice. The study established crucial policy omissions such as maternity leave, child care, medical care, education and post-career planning. Indeed, clubs and the FA's almost exclusive focus on producing elite footballers with limited consideration given to their employment needs is highly problematic.

Taken together, the findings in this research call into question the employment and workplace policy of professional women footballers. There is widespread agreement that work, and employment conditions have changed in important ways for women. In the context of growing women labour force participation, organisations have placed greater emphasis on workplace policy crucial to women at work. Central to the contemporary concerns of organisations are family-friendly and work-balance policy, to improve the quality of life for employees. While these examples of policy remain important for professional women footballers, perhaps more crucially are fundamental policies that are taken for granted in other occupations such as,

maternity leave, medical care and child care. In general, therefore, it is assumed women who work as professional athletes will not have children in their career, or educate themselves for inevitable retirement, and are actively discouraged from doing so through policy omission. Such oversight in policy, reinforce the exclusionary practices of sport, the gendered nature of football as a career, and fails to recognise how the underlying structures and practices of clubs and organisations reproduce gendered working practice.

Increased professionalisation of women's football in England has failed to shift employment policy onto the agenda of clubs and the FA. The evidence from this study suggests that football clubs and organisations such as the FA and PFA, assume professionalisation is an end point for women's football, overlooking decisive employment policy for women footballers. The findings in this study suggest that employment and workplace policy omission for professional women footballers, is another example of the marginalisation of women in football, despite the continued discourse of an equal game. It is well documented that football is a precarious career, inbuilt with insecurities, in this way, disregard of workplace policy contributes to greater economic inequality, insecurity and instability based on gender. Players appear to be mixed into an existing system of professional football with limited understanding for their needs as women athletes. The interview data collected for this study suggest that within football clubs, women footballers require employment and workplace policies, security specific, to their own game. The professional football field acts as a football bubble to individuals operating within it. The club is often reinforced as the centre, or should-be-centre of players' lives, in these

circumstances, despite the centrality of employment and workplace policies, policy becomes redundant in favour of securing and maintaining professional status. Players are uncertain what security should be offered in their contract beyond economic remuneration. In line with this, fundamental workplace policies for women are often neglected. In short, players fear 'rocking the boat' and their professional status being taken away.

The contribution of this research identifies implications of professionalisation for women footballers. The evidence presented in this thesis demonstrates players rarely carry symbolic or cultural capital and therefore, to make the most of their short, uncertain career, exhibited individualised practice. Consequently, the evidence presented in this study clearly demonstrates an increase in individualised actions for many women footballers in this sample. The field of professional football appears to promote individualised behaviours that players have internalised and act out in their practice. The interview data collected for this study contradicts taken-for-granted assumptions that all footballers are team players and indicates women players are aligning characteristically with male footballers. While in part, players can be considered team players, as they perform their work in teams, there appears to be an intensification of individualised behaviours.

The individualised nature of women footballers in this study signals a change in attitude for many players, as women footballers are often characterised by organisations and in the media as playing for the love of the game. The empirical validity of this claim has been contested within this thesis. Increased individualisation

of players has not occurred in isolation, or through individual choice. The inception of the FA WSL meant clubs were asked to break into new markets as a way of justifying their position in the sport (Woodhouse et al. 2019). This increase of neoliberal objectives in the shape of quantifiable measures, has been embodied by players who are attempting to push women's football into new markets through individualised branding. Through a more concrete relationship with the field of power (men's football), there has been a rise in neoliberal aspirations of the FA WSL, in terms of commercialisation and marketisation of both clubs and players. The growth in interest in women's football has meant economic rewards are available to a handful of players. Such context means players are making strategic decisions to improve their capital in the field. This study highlighted the changing nature of individualised players and how players live the neoliberal discourse of individualism in complex ways. In this way, both success and failure are considered a product of individual action.

Implicit in the new realities of professional women footballers, are players' embodiment of freedom and choice. Although it is not suggested women take up football as part of a feminist agenda, the data collected for this study suggests female individualism is prominent amongst the sample in this study. Thus, marginalising both collective feminisms, potential action and reducing workplace concerns to individual concerns. The stories recounted by players indicate many have internalised new gender regimes and integrated individual feminism into their practice. In line with research on male dominated occupations, this is also likely a result of low numbers of professional women footballers, which can result in women

individualising their experiences rather than perceiving them as a result of gender. This study contends the emergent rise of individualisms is linked to the broader societal rise in post-feminism. Post-feminist notions appear to have influenced both gendered relations and the gendered dispositions of professional women footballers. A consequence of post-feminism is that individuals appear to manifest self-determination and agency into their practice. In this way, the women's game rests on the shoulders of players, helping to engender a new professional woman, empowered and able to balance the occupation of football, whilst acquiring capital. Such a quest requires constant monitoring, surveillance and evaluation.

The contribution of this research suggests there are considerable pressures on women players to make the most of their short career and become role models, in order to generate and maintain interest in women's football. The data collected for this thesis suggests players not only accept this as normality but promote themselves and the women's game with great regularity on social media. High levels of competition for positions in the starting eleven are commonplace within professional football. What is less common and thus, a new reality for professional women footballers, is branding through social media and the agents who facilitate and encourage branding. As a new norm of the successful professional woman footballer, an agent becomes normalised as someone who helps shape and direct individuals active branding. The data collected for this study ascertains players are profoundly influenced by both their agent and dominant feminised images of women. Players cited the perceived economic and social benefits of social media. Moreover, how players have internalised complex imagery is evident. Occupational fragility is

implicit throughout the data. In the highly competitive field of professional football, it becomes crucial for women players to become and remain visible.

An implication of professionalisation means social media acts as a misplaced form of control and visibility for players who perceive they enact both freedom and choice when building their brand. However, problematically, stories told by players imply they have not only been influenced by feminised imagery, but, feel pressured to brand themselves in any way possible. The way in which players present themselves on social media replicate gendered and social norms, more than that, players are pressured to look a certain way and be accessible to fans. Players recognise problems with over-accessibility, yet, believe it is necessary to promote the FA WSL and their personal brand. The evidence presented in this thesis established that the majority of players in the data set, are acutely aware of the increased expectation and professionalism, alongside the expectancy of self-promotion to gain interest in themselves and their team. However, whilst players take for granted these expectations, players in this study operate in a contradictory space.

It is evident that players in this study feel privileged to play professional football, but predominately players were unprepared for the insecure working conditions in which they operate, the emphasis placed on branding to acquire capital and the surveillance placed upon them as professional footballers. In most cases, players were unprepared as clubs failed to cultivate understandings of potential consequences as misinformation dominated club narratives. The results of this study indicate that a loss of autonomy and control leads to mental health concerns. An

implication of professionalisation in part confirms overexposure to uncontrollable work and non-work conditions has left players uncertain and unstable. The attachment players have to acting in a professional way and conforming to club and FA expectations, has left players in a disempowered position. In sum, in their quest for legitimacy, players ascribe to an intense approach to accountability and surveillance on their bodies and lives. The vulnerabilities experienced by women were multifaced and unexpected and included: eating and bodily disorders, work spill and overtraining. It is within the context of professional women's football and their new realities, players are expected to deal with a loss of autonomy and perform in their less than satisfactory work conditions.

In summary, the introduction of professional women's football in England has provided a unique opportunity to examine football as paid work for women. The field of professional football is marked by stark inequalities relating to gender, race, ethnicity and so on. Yet the same industry celebrates diversity, openness and meritocracy through the development of FA WSL and other positive public perception strategies. Although the opportunity for women to play professional football has increased, women are not afforded the same resources or prestige as men in the same career. The data uncovered in this research provided unique insight into the subjective experiences of professional women footballers. Presenting commonalities between other sports and professions with a focus on the experiences and expectation of women in the workplace, employment and workplace policy and implications of professionalisation.

The evidence collected for this thesis has the capacity to inform organisations and countries, with ambitions to professionalise women's sport on the specific welfare and employment policy necessary for professional women athletes. The focus on women is necessary as women face different challenges in both work and non-work settings than men. The information presented in this thesis can be considered beneficial to governing bodies, both in football and other sports, organisations such as the PFA, and football clubs in shaping policies and procedural guidelines for players. From an academic perspective, this work will contribute to the sociologically under-researched area of women's football, enabling a greater understanding of professionalisation of sport and women's football.

