

**Structural Inequity and Identity Politics within International Football: The impacts of
exclusion from the international arena on the KTFF Süper Lig**

By

Simay KANAN

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

at the University of Central Lancashire

May 2024

RESEARCH STUDENT DECLARATION FORM

Type of Award

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

School

Sport & Health Sciences

1. Concurrent registration for two or more academic awards

I declare that while registered as a candidate for the research degree, I have not been a registered candidate or enrolled student for another award of the University or other academic or professional institution.

2. Material submitted for another award

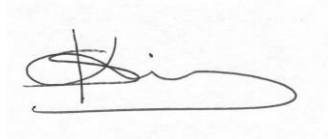
I declare that no material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award and is solely my own work.

3. Collaboration

This research was not part of a collaborative project.

4. Use of a Proof-reader

PaperPal online proofing software



Signature of Candidate _____

Print name: SIMAY KANAN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|------|
| RESEARCH STUDENT DECLARATION FORM | i |
| TABLE OF CONTENTS | ii |
| ABSTRACT | vi |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | vii |
| LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES | viii |
| INTRODUCTION..... | 1 |
| BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY | 2 |
| Aim And Objectives..... | 3 |
| Structure of the Thesis..... | 4 |
| CHAPTER ONE: HISTORY OF THE FOOTBALL IN CYPRUS | 6 |
| 1.1. Introduction | 6 |
| <i>1.1.1 Background of The Research</i> | 8 |
| 1.2 History of Cyprus | 9 |
| <i>1.2.1 General Political History of Cyprus</i> | 9 |
| <i>1.2.2 Formation of the Republic of Cyprus</i> | 10 |
| 1.3 Republic of Cyprus Period 1.3.1 1963-1974 Period Developments and Peace Operation.. 10 | |
| <i>1.3.2 Turkish Federated State of Cyprus and Northern Cyprus</i> | 12 |
| <i>1.3.3 Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus</i> | 12 |
| <i>1.3.4 Unilateral Binding of Cyprus to the UK</i> | 13 |
| 1.4 Development of Sport in Cyprus | 13 |
| <i>1.4.1 History of Sports in Cyprus</i> | 13 |
| <i>1.4.2 Sports Management in Northern Cyprus</i> | 14 |
| <i>1.4.3 Sports Policy in Northern Cyprus</i> | 16 |
| <i>1.4.4 Cyprus Turkish Football Association</i> | 18 |
| <i>1.4.5 Sports Management in The Republic of Cyprus</i> | 21 |
| CHAPTER TWO: RESEARCHER’S PERSPECTIVE AND JOURNEY | 24 |
| 2.1 Researcher Journey | 24 |
| 2.2 Philosophical Standpoint | 26 |
| 2.3 Data collection strategies | 30 |
| <i>2.3.1 Case Study</i> | 32 |
| <i>2.3.2 Semi- Structured Interviews</i> | 32 |
| <i>2.3.3 Surveys</i> | 33 |
| <i>2.3.4 Participants</i> | 34 |
| 2.4 Implementation and Impact Mitigation Strategies | 34 |
| 2.5 Limitations and Strengths | 36 |