7.1 Limitations and further study

As stated in the methodology and elsewhere in this thesis, the study adopts a focus on a particular demographic and limited number of players, to allow for depth of engagement. Such limitations imposed upon research can restrict the generalisability of the findings to broader populations. In agreement with the interpretative epistemological approach the study took, the FA WSL is constantly in flux and therefore players interpretations who work within it, will fluctuate and shift accordingly. However, the themes identified throughout the examination and subsequent theorisation, were grounded in the information provided by professional women footballers and provide new insights into football as work for women in England. Research into professional women's football is particularly limited given the recent professionalisation of the sport. As the women's game in England continues

to grow, it is hoped that this is the start of a more robust approach to researching professional women's football in England.

An initial examination of the new realities of professional women footballers analysed several key themes; subsequently it is hoped in the future there is scope to develop and investigate a number of areas more closely. For instance, employment and workplace policy is overlooked and neglected for women footballers, by both clubs and the players themselves. Thus, to increase workplace security, employment policy needs further analysis. The development of women-specific policy would be highly beneficial. Moreover, players need access to non-biased information to educate them on their rights as women and employees. In line with this, as more women become employed under contract, agents and their influence is a growing area of research, subsequently, future research should reflect this. As the women's game continues on an upward trajectory, further consideration must be given to the mental health of professional women footballers. Mental health is neglected both within research, by the clubs and at times, by the players themselves. Participants noted an uncertainty of whose responsibility it was to offer support, and in the rare occasion participants sought help, players felt that their club was reluctant, or had spent their budget elsewhere.

The FA WSL and its players are under-researched as an area of scholarly investigation. It is necessary to acknowledge the access afforded to me as a researcher, is fairly unique. As the first former professional in the women's game in England to undertake a PhD, I had access to former teammates and opponents.

These factors should not dissuade researchers from providing further critical analysis of FA WSL and professional women footballers. Increased professionalisation cannot be accepted as an indication of improved workplace conditions for women footballers. Therefore, further work is necessary to look beyond increased professionalisation and challenge taken-for-granted assumptions. As this study has identified, the professionalisation of women's football is a new reality, not only for the players, but researchers who aspire to improve work conditions for women, across sports and other employment sectors. In this way, we are all fish out of water. It is hoped, other researchers will take on further critical analysis in the area.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1- Reflexive Research diary

PhD Diary/critical events and notes on interviews etc - reflexive diary.

12th Dec 2016 - FA scheme to increase participation by using pink whistles. See - 'increase participation FA PINK WHISTLES' document.

9th Feb 2017 - FA note of no confidence form government.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/football/38911980 Greg Dykes comments re: reform

Summer 2016 - USWNT launch protest for equal pay with USMNT, after it is suggested they bring in more dollars but receive less in payment. This is a landmark event in many ways. For a brief moment last summer, the U.S. women's national team was everywhere. The team's 5–2 final win over Japan was watched by more than twenty-five million people in the United States, the largest-ever television audience for any English-speaking broadcast of any soccer game, men's or women's.

But even as the team celebrated its tremendous win, it was engaged in tense collective-bargaining-agreement negotiations with U.S. Soccer. At issue was whether the women would be compensated at the same level as the men—which, they contend, U.S. Soccer refused even to put on the table. In February, U.S. Soccer sued the union representing the players in a dispute over the validity of the terms of the old collective-bargaining agreement, which includes a no-strike clause. At the end of March, Carli Lloyd, Becky Sauerbrunn, Alex Morgan, Megan Rapinoe, and

Hope Solo went public. They filed a federal complaint accusing U.S. Soccer of wage discrimination. They earned significantly less money—roughly a quarter less, according to the complaint—despite dramatically outperforming the men's national team, and despite producing nearly $20 million more in revenue for U.S. Soccer than what the men's team brought in. (The U.S. Soccer Federation disputes those numbers.)

The women are making two different appeals, one aimed at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, where the case was filed, and one aimed at the public. One argument is economic and grounded in employment law. The other is about social justice. The reason they went public, their lawyer, Jeffrey Kessler, told me, is that they feel an obligation to speak for women in the workplace. "It's about doing the right thing, the fair thing," Lloyd wrote in an Op-Ed for the New York Times. "It's about treating people the way they deserve to be treated, no matter their gender." The implicit assumption is that those two arguments are inseparable—in the women's formulation, equal pay for equal play. Money is respect.

http://www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/the-case-for-equal-pay-in-womens-sports downloaded 23rd Feb 2017

Interviews started on 8th Feb 2017.

Can FA really reform? Slowly, slowly - working inside male defined parameters, liberal feminist discourse supports this notion. Yet, real change is not being delivered.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/football/38907978

9th Feb

http://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/football/38920489

28th Feb

https://www.theguardian.com/football/2017/feb/10/kick-it-out-football-supporters-federation-complain-fa-ray-kiddell

9th Feb 2017 - FA note of no confidence form government.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/football/38911980 Greg Dykes comments re: reform

███████████████████████████████████ - this location was selected by the player as it is her place of work (dual career). █████████████████████████ accompanies us on the interview. ████████████████████████████████ ███████████████████████████████████ it is clear player is still in pain now. Appears very detached from the game when speaking about her issues, disillusioned but has signed for a new team despite these clear and obvious reservations. ███ of a team player, who just loves playing football ████████████████████████ indicative ███████████████ - recognised the cut throat nature of the game but appears unsettled that its happened to her in women's football. Mood appeared to distance herself from football as a result of how she was treated by former club. Talks openly about investment in the game with very little return, but doesn't regret it..

Paradoxically very interesting.

████████████████████I ██, also didn't know much about their team apart from they were full professional and they had had a poor season the year before. ████████████████████████████ was clear the security guards were accepting of the women's team - I asked where to park etc and they gave good, friendly information. Before the interviews start, I make a note of this to the players - who comment, 'they're the only ones who like us round here - the fellas on the door!' - I was initially passive to this comment and passed it off as 'banter', yet it became very clear when we sat down to do the interviews, the intent and honesty which supported that comment. All players interviewed here seemed downbeat, was very unsure of the future. ████████████████ retiring if they didn't find club soon, seem tired of the situation at club. ████████████████ who is a woman but does not fight for them because she is employed by the men. Reflective story telling, attaching and detaching themselves from football in various waves. ██

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████████████████████████████ - again another detached player. ██████ was injured and mistreated by former club. ████████████████████████████████ with very real concerns her young family (nieces and nephews) will forget her. Dual career, club ██████████████████████████ a lot of various pressures. Again, ██ and is very open and honest. Mistreatment by former club ██████████████████████████ cut throat nature of professionalism and it changed her identity, which she stated was hard to take. New

club appear to be helping her as much as she can, but being alone in a new city is tough.

Feb 10th. Keith Crompton defends lack of women and ethnic minorities on the FA council.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04sdn9v

████████████

██████████████

Has recently signed her first professional contract. Leaving behind a well-paid, consistent job. She suggested her reasons for signing her pro contract - was a once in a lifetime chance, if she didn't take - she would regret. Although the job was new, she didn't appear to harbour ambitions to force her way into first team recognition. Very real concerns about trust within the club. Money is irregular, promises broken and ██████████████████████████████████████ and unsure of her choice. Player states she doesn't know what to expect from professional playing so is accepting almost anything, even though in her 'normal' job she wouldn't accept it. What is so different? Just wants to 'play' make the most of her opportunity and doesn't want to rock the boat. Power at play. Recognises her lack of capital and doesn't appear to know how to acquire more, or willing to try. No feminist.