| | |
|--|------------|
| 2.7 Biases, The Researcher’s Positionality..... | 38 |
| 2.8 Impacts..... | 40 |
| CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW..... | 42 |
| 3.1 Structural Inequity, Theme 1..... | 44 |
| 3.1.1 Athlete Career Development and Transitions | 46 |
| 3.1.2 Dual Career in Athletes | 49 |
| 3.1.3 Injury | 50 |
| 3.2 Loss of Identity, Theme 2 | 52 |
| 3.2.1 Exploring Social Identity | 52 |
| 3.2.2 Exploring Cultural Identity | 54 |
| 3.2.3 Exploring National Identity..... | 55 |
| 3.2.4 Exploring Dual Identity | 58 |
| 3.3 Isolation/invisibility, Theme 3..... | 59 |
| 3.3.1 Psycho-social Dynamics of Football Players in Northern Cyprus | 60 |
| 3.3.1(a) Support..... | 61 |
| 3.3.1(b) Family Influence on Sports Participation | 63 |
| 3.3.1(c) Goal Orientation..... | 64 |
| 3.3.1(d) Understanding Pressure in Football Players | 67 |
| 3.3.2 Structure of the Education System in Northern Cyprus | 71 |
| 3.4 Political and Economic Oppression, Theme 4..... | 72 |
| 3.4.1 Impact of Socio-Cultural Concerns and Learned Habits on Professional Lives | 72 |
| 3.4.2 Professional Football Contract..... | 75 |
| 3.4.3 Health and Social Insurance of Professional football | 77 |
| 3.3 Conceptional Framework..... | 79 |
| 3.3.1 Stuart Hall and Identity | 80 |
| 3.3.2 Paulo Freire | 81 |
| 3.3.3 Miranda Fricker Epistemic Injustice | 81 |
| CHAPTER FOUR: STUDY ONE - STRUCTURAL INEQUALITIES IMPACT ON FOOTBALL AS A CAREER..... | 86 |
| Structural Inequity, Theme 1..... | 86 |
| 4.1 Football Career Paths..... | 87 |
| 4.2 Injury - Serious Injuries Reported by Football Players | 94 |
| 4.3 Professional Approach..... | 97 |
| Loss of Identity, Theme 2 | 100 |
| 4.4 Lifestyle - The Human Side of Professional Football | 100 |
| Isolation/invisibility, Theme 3..... | 105 |
| 4.5 Psychological Support..... | 105 |
| 4.6 Pressure..... | 111 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| 4.7 Motivation | 115 |
| 4.8 Education | 119 |
| Political and Economic Oppression, Theme 4 | 124 |
| 4.9 Career | 124 |
| 4.10 Dual Career | 133 |
| 4.11 Insurance | 137 |
| 4.12 Retirement | 139 |
| CHAPTER FIVE: STUDY TWO | 143 |
| Structural Inequity, Theme 1 | 143 |
| 5.1 Football Career Paths | 143 |
| 5.2 Professional approach | 146 |
| Loss of Identity, Theme 2 | 147 |
| 5.4 Lifestyle - The Human Side of Professional Football | 147 |
| Isolation/invisibility, Theme 3 | 149 |
| 5.5 Psychology | 149 |
| 5.6 Support | 150 |
| 5.7 Pressure | 151 |
| 5.8 Education | 152 |
| Political and Economic Oppression, Theme 4 | 153 |
| 5.11. Career Recommendations | 153 |
| 5.12 Dual Career | 155 |
| 5.13 Health Insurance | 156 |
| 5.14 Retirement (insurance) pension | 157 |
| Structural Inequity, Theme 1 (Referees) | 158 |
| 5.15 Key factors influencing Referees' Career | 158 |
| Loss of Identity, Theme 2 (Referees) | 159 |
| 5.16 Referees and the Choice to Referee Abroad | 159 |
| Isolation/invisibility, Theme 3 (Referees) | 160 |
| 5.17 Psychology | 160 |
| 5.18 Education Levels of Referees | 161 |
| Political and Economic Oppression, Theme 4 (Referees) | 163 |
| 5.19 Career | 163 |
| 5.20 Dual Career in Referees | 164 |
| CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS | 166 |
| 6.1 Clarification of Aims | 166 |
| 6.2 Synthesizing the Studies | 169 |
| 6.3 Reflection | 175 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| 6.4 Contribution to Knowledge and Originality | 179 |
| 6.5 Recommendations | 179 |
| 6.6 Conclusion | 180 |
| 6.7 Research Limitations | 184 |
| 6.8 Future Research | 185 |
| REFERENCES | 187 |
| APPENDICES | 213 |
| Appendix A – Participants’ Information | 213 |
| Appendix B – Participant Consent Form Example | 216 |
| Appendix C – Interview Questions | 217 |
| Appendix D – Survey Questions (Football Players) | 219 |
| Appendix E – Survey Questions (Referees) | 221 |
| Appendix F - Isokinetic FIFA Conference: <i>Football Medicine - Players' Voice</i> Conference in Lyon, France, (2022) | 222 |

ABSTRACT

The lack of recognition by the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) and the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) creates significant knowledge, financial, and political challenges for the Cyprus Turkish Football Association (CTFA). CTFA players live and continue to play football in difficult circumstances, facing many problems, such as inequity, discrimination, and epistemic injustice.

A Thematic Analysis approach was used to evaluate responses from semi-structured interviews with a purposive sample of 15 players from Yenicami Ağdelen S.K. (Study 1), corroborated by responses to a survey of a wider comparative group of football professionals, consisting of n=78 CTFA referees and n=201 Süper Lig football players (Study 2). This thesis investigates the systemic challenges in Northern Cyprus football, focusing on structural inequity, loss of identity, isolation, and political and economic oppression.

Study 1 explored the challenges faced by CTFA Süper Lig players, exposing the themes of identity loss, isolation, and systemic inequality. Interviews highlighted the impact of exclusion on careers and mental well-being. Survey data from 201 players and 78 referees were examined in Study 2, which identified systemic inequalities, discrimination, lack of resources, and isolation. Participants required systemic reform and international recognition.

The study concludes that exclusion from global governing bodies for sport has had a destroying impact on sport in Northern Cyprus, particularly football. The loss of sporting identity has significant psycho-social impact on athletes and professional football players. Football has always been a vehicle for national identity, global isolation, and exclusion from the ‘football family’ of FIFA and UEFA.

There is a need for international capacity building partnerships to future proof the game. Football’s global governing bodies said they are committed to inclusion, equality, and human rights. There is structural inequity within international football, where professional players are denied the advantages of affiliation to the global governing bodies solely because of where they live.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my first Director of Research, Professor John Hughson, who helped and supported me at the beginning of this study. Professor Alethea Melling's guidance was invaluable, and her support deeply inspired me throughout my doctoral journey. I am grateful to her for her academic input and encouraging sentiments during my study.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Jackie Day for her invaluable support throughout this study. Her visions and dedication were crucial to the success of my work. I would like to thank Dr. David Grecic for offering a different perspective and for his steadfast support throughout this project. A big thank to Jimmy Khan and Dr. Jessica Louise Macbeth for their interest and assistance during my study.

Another big thanks to my family. I owe it to them, who provided me with all kinds of support and stood by me from the beginning to the end of this process. I would like to thank my friends who supported me with motivational speeches during this process. I am grateful for the support from the Cyprus Turkish Football Association and extend my thanks to President Hasan Sertoğlu for his contribution to this research.

Finally, I owe my thanks to the professional football players and referees who participated in my work and expressed themselves honestly. With the results of their statements, I hope I can contribute to the issues with which they have problems, and this first step to solving this problem will start to make a difference in their lives.

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of Ahmet Kanan.

1934 – 2015

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

List of Figures

| | |
|--|----|
| Figure 1. PRISMA Flow chart Template..... | 43 |
|--|----|

List of Tables

| | |
|--|-----|
| Table 1 Applying the Perspective of Pragmatism to This Research | 29 |
| Table 2 Post-career planning (transitions)..... | 87 |
| Table 3 Key factors influencing career choice among football players | 91 |
| Table 4 Serious injuries reported by football players..... | 95 |
| Table 5 Attributes of an Elite Level Professional Football Player | 98 |
| Table 6 Identity of Football Players | 101 |
| Table 7 Psychological Support by Club | 106 |
| Table 8 Psychological Support by Club/National Team | 107 |
| Table 9 Pressure on Players | 112 |
| Table 10 Players' Motivation..... | 116 |
| Table 11 Education Choices..... | 120 |
| Table 12 Players' Views on Football Careers | 124 |
| Table 13 Recommendations for Young Players | 127 |
| Table 14 Safer Career..... | 130 |
| Table 15 External Responsibilities..... | 134 |
| Table 16 Health Insurance Requirements. | 137 |
| Table 17 Retirement (Insurance) Pension | 140 |
| Table 18 Post-Career Planning for Football Players (Survey Results) | 144 |
| Table 19 Key Factors Influencing Career Choice Among Football Players (Survey Results) | 145 |
| Table 20 Qualifications Required for a Professional Football Player (Survey Responses) | 146 |
| Table 21 Identities of Football Players (Survey Results)..... | 148 |
| Table 22 Psychological Support for Football Players from their clubs..... | 149 |
| Table 23 Psychological Support by Club for Football Players | 150 |
| Table 24 Pressure on Football Players Survey Responses | 151 |
| Table 25 Education Level of Football Players | 152 |
| Table 26 Recommendations for young players..... | 154 |
| Table 27 External Responsibilities - Football Players Survey Responses | 155 |
| Table 28 Health Insurance Requirements | 156 |
| Table 29 Retirement (Insurance) Pension | 157 |
| Table 30 Key Factors Influencing Career Choice Among Football Referees (Survey Results) | 159 |
| Table 31 Referees and the Choice to Referee Abroad | 160 |
| Table 32 Psychological Support for Referees | 161 |
| Table 33 Education Level of Referees | 162 |
| Table 34 External Responsibilities - Referees Survey Responses | 164 |