██████████████████████████, first thing she explains is constant contract issues which have led to a mistrust in the club and a loss of capital. Came to the club

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of development as a player at club as the reason. Contract issues are a concern which leads to a feeling of insecurity and uncertainty. Feels she has no power as ██████████████████████████████████ so she would struggle to move or want to move so, the offer from the club is less than okay - but accepts it. Considering quitting as football has changed. Recognises the need for education, understands the club doesn't 'care' about players - just wants them on the pitch. In a difficult

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to it - as just wants to play, despite contract negotiations. ████████████████

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██. Parents no uni. Interview at training ground. Already preparing for life off the field. Understands position as a player with capital. Important to her to use it in the right way. ██████████████████ ████████████████████████

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███████████████████████████████.

<u>Monday 13th March</u>

The F.A announce plans for the future of women's football. The "For All" strategy aims to double the fan base and participation rates of women's football by 2020. The F.A also suggested the senior national team will be ready to win the World Cup 2023.

http://www.thefa.com/about-football-association/what-we-do/strategy

https://amp.theguardian.com/football/2017/mar/13/baroness-sue-campbell-womens-football-fa-plan

The For All strategy implies, football for everyone. Empowering women and girls through sport - "a grand idea but it is what were trying to do" - this opens up questions of the current players, where are they? There are three headline targets but in reality are attempting a paradigm shift in the status of the sport. The current status of the sport is in the hands of the FA WSL players and England players. The lack of emphasis on the current players is interesting. Extend this section.

██ she's off sick from football. First ██. █████████████████████ ███ ████████████████████████████████████ Very lonely existence.

███ into the peak of her career as a footballer and yet, I encounter another disengaged, detached player. Lost trust in the set-up and the ambitions of the game, another player who states she has fell out of love with the game - but is in a paradox, she's not yet ready to retir████████████ ███ ███

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

20th March "It's only women's football" the researcher is a victim of symbolic violence - after 20 years of being told that and reading it, it is difficult to comprehend where this research will end up or how it will benefit sociology, due to habitus/doxa/symbolic violence. Invariably end up questioning myself about the content of the research and 'selling' 'showing off' the research as the [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. In addition having to contact players who I know are not champions of the sport and listen to their stories proves increasingly difficult with forthcoming interviews.

Muirfield admission for women golfers mid-march. 20% did not vote in favour, despite being threatened with the Open omission.

[REDACTED] is in the middle of contract negotiations with her clubs, which she states she is not receiving any help with. One of a few one club players - young player but with lots of experience. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] to move [REDACTED], as she cant afford to live close to the club on the wage she is. I feel very emotional when … is telling her story.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

teammates. … [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

cutthroat now and players are not cared for - [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. Policy changes are needed in education, infrastructure and support for players, changes within boardrooms and changing rooms, more women are needed in top jobs to understand women. When she was

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Truly a heartbreaking story to hear. Spoke of looking attractive for commercial gains was common practice in women's football now. It has been normalised. 7/10 players have spoken of this acceptance as part of the game. Almost an expectation of society and the players themselves.

side note according to all players to date (4/5/17) none have been made aware of any policies within the club. Medical, grievance, maternity, insurance, education, mental health etc - this appears to be a very real issue, as all players have stated at some point they required one of the above. Players appear to bypass club and go straight to PFA - due to several reasons: a lack of trust for club or manager, recognition it would lead nowhere, players feel threatened for their place on game day and so on.

5th April 2017 A new collective bargaining agreement has been reached for USWNT. Important moment for players and also women's sport and players.

https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/05/sports/soccer/uswnt-us-soccer-labor-deal-contract.html?smid=tw-share&_r=0

At the same time, the Republic of Ireland's women's team are raising issues for basic rights - they are threatening a strike over treatment of players on international duty.

http://www.irishtimes.com/sport/soccer/women-s-football-team-to-boycott-fai-training-camp-1.3037352

"In sport, only real men are the standard to which all others should aspire" (Cooky & McDonald, 2005). This comment struck me as significant - when I have interviewed the players to date (18/4/17) all have referred to an apparent shift in football, moving away form male defined norms - the evidence they provide is purely economical, as when probed they all agree, football is a man's game (still). The shift rhetoric which is assumed and repeated throughout women's football, is the same as when I played. We were repeatedly told (by the public and coaches) things are changing, which you repeated, unquestioned when asked. This forms part of your dispositions. Players are so keen for a shift and change the rhetoric becomes legitimised, which leaves little hope for REAL change - as players are submissive to the apparent (economic) changes which have been generated.

April 21st 2017

Notts   County   Ladies   fold.

http://www.nclfc.co.uk/news/club_statement_468138745.html#G6qU3BS2Lk7Uhiw
9.97

Debts of up to 1 million pound could not be restructured. As a result, players, staff & fas have lost their jobs, income and livelihood - but perhaps most shocking their football. Two days before season started - players were told via social media. FA refused to sanction the transfer of licence - why I will never know. ██████████ ███████████ very sad day for women's football. It is not acceptable in the current climate of women's football, that players and staff lose their jobs in this way! FA lack of good governance is highlighted here. It is difficult to remain optimistic about women's football when the over reliance of women on men is the issue here. Further analysis of situation required.

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█████████████ has ██

███████████████████████████████████ Again, first story she told was about a transfer, which in many ways ██████████████████████████████████ yet the

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██ was very different she discussed feelings of anger, isolation and a severe lack of confidence ██ which would help her understand the move and settle into her new club. It was an eye opener, I didn't up until this point realise just how cutthroat the game has become. … ██

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████████████████████████████████████ … was aware it is a short career and the uncertainties which surround the game, and the 2nd player I've met who recognised this and was preparing ████████████████████████████

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████████████████████████████████ which to run a football club is not possible. After interviewing ██ it was clear that players are prepared to use their gender capital to acquire economic/social capital. A paradox has occurred, players recognise they must look good to gain economic/commercial capital, however, it is subconscious and part of a newly formed professional footballer habitus. ████ appeared to be aware of how manipulate her capital, suggesting players who are athletically pleasing appear to obtain more 'commercial' ventures. Players are under pressure to look good to bump up their pay etc. Messener (2012) suggested Although there are a wide variety of resources that form a woman's gender capital, some female athletes preferred modifications of appearance. (Messner 2012) suggests This is Similar to snowboarding, some women acquired a symbolic capital by acting like men whereas others used their feminine capital (Huppatz, 2009). Yet unlike those in snowboarding those who act like men to gain symbolic capital may have capital on the field, but off the field, commercial ventures are reserved for those who use their feminine capital!! In this case, possessing one of these kinds of capital excludes the other (Thorpe, 2009).

████████████████████████ will the most capital to date and of all the players I will ██ very real worries about the women's game could fold tomorrow. Player recognises whats at stake. Football really is her life. ██

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██████████████████████████ Player highlights real mistrust within the club, due to contract issues. ██████████████████████████████████

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██████████████████████████████). Trust issues are explicit here.

Players are expected to do so much to promote the game, FA & clubs really squeeze all they can out of players. The expectation is on the players to promote themselves and the league - players are expected to be accessible, which sometimes is not realistic and if players don't make themselves available they're called 'big time' etc. No privacy for players because they are expected to be tangible to fans to grow the game. (Gendered expectations) Always under pressure. Another pressure player spoke about is aesthetic pressure. Players are expected/pressured to look/act a certain way to 'promote' the game. Teams are no longer teams because players are

likely to leave/move at the end of their contract due to economic conditions. Insecure/worried contract conditions - (re)negotiation is slow, players contracts are allowed to run down to the last week and player is unaware of if they will have a job or not. Despite her capital player is very aware of short career and the lack of support for players within the club. ██████████████████████████████████

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██! Control/power very evident throughout interview. This interview was in ████████████ I felt the loneliness I sometimes felt when I was playing football, it is a difficult situation to be in and understand, the controlled/dominated environment is perhaps the most doxic, because you accept these conditions as normal, but they are anything but normal.

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███. Very quickly into the interview it became clear … was not enjoying her football and felt huge pressures with very limited (or completely lacking) in policies, infrastructure and support. I could see … ██

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████████████████████ - it is easy to get out of control. ██████████████████

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███ is a constant thread throughout

the interview. ██

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████████ Club has no care for players as humans, said it makes you realise how

much of a business football is now. ████████████████████████████████

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███████████████████████ person to talk to, to help switch off, but players are only here

to do a job.

███████████████████████████ comes from a high capital background, it appears in the

first exchanges - she definitely knows her worth. It is an interested context and the

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for players. Clubs are happy to pay players less than minimum wage and expect them to act professionally at all times. ███████████████████████████

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██████████████████████ is acutely aware of her position - the FA need the players not the other way round, highlights the players being the issue as well as FA as players legitimise/accept the position of the dominant FA or club. **Taken-for-grated/common-sense is throughout women's football (this needs highlighting as part of thread!).** ████████████████████████

████████████████████████ Realism to the interview that men **don't care** about women's football. It is a constant reference point throughout this interview.

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████████████████████ However that was not the case. … referred to transferring and how difficult emotionally it was. She discussed a lack of emotional support from ███. Yet, how

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occupation and new context, players do not know how to deal with it. It is clear, clubs just want the player and are not sure how to, or have the staff to deal with emotional or wellbeing of players. The implications are players feel unsettled and cannot perform or maximise their potential at the new club which effectively leaves them isolated. Work life/place programmes could exist for players who are constantly on the move. Emotional/wellbeing/education (which allows them to develop networks

outside of football). ▮ mentioned having a tough time over the proliferation of herself

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faced in attempting to live up to standards and how its effected her both on and off

the field. ███

████████████████████████████████████ … feels isolated. I can

sympathise and understand this feeling. The gendered capital/identity was obvious

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████████████████████████████This is an important issue is it a women's only

issue or do we make it so it is a women's issue are men feeling the same but no-one

asks them because they are men?). … ███████████████████████

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██████████████████████████████████████ As a consequence

player has become individualised. It is difficult to not become that way if there are

constant pressures on you ████████ ██████████████████████████

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██████████████████████████ work for more people not just the elite internationals ██

███████████████████████████████ almost enforces why and how individuals are

created. Feel really emotional after this interview

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date. ████ ███ Also

recognised/justified my position as the insider and said she wouldn't speak openly

like this to anyone who hadn't been through or understands her position. Education

was a pressing issue f██████ based on her own experiences wishes she would have

had more information and guidance and sees that as crucial for players now to

develop skills and wellbeing outside of football. FA/PFA/clubs don't do enough for

players off the pitch. Players are not explicit to call this welfare or wellbeing but it is.

Defines a lack of trust within club to look after her when she had a prolonged injury

and put this down to funding the medical staff. Majority have stated medical issues

whether it be recovery or treatment, players who are fortunate enough to be an

international are given excellent medical care the others are not. Mass levels of

disparity articulated and player didn't understand the gulf. Player was explicit in

justifying other players positions of being too accessible to the public (despite this

being an original pledge from the FA) players now feel its out of hand and players

are concerned about fans etc knowing their personal lives too much and pressures

and expectations which go along with that (gender specific men wouldn't be

expected to justify their position as a footballer). █████████████████████████████

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██ Players aren't respected enough to just be a footballer and concentrate solely on football and being a player. █████████

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██████████████████████████. Player highlights sacrifices made for the game, which all players have suggested is necessary. The player indicates a point where she couldn't sleep or think of anything else other than football and football pressures, performing and being selected. It is that cut throat that players become (mental) due to pressures, not used to it, need outside 'buffer' in clubs. ███████████ █████

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8th May 2017 - Moya Dodd loses out to male official to represent FIFA board. FIFA reforms were made earlier this year, which stated there would be at least six women (one from each continent on the 37-member FIFA council. Yet Dodd lost out and it is representative of the way in which FIFA deal with reform. Women are being elected to the council who know nothing about football as such they are merely ticking a box. The article here written by Julie Foudy highlights the stark indifference of FIFA towards real, legitimate progress for women.

http://www.espn.com/espnw/voices/article/19364609/dear-fifa-do-better-support-equal-representation

Thursday 18th May - http://www.thefa.com/news/2017/may/18/fa-governance-reforms-180517#.WR21SvizL98.twitter

Governance reforms implemented by the FA. Despite these reforms represent progress in some capacity, it is difficult to remain positive. As Schultz suggested, I am cheering with reserve. The FA were under pressure to reform or face losing it's funding from Sport England and the government. As such, it is hard to not be critical of the timing and the reforms in general.

Side note (6/6/17)

No players to date have stated they have any maternity pay (███████████████ because contracts are so short) or from clubs. Players are put off having kids because of this and combined with the lack of infrastructure and support from clubs. Clubs only want players on the pitch so highly unlikely to give them longer contracts which gives them option of having kids. There is very limited flexible working - even for players who live away from home. ALL players noted a male influence getting them into football. Is this why players are submissive to men in football? All players no nothing about their image rights, maternity, flexible work, grievance policy there are a lot of issues.

before the interview, which provided an interesting dynamic. Excitement was equal

to apprehension after handing her notice into work and ██████████████, she has thrown all her eggs into one basket. ██

██████████████████████ Supports education/welfare policies which are necessary for players. Further another mental health worry which comes out the interview. No infrastructure to support her when injured, lonely and unsure whether she could come back due to the severity of her injury. ██. The mental health issue shone through the interview. When players are not asked directly they have appeared to open up without knowing. It appears by not asking something an answer pops up. No maternity leave, again, contracts are not sufficiently long enough to provide support. Similarly with an injury, ████████████████████████ a FT contract the situation will be very different if she is injured again for a substantial period. ██████████████████████████████, so was surprised to hear of the problems suffered due to a lack of social/emotional policies for players. The club supported her recovery but what was most apparent is the lack of emotional support. Players need this (wellbeing person). █████ ████████████████████████ ██ █████.

██ ██ ████████████████████ resentment and detachment from football after her

experiences. She appeared a bit lost and despite signing for a new club, still had lots of reservations about women's football. She really brought home the realisation of the need for a metal health/well being support that is necessary inside professional sport. Discussed in depth the need to reassess policies concerning medical care/wellbeing support and education. ███████ ████████████████████████████

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████████████████████████████████ Overall the interview depicted a situation which could happen to any player in the WSL████████████████████████████████

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<u>**12th July 2017**</u>

<u>**https://www.womeninfootball.co.uk/news/2017/07/12/lewes-fc-launch-ground-breaking-equal-pay-initiative/**</u>

Lewes FC launch equal pay initiative. This is something which I could possibly use as evidence the impact of my study. My initial reaction to the news was one of excitement - but automatically felt like it was unsustainable. Is this because of my habitus?

<u>**13th July 2017**</u> England fly to Euros. There is pressure on the players to perform and 'inspire a nation' the team and players are expected to win the Euros.

FA launch partnerships with 8 uni's

<u>**http://shekicks.net/2017/07/13/eight-high-performance-centres-selected/**</u>

Which is beneficial to my research, doesn't say when it will be implemented or what the selection criteria is. ███████████████████████████████████

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Currently the interview process has slowed somewhat due to holidays and Euro prep. I have taken this time to try to get to know my data a bit better and understand players feelings towards the clear uncertainties they face on a daily basis. Injury/medical care/wellbeing/mental support/maternity/education/post career playing/elitism/a lack of flexibility and understanding from clubs are topics which are highlighted so far. Interviewss have been challenging emotionally but reflection is key in putting myself back into the shoes of the players and feeling their concerns, players are more than just data to me.

26th July 2017

http://www.farenet.org/news/shocking-working-conditions-players-new-mexican-womens-league/

Shocking working conditions for Mexican players - non pregnancy and non homosexuality really shapes the working conditions of Mexican players. Must look further into claims of similar conditions in Spain.

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████████████████████. ███████████████████████████████████████ of the medical ██████████████████████████ players are valued within the club - which transpired to be not very highly. Players appeared to be last on the list when it came to vital medical provisions like scans, recovery and physio. ██████████████████████████

an improved medical situation from clubs who are below them, there resource allocation is inadequate at best. Players appear to be marginalised and undervalued - a similar situation to the majority of clubs in the WSL. Interesting insight into clubs prioritising the football over players wellbeing, support and education. Diminished wellbeing and feels a lot of pressure to prove herself after injuries, but blames injuries and delayed recovery on lack of resources from the club. ████████████████ ██████████████████████████████████ Very aware of the increased commercialisation and how it has led to feminised players. Must re-listen.

https://theconversation.com/how-early-career-women-help-to-open-up-the-gender-pay-gap-81591?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=twitterbutton

This article appears to position the pay gap for women as a woman's only problem which supports the argument that gender is positioned as a women's only issue.

29thJuly 2017

Disney princess campaign with FA.

http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/disney-fa-dream-big-princess-football-campaign-keep-girls-out-of-sport-england-team-a7860676.html

By using the image of a princess to play football changes the position of the message women's sport tries to promote. This contradictory message undermines the image of women's football and feminises the sport. I am highly critical of this message as it counters the message that girls/women don't have to be feminine to play sport, they don't have to be anything. This message again puts women in male defined parameters and shapes a contradictory image to the one football should be about - an empty rhetoric which marginalises women and girls further.

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██ Aware of commercial

game and is very open that players must look good to benefit economically. Talks a

lot about the word pressure, knows how much she has to do to gain recognition and

understands football as completely male dominated. Must re-listen. Doing interviews

with ████████████ is very important to the research, ██████ solely invested in

women's football - started uni but hated it, says she worries about her contract

length, if she is good enough to make it internationally and also about performances

not only on the field but also off it. The interview was really short but very informative

on the pressures young players associate with professionalism.

Gail Emms MBE speaks publicly about post-career options and how the struggle is

very real. This article prompted a lot of discussion - but I find that is the problem,

'people' are very good at describing a situation without actually effecting it - which I

include myself in.

http://www.themixedzone.co.uk/im-ashamed-admit-im-struggling/

side note I am now finding the research process very interesting there appears to

be reoccurring themes which highlight the difficulties women players face on a daily

basis. Some interviews are very difficult to deal with and an unexpected theme of

wellbeing and a lack of support players feel from clubs, coaches and teammates are

very real. I am unsure how all of this will come together in the way of 'story telling'

but there are some increasingly important contributions from players. I have competed 20 interviews to date with hopes of a further 10 to be completed by September.

4th August 2017 FIFA PRO Conf.

FIFA launch conference to discuss women's experiences of football as work.

https://fifpro.org/news/elite-female-players-quitting-before-their-prime/en/

This is important work, which will support my findings when the results are published in September. The survey also covers salaries, contracts, career prospects, childcare support, education, health and safety, abuse in the workplace, discrimination and match-fixing, among other issues.

The conference coincides with the end of the women's euros - which by all accounts were a huge success. I was at the semi final and final and have never witnessed football support quite like it for women. It was incredible. There are many articles about commercial ventures in women's football and how they can improve the game. Although commercial gain is necessary - I am skeptical due to the interviews conducted to date and the very real pressures players are subject to.

https://fifpro.org/news/alert-women-s-football-survey-out-august-7/en/

https://fifpro.org/news/alert-women-s-football-survey-out-august-7/en/

refer to these two videos of the problems of women's football and it appears it is cross country and cross continent. "It's about us"

There is a clear relationship between how women players are treated and gender equity outside the football world - this connection must be made throughout the

research. A reflection of how players are treated is a reflection of women more generally - what is the example I can give? General working conditions?

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████████████████ ██████████████████████████████████ She is well trained in discussing roles and responsibilities at the club and also of what she understands as professional behaviour. The interview is a very masked performance at the start. However, she touches on wellbeing as a problem for players and as captain she feels responsible for attempting to help and listen to players, although she stresses its something which the club should facilitate - but don't, because they use the budget to attract players, but its something which ███████ feels is a real issue within her team and with women's players more generally. ████████████

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████████████████████████████ This can be the reality for players, because there are not as many clubs who can offer a second chance. Players wish to tell a glamorous story on social media, but ███████████████ this as unprofessional and are not willing to make choices for their career, but want all the plaudits which come with being a footballer. Non feminist. Worried about having kids because she wont get offered another contract. But doesn't have maternity care in her club contract. Wellbeing was the big issue to come out of this interview, however player failed to connect the dots with external social pressures and players wellbeing. Good interview from a player who has invested herself into the game and believes anything you have is through hard-work and thats why she says she isn't a feminist. Illusio is very prevalent - doesn't see football as a man's game anymore.

12th Sept 2017- Had many failed interview opportunities over the last month which has been frustrating - but has given me time to develop chapter three, football as paid work for women. I sent that for feedback on 1st Sept 2017. In between interviews there has been developments with the Eni Aluko case against the FA and Mark Sampson (also Sanderson, Asante & Chapman have spoken out in various contexts). ██ ██ ███████████████████████████████████, for 'unlioness' behaviour - the ambiguity concentrated within this term, has left many questioning why the FA paid Aluko 80k, but cleared Sampson of any wrong-doing. There are calls for a further, independent review by the govt. It would perhaps be fruitful, to use the details of this case in my concluding comments of potential issues which can arise due to a lack of trust, support and infrastructure to support the employment and wellbeing issues of elite women footballers.

https://www.theguardian.com/football/2017/aug/22/eni-aluko-interview-10-questions-the-fa-must-answer

https://www.theguardian.com/football/2017/aug/21/eni-aluko-england-manager-mark-sampson-ebola

https://uk.sports.yahoo.com/news/mark-sampson-apos-future-england-185800051.html

https://www.theguardian.com/football/2017/aug/21/eni-aluko-interview-race-difficult-situation

There have been many disputes this year from international players unhappy with the £ (and other circumstances) offered by their FA. Denmark, Ireland, USA have all

effectively gone on strike to highlight disparities and difficulties they experience. The Denmark team are currently threatening not to turn up for the friendly fixture v Netherlands on Monday. The DBU are yet to reach any agreement and after reaching the euros final, players appear to be recognising their value (Ada Hegerberg (Ballon d'or winner) has effectively retired at 22 from Norway national team due to insufficient support from the FA. The stand-off with the DBU appears to be underpinned by players are uncertain if they are employees of the DBU or not. (

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██████████████████████████). The DBU suggest players are employee of clubs, but players argue what about international duty. It is a justified argument which has not yet reached its conclusion.

Meanwhile a development occurred in AUS concerning its national team. In 2015 the Matildas raised a professional dispute with the FA.

http://thewomensgame.com/2015/09/matildas-withdraw-from-pre-usa-tour-camp/

Fast forward to 2017 and it appears progress has been made.

http://www.w-league.com.au/article/new-era-for-professional-female-footballers-in-australia/f16st1wmt0kh1vizg7951zy12

The significance of improved conditions can not be underestimated. Further context is necessary.

20th Sept 2017

Mark Sampson is sacked from England. Allegations from Bristol Academy - more news to follow. Mark Sampson has been sacked by the FA due to allegations of his previous behaviour at Bristol Academy involving young players. This poses

questions regarding safeguarding, safety of players, the FA initiated a safeguarding development course for MS to help his behaviour around women players. Questions must be asked of the FA, how they allowed Mark to be England manager, arguably the most sought after position in the women's game. The wellbeing of players is a concern - players will be under pressure to discuss MS. It has led to a disillusionment within the game - this simply is not the publicity the game wants and would not be allowed within the men's game.

https://www.theguardian.com/football/2017/sep/20/mark-sampson-leave-england-womens-manager

Are the historical processes round the FA's recruitment in need of review? Does the current system work effectively? It is flawed.

26th Sept 2017

Since the sacking of MS, I have been inundated with calls from the media. As my time at Bristol overlapped with MS and his behaviours. It has been difficult recalling incidents which effected my 'love' for the game. I believe the scandal which has emerged will be potentially very divisive for the women's game in general. After ███████████████████████████████████████ only for him to be sacked the next day - could potentially divide England players ████████████████████████ ██████████. ██ ██. Although I have 25 interviews completed I would like to meet the quota of 30 or more which I was my original aim.

27th Sept 2017 FA launches plan to restructure the women's game in England, making the league full professional and asking clubs to invest massively in their women's teams.

http://www.thefa.com/news/2017/09/26/15/19/restructure-elite-womens-football-pyramid-questions-katie-brazier-the-fa-270917

14 clubs will make up the tier 1 restructure. The FA's ambition of a fully professional league is becoming reality. However, there are problems associated with the restructure. 1) Teams in WSL 2, cannot be promoted, which effectively means the 2017-2018 season counts for nothing if the club cannot afford a licence for WSL next year. 2) The timing of the announcement appeared to be a thinly veiled attempt to distract the attention from the continuing MS saga. 3) there have been too many changes to the format, dates, schedule of the WSL and overall the FA's strategy appears to lack consistency, this is problematic due to pressures on clubs to get fans through the turnstiles - how are clubs supposed to acquire regular fans if the FA are insistent on changing format and schedules of the league and games regularly? Players once again will suffer and I expect there to be a big turn over of players once again because not all clubs can meet the licence criteria. The inconsistent strategies employed by the FA delegitimise the work players do to get the public engaged in women's football and the social media pressures from their clubs. The criteria reads maternity pay and leave must be within a clubs policy - yet, if players are only signing short-term contracts it is impossible for players to have a baby whilst playing football. The contracts for England players run Dec-Dec and then club contracts are between 1-3 years, players are put off having children in their careers because of the way

other players have been treated when pregnant, costs associated with having children and also contract length. Another criteria which is limited and ineffective is the safeguarding officer. The criteria recommends one day a week for the SGO, yet, when I speak to players they argue this is the position which needs more investment and something which should be taken more seriously by clubs. After the MS saga one overall message can be taken - players need a safe environment to grow and articulate their problems. Not to be dropped or considered whistleblowers but to express their problems to a non-judgemental person and someone they can trust. Trust is a big concept which has come out of all the interviews so far, all players referred to a lack of trust in some context. Yet the FA recommends one day a week for the SGO and no mention of psychologist or wellbeing/welfare officer. Highlights that the players are last on the list of concerns for FA.

The long-term future of WSL appears to be at stake, with huge expectations on men's clubs to support a FT version of their women's side. Therefore it is clear the FA only wish to have the richest clubs involved, every other club appears irrelevant. Opinions range from the WSL expanded too much too soon (Carrie Dunn/Jo Welford) the evidence of this could be one club folding (Notts) and Sunderland moving to PT status in one season alone. So the WSL stands to experiment on its first ever winter season and then immediately after, expects 14 clubs to go full time. No-one knows what consequences the calendar change will have? Would the FA have been better implying caution and consolidation to the WSL? Will the amount of money clubs have now be directly correlated with success? It could appear that this will be the case, with players regularly citing the gap in the league as huge. There is

much to consider with the league restructure, not least on the impact on players. The captain of EFC has recently retired due to the clubs 'professionalisation' - the economic support offered to the captain was not enough for her to live on and leave her teaching position. This is the reality for players now, as wages offered by clubs are not very high but players are expected to leave stable jobs in order to commit to professional contracts offered by clubs.

Thursday 5th October 2017 Reading through my notes and there are a lot of potential avenues of enquiry with the pending data from this study. ███████████ ██ The questions around wellbeing and mental health are omnipresent, reading between the lines and listening to players talk. It is clear players are no different than most regular people and are striving for economic capital. Yet, at what cost? The desire to prove themselves (to who) can possibly impact negatively on emotions and wellbeing and the clubs do not appear to have the infrastructure to support players. Various dimensions of health and wellbeing are impacted (commercial/slim/athletic athlete) becomes highly problematic in an industry characterised by constant comparisons, quantifiable data measurements and accountability. The wellbeing issues players highlight about themselves and other players is concerning. In the last couple of years a young girl who was released from Man City committed suicide at a very young age. The pressures associated with 'making it' it is clear are detrimental to health and wellbeing, which makes it increasingly important to support players with the necessary infrastructure. Further, cases of Eni Aluko, MS, Lianne Sanderson etc

highlight the lack of genuine care and consideration for women's football by the FA. Is it time women ran their own game? It is an interesting point of contention.

9th October 2017

Women's football appears very topical right now. Norway FA have agreed to pay their men and women equally on international duty. This is a landmark, unrivalled across the world. Scandinavia has often been at the fore of developing the women's game both economically and socially.

http://www.espn.co.uk/football/norway/story/3223153/norway-to-give-male-and-female-internationals-equal-pay

https://www.fifpro.org/news/who-s-next-explaining-the-norwegian-football-pay-deal/en

The important steps taken by Norway have not been a linear process. The Ballon D'or winner Hegerberg refused to play for Norway until the FA showed respect to their women players. Norway has acted accordingly. Meanwhile in Brazil the context is very different. Brazilian player Christene (PSG) has retired from the national team due to a lack of respect from their FA. She shared a heartfelt video on youtube which was truly sad for an amazing player. She said she couldn't physically do it anymore in the conditions which Brazil offered.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l3p2EykuZTI

https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B9AHTorEckEnOFpWYXQ0YUN0RWM/view

The second part is the open letter of the Brazil national team. For Brazilian players to go to this extreme is heartbreaking for the women's game. Yet players see it as they're only option for respect and recognition away from the governing body.

Opinion - What can the rest of the world learn from Norway?

Wednesday 11th October 2017 After a few weeks of relative silence from players, I have had an influx of interviews. ████████████████████████████████

██ This has been an enjoyable few days, the interviews have all distinctly varied. I have been considering a variable for the study on age, players who are younger appear much more assertive and sure of themselves ██████████████████████████████

██████████████████████████ and more from the league with seemingly little consideration of their position. Whereas older players are more accepting and grateful. It is certainly very interesting and something to consider when I am analysing the data. ██

██ All players state the need for capital - clearly. The need/use/desire of gendered and feminine capital is very obvious. I am considering analysing them as two separate forms of capital as I believe they are. ██████████████████████████████████

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██████████████ .

Not sure if this has anything to do with my research? But body image is something discussed within the majority of interviews so it is worth keeping as a reference point? And again here - UK lags in gender equality

https://www.theguardian.com/inequality/2017/oct/11/uk-no-further-forward-on-tackling-gender-inequality-eu-league-table-shows

These are crucial reference points to my research. Sport is never included as the stats would look awful!

17th October 2017 ██████████████████████████████████████

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████. Today the DCMS revise the treatment of Eni by the FA in parliament.

https://www.theguardian.com/football/blog/2017/oct/16/aluko-allegations-greg-clarke-email-mark-sampson

I expect there to be some fall out over this as it appears the FA have not done their due diligence with Sampson and have not handled the enquiry with the respect it deserves and as the article above states, if it was the men's team - how would this be handled? The FA want to be appear to be equal, but they are based on an equal but different model. This is problematic for many reasons, as players are not in a position to question their position through fear of losing their career and opportunity to make a career post football. ████████████████████████

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20th Oct 2017

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https://www.theguardian.com/football/2017/aug/17/eni-aluko-england-women-
mark-sampson

http://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-committees/culture-media-
and-sport/SPG%2001%20Football%20Association%20PRINT.pdf

https://www.theguardian.com/football/2017/oct/19/minister-labour-lost-
confidence-fa-eni-aluko-affair

Above are just a snippet of what the media frenzy has been like surrounding the

case. ███

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Heres Eni evidence

http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/digital-culture-media-and-sport-committee/sport-governance/written/71333.pdf

https://apnews.com/3894032fa7b6445195d697d77de8d454

In this week Denmark (silver medal at euros) have gone on strike due to mistreatment by their FA they ave refused to play a WC qualifier.

http://www.foxsports.com/soccer/story/denmark-cancels-world-cup-qualifier-against-sweden-101817

FIFA Pro evidence: must use as quantitive data.

https://en.vavel.com/football/womens-football/814907-fifpros-womens-football-survey-causes-deep-concerns.html

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8th Nov 2017 Haven't wrote in the diary for a while, there has been much going on in terms of teaching, presentations and prep for those things. However, after the news of the restructure of the WSL (clubs being solely dependent on men's clubs) Watford have announced they wont be applying for WSL status. This leaves players again effectively unemployed. The over reliance on men's clubs where women's football is always last on the list, doesn't seem to effect the FA's outlook. Charlton, Fulham, Sunderland, Notts and now Watford over the past 10 years have been liquidated. Where does this leave players? Reaction is pretty angry from players and fans alike and question the FA's ability to run the women's game effectively with the

game as its priority. Watfords players were given 40 mins notice before they were told next year they wont be employed by the club, or be playing top level football. Must include in-depth analysis on restructure in my thesis.

29th Jan 2017

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███ The process of professionalisation has really impacted players and in short, myself. Turning the research instrument back on myself has been difficult at times, things players said and subconsciously I judged, I would have said the same thing when I played. Particularly relating to feminism, when players rejected feminism or collectively, ████████████ but I remember thinking the same thing - i only wanted the best coach for me, regardless of gender, or whatever minority group.

It was important for me to really reflect throughout the process. The interviews have been emotionally draining at times, I felt I really stepped into the shoes of the players when they recounted concerns around eating issues, non selection, early retirement. I wasn't really prepared to feel emotionally how I did. The mental health of players is really at risk, something again, I did not anticipate within the research. Players don't know what mental health is or what they do or don't have - what does their future hold? It is a scary proposition because not only are players really short sighted, but also coaches, FA agents etc. So, what hope do players have? It is a concern. Using the diary and various note taking exercises helped.

Appendix 2 – Coding of Interview data

1.Changing context of professional	1.1 Showing value	1.2 Feeling valued	1.3 No loyalty	1.4 Cut-throat	1.5 Trust	1.6 Doxa	1.7 Eco cap	1.8 Individualism	1.9 Short career	1.10			
2.New realities	2.1 Contract	1.1/1.4/10.2/14	2,2 Football as work	2.3 No compassion	1.8	2.6 Loyalty change	2.7 Insecure	2.8 Symbolic violence					
3.Expectations	3.1 Isolated	3.2 Ambiguity	3.3 Low expectation	3.4 Beck	3.5 No support	3.6 No Future	3.7 Complex movement	1.3/1/4					
4.Wellbeing	4.1 PFA invisible	4.2 Value?	4.3 Trust	4.4 Identity	4.5 No support	4.6 Welfare	4.7No Confidence	4.8 Club WB issue	4.9 Sacrifice	4.10 Detached	4.11 Away from home		
5.Power imbalance	5.1 Controlled	5.2 Fear losing position	11.1	5.3 Disparity players	5.4 Disparity club	5.5 Not accepted	1.8	5.6 Power struggle	5.7 Integration				
6.Post career	6.1 Investment club	6.2 Dual career	6.3 Degree to fit football	6.4 Club accept D/C?	6.5 P/C concerns	6.7 Capital for P/C							

7. Habitus	7.1 Male influence	7.2 Education Family	7.3 Edu of player	7.4 Accept Subordination	7.5 Football habitus	7.6 Gendered habitus							
8.Employment concerns	8.1 Investment	8.2 No security	8.3 Pressure	8.4 Employee?	9.1 Uncertain	10.2 Eco cap	14/4.3/8.5/2/1/8.6	8.5 Transition	8.6 Career exchange	8.7 Acceptance	8.8 Rock the boat	8.9 W.L.B	
9. Policy	9.1	9.2 Lib Fem	9.3 No infra	9.4Edu pol	9.5 Inconsistent	9.6 Serious concern							
10. Capital	10.1 Edu	10.2 Eco	10.3 Social	10.4 Symbolic	10.5 Fem Cap								
11.Professional feelings	11.1Misconception	11.2 Acting pro	11.3 Behaving pro	11.4 Illusio	11.5 Inconsistency	11.6 Business	11.7 No attachment	11.8	11.9 Reject pro	11.10 Fitness	11.11Value	11.12 Watched	11.13 Bad club
12. Never not a professional	12.1 No care	11.8	12.2 Attached	12.3 Work spill	12.4 Embodied	12.5 Teammate?	7/7.4						
13. Grateful	13.1 Lucky?	13.2 Money's worth	13.3 Privileged	13.4 Paradox	13.5 Prove worth	13.6 Expectation?							

14. Economical capital	10.2	14.1 Important	14.2 Money concern	14.3 Unworthy	14.4 More investment	11.8	14.5 Short term	14.6 Agents					
15. Medical	15.1 Respect	15.2 Mistreated	15.3 Concerns	15.4 Delayed return	15.5 Vulnerable	15.6 Over-trained							
16.Flexible work	6.2/9.3	16.1 No support	16.2 No Flexible	16.3 No social time									
17. Gendered capital	17.1 Exposure	17.2 Using	17.3 Media	17.4 Searching	17.5 Women's roles	17.6 Insecurities	17.7 Social media	17.8 Pressure	17.9 Celebrity	17.10 Brand			
18.Taken-for-granted	18.1 Male dom	18.2 Don't care	18.3 Concerns	18. 4 No feminism	18.5 Outsiders	18.6 Motives of men	18.7 Justify position	18.8 Over-reliant on men	18.8 Legitimising men				
19. Changing opinion	19.1 Type of treatment	19.2 Attitude											
20. Narrow understanding	20.1 Wider	20.2 Conform											

21. Accessible professionals	21.1 Dilemma	22.2 Too accessible	23.3 Pressure										

Questionnaire sample

General information

Name:

Current club:

Age:

International: Y/N

Age group:

FT/PT

Honours:

Approx hours per week at club/international (training, playing, appearances):

Football specific Information

How many years have you played in the WSL?

During this time, how many clubs have you played for?

What was the reason you moved clubs? (probe)

Who negotiated your move for you? Was it straight forward? Any issues? Money/commercial rights etc?

How do you move clubs now? Things have changed a bit since I was playing and it was only 4 years ago, the game is moving fast isn't it?

Were you given advice on what to expect from the move? As in if anything went wrong etc?

Who did you discuss the move with? Friends, family, partner?

If you hadn't become a footballer, what do you think you would be doing now? (probe)

Dual career and education

Do you work or are in education alongside football? (If N, did you? When/how did that change?) What does it entail, time wise?

Do you think women have to do so much more than men, to gain any recognition in football and to plan for a life after it? Can you give an example of what you mean?

Have you done a degree or any further education? Why did you choose that particular degree or course?

If Y are you the only person who has done a degree in your family? MUST ASK FOR HABITUS

Who started you off playing football? Was it a decision to stay involved, as when you were younger, it wasn't a career option - did you have to make a 'choice'? How did you make that choice? And why?

<u>Life in WSL</u>

Other than training and playing, do you have any other responsibilities at the club or for the national team? Can you explain a bit about them?

Do you enjoy this side of the your job? (Is it tiring?)

So, footballer as your job, does it feel weird when you say that? Do you feel different now you are a pro? How? What is different?

What does a typical day look like for you? Training etc? Long day?

What qualities do you need to have to succeed as a professional footballer? In your opinion.

Are there parts/aspects to a professional women's football players life, that people don't understand? (probe)

People look at a footballers life, and think it is a glamorous one - is it?

You have played football as an amateur and now as a pro, are there any conditions you'd ask for in a future contract? Or advice you would give to a younger player regarding contract details? (probe for differences) Or advice in general?

Did expectations change on you and your teammates after the WSL has taken off? If so, how?

Did your expectations change of football? Of yourself and your team-mates? How?

Has anything happened in football which has changed your opinion of it now you are professional? How was it resolved?

If you have a contractual issue, or an issue with a player or manager - who do you speak to? Are there procedures in place if any issues occur?

What concerns do you have as a professional? Contract length/Injuries/medical care/not playing (probe) what you will do after/short career, does that worry you?

Do you feel secure, safe, uncertain about your contract when your contract is coming to an end, like - where will I play next etc? Is there ever any uncertainty?

What do you think the barriers are for women's football to progress further?

For the league and all its players to be professional, what will it take? Do you believe it will ever happen?

The players, if they're not "full time" pretty much, are (time-wise) - I was even when I was playing. You are expected to be professional, no matter what - shouldn't you be paid as such?

What are your thoughts on the USWNT 'Equal pay for equal play'? - can you see that happening in England?

Contracts and policy

A few players have mentioned to me about a few contract issues they've had or heard of, can you describe any? Either for club or country? (Mention England/international contracts - are you paid enough, is the set up good enough what if you have issues?)

Do you know what type of contract you are on? Workers/fixed term/etc?

Do you know any of your employment rights, or employment policies in your contract? medical/maternity/insurance/commercial/post-career playing - are they important to you? Why?

How long is your contract for (England/international) and club? It is short term, does this make you feel insecure? How?

How are the contracts renewed? Individually or collectively?

In your contract, do you feel secure? For example, a few players have mentioned about not having maternity pay with their clubs and country? Or medical care if you have a serious injury, using the NHS is not what you want to be doing? What are your thoughts on this? What happens if your contract isn't renewed?

Have you ever had a serious injury? What happens with the recovery if you are out of contract?

Was your injury a long term one? Did you recover as expected? Whats it like being injured?

Football is a short career, as I am sure you are aware. Have you given much thought to what you will do after? Do you believe there should be education programmes in place to support players, during and after their careers? Same as happens for the men?

Do you have any children? (If yes - how do you manage looking after them and playing, training and other commitments?)

Did you have to 'decide' to go back and play, or was that always your ambition?

Would you be put off having kids? Due to child care, getting back to peak condition and missing games etc? Will you wait till you finish to think about a family? Why?

The USWNT have a nanny at clubs and international duty, is that something that would encourage players to have children - or at least give them the option to whilst playing?

Are you part of the PFA? Why did/didn't you join? Is it worth the money?

Do you feel supported by your club and staff? Or international organisation and staff? Are there any instances when you didn't feel supported?

Do you believe clubs and the Football Associations do enough for women's footballers? How? If not, what could change?

As I understand it, it's not about money equality for women players (the ones I've interviewed) its about being treated equally so you can excel at your 'job' would you agree? Anything to add? (probe) (flying 1st class, hotels when your away, kit, boots, things which come as standard for even 14 yo boys)

If I said to you - football is a man's game, what would you say? And how do you feel?

Are there cultural differences here which prevent the progression of women's football? Use USWNT example - is football accepted as a women's sport here in England?

Life as player and identity

If I said to you what are you first - a footballer, mum, friend, partner, sister, or family member - which one would you say first? Why?

I hear a lot of talk of the word, pressure. Are players under pressure? Probe.
What *type* of pressure exactly?

Are there any parts of being a footballer that are difficult to deal with? Moving away from family/friends/partner etc?

How do you understand football as your job and is it different to any other job you've had? How/why?

What do you understand by the term - 'flexible-working'? In your opinion, is it applicable to women's footballers? A few interviewees have commented that it depends on how much the manager 'favours' you, if you ask for a morning off you get it. If you are not a favourite - it doesn't work that way. How do you see it? If you requested a day off - would that happen, or does football come first?

Do you have enough time to see family and friends as much as you like? I remember missing every single social event from the age of 14-28!

Do you believe the F.A creates policies and situations for internationals first and then WSL players? What is your opinion?

Does player power exist in the women's game? In what way?

Future

The WSL and international teams, predominately has men coaches and managers - why is that? What do you think of that?

Do you think being attached to a men's club has its (dis)advantages? Probe.
The F.A, PFA is also mainly men, making decisions for women, how do you feel about that? Do you think it needs to change? If there were more women involved in decision making, would that inspire you?

Could you ever imagine a situation where women's coaches, for example Hope Powell or Mo Marley are applying for jobs in the men's game? If not why not? Do you think a situation where like the Rooney rule is in place would happen for women?

How could the clubs, managers, coaches, media and the F.A be more supportive of the players?

What are your thoughts on the winter league? Think it will hold back or progress the game? Its like starting all over again isn't it?

If i said 'women's football or female football' do you have an opinion on that? Probe.

Do you think players are expected/encouraged to 'look good' on the pitch to gain recognition, for football/themselves/sponsors? Probe.

Would you consider yourself a feminist? Probe - yes, no, why?

There is a lot of movement in the women's game, why is that?

What do you think the future of women's football and the WSL is? Where will it be in 10 years?

Is there anything else you want to add?

Thanks for participating!

Informed consent statement

'Elite women's football in England: A new reality?'

Research student name: Alexandra Culvin

University: University of Central Lancashire (UCLan), Preston

Email: Aculvin@uclan.ac.uk

Telephone: ███████████

Director of studies: Prof. John Hughson, University of Central Lancashire,

JEHughson@uclan.ac.uk

Background

I am a PhD student in the school of Sport and Wellbeing at the University Of Central Lancashire, UK, conducting research that is a requirement for fulfilment of the award of the doctorate degree under the supervision of Professor John Hughson and Professor John Horne.

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate in the study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information

carefully and ask the researcher if there is anything that is unclear or if you need more information.

Purpose of the study

This thesis explores the lived experiences of elite women footballers in England. By conducting interviews, with current players in the FA Women's Super League (FAWSL) it is intended to identify the lived experiences of women players in this 'new' occupation. The information uncovered will be beneficial to governing bodies, both in football and other sports, organisations such as the Professional Footballers' Association and football clubs in shaping policies and procedural guidelines for players.

Procedure

If you volunteer to participate in this study, participation will consist of one interview lasting approximately one hour, at a time and place convenient to you. The interview will focus on several key themes:

What do you understand is different now you are a full time player?

To understand what components affect the way you do your job as a footballer for both club and country, in terms of your contract and how it could be improved in your opinion?

How do you do your work role as a footballer?

This interview will be audio taped to help capture your insights in your own words, unless otherwise requested by you. You will have the opportunity to ask questions during the interview and have any information clarified. There may be additional follow up/ clarification through email, unless otherwise requested by you. Privacy will be ensured through confidentiality (see below).

You have one month, in which to decide if you wish to volunteer to take part in this study. Should you wish to do so, please complete the Informed Consent form. You have the right to withdraw from the study for up to one year after your interview and should you choose to do this all the information that you provided, including tapes, will be destroyed and omitted from the final thesis. If you decide to participate the data you provide will be stored in a secure location for five years, after five years, all data will be destroyed.

Benefits and Risks

This study will not bring you specific benefits outside of an opportunity to share your views and opinions. Your participation and the subsequent findings, however, will be of considerable benefit for personal educational purposes, for it will give the researcher a critical opportunity to develop professional skills and to gain knowledge about the working lives of professional women footballers, with a view to improving those conditions.

There are no risks associated with participating in this study or costs for participating in the study.

Confidentiality

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by using pseudonyms for both yourself and your club when transcribing the interview. Additionally, there will be no information or details available which would potentially identify you. The transcribed data will be coded and along with interview tapes will be kept securely for five years, data will then be destroyed. Access to the code to link the pseudonyms and transcribed data to personally identifiable information will be stored separately and secured by means of a password protected database limited to the researcher.

The findings of the study will be used for academic and publication purposes in academic journals and as a thesis for fulfilment of the award of the doctorate degree. If you wish to be made aware of the findings, please request this of the researcher.

Should you have any concerns or questions about the research or any related matter, please do not hesitate to contact myself, Alexandra Culvin,

Many thanks,

Alexandra Culvin

Date:

Participants informed consent

Purpose of the study

This thesis investigates the working experiences of elite female footballers in England.

Subject's Understanding

Please initial all boxes to indicate your consent

I agree to participate in this study

I understand that my participation is voluntary. I understand that I may withdraw from the study for up to one year after the interview, with no adverse repercussions.

I understand that all anonymised data collected will be used for this study and may also be used for teaching purposes and to inform future research within the

same research theme. I'm aware that all records will be kept confidential in the secure possession of the researcher.

I understand that I will not be identified by name in the final thesis.

I acknowledge that the contact information of the researcher and his advisors have been made available to me along with a duplicate copy of this consent form.

I understand that the data I will provide are not to be used to evaluate me as an official of the club I represent or any other organisation in any way.

I give permission for the researcher to contact me after the conclusion of the interview for clarification purposes

Subjects full name:

Subjects signature:

Date:

Researchers name:

Director of studies:

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