GLOSSARY OF TERMS, ABBREVIATIONS, LIST OF SYMBOLS

| | |
|-----------|--|
| CTFA/KTFF | Cyprus Turkish Football Association |
| CFA | Cyprus Football Association |
| FA | Football Association |
| FIFA | Federation Internationale de Football Association |
| UEFA | Union of European Football Associations |
| PDW | Personal Development and Welfare |
| ECB | England and Wales Cricket Board |
| CONIFA | Confederation of Independent Football Associations |
| IOC | International Olympic Committee |
| WHO | World Health Organization |
| CSO | Cyprus Sports Organisation |
| EOC | European Olympic Committee |
| NOC | National Olympic Academy |
| COC | Cyprus Olympic Committee |
| TRNC | Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus |
| F-MARC | FIFA's Medical Assessment and Research Center |
| Süper Lig | Super League |

INTRODUCTION

Cyprus's Mediterranean nation has a distinct football culture that reflects its political culture. Cyprus, a member of the European Union since 2004, is a divided territory. Officially, Cyprus is known as the Republic of Cyprus; however, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) claims independence as a distinct nation. The independence of the TRNC is recognised only by Turkey. Sports and other forms of cultural organisation in Cyprus reflect this claim but disputed independence. The Cyprus Football Association (CFA) is the governing body of football in Cyprus and is an affiliate of the FIFA. FIFA membership has essential knowledge, financial, and political implications for national clubs. Funding for development, such as the FIFA Goal Programme, significantly contributes to national teams' talent building. Therefore, it can be argued that the Cyprus Turkish Football Association (KTFF/CTFA) Süper Lig is subject to politically engineered structural inequity, as players from unrecognised states are attributed an unequal status to others in international football. This impacts aspirations, motivation, and performance development from the grassroots to league level.

This thesis aims to define the extent to which the embargo-driven structural inequity experienced by football players from Northern Cyprus impacts players' careers, and to provide insights into how this can be mitigated. This will be achieved by identifying the psychosocial and economic determinants (loss of identity, isolation/invisibility, political and economic oppression) that influence recruitment, retention, performance management, and career progression. The outcomes will inform national and international policy and practice regarding the impacts of structural inequity within football.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

My personal experience as an athlete and football coach in Northern Cyprus inspired this thesis. A state currently unrecognised by the United Nations and embargoed by significant global sports infrastructure organisations. My grandfather, Ahmet, nurtured my love for sports, particularly football. His support and enthusiasm eventually led to a career as an international athlete. Then, as a coach committed to addressing the structural discrimination faced by athletes representing an unrecognised state. I have been involved in sports since a young age, being a national athlete who participated internationally, and representing my country in volleyball. I still hold records from three different disciplines: the long jump, 60m and 200m sprint runs. As an elite athlete representing Northern Cyprus internationally, I faced structural barriers due to political embargoes, which made it difficult to compete internationally, even at the individual level. This experience helped me develop a theoretically sensitive approach to my research and methodology.

Embargoes in professional athletes have impacts beyond the competition (KTFF, 2014). For example, the lack of elite coaching and performance management expertise has resulted in injuries in the athletes' body (Finch, 2006). These challenges led to the question, 'How can I help young people who play sports?'. The answer was to study sports science, so the knowledge developed could help young people. As a student, I volunteered to support the football teams. This included a period in the F-Marc Centres in Istanbul, where many professional football players worked. This experience influenced my decision to study Applied Sports Science at master's level. Later, I worked for the English Premier League football team, Swansea City, to gain experience from different cultural perspectives on football in society. On returning to Northern Cyprus, I contacted the Football Federation to assist in their work. The result was the position of the Club Academy Coordinator. In this role, I saw the depth of the impact that sporting embargoes had on players' emotional health. At the beginning of each season, the players prepare for the league with excitement. At the end of the season, uncertainty and anxiety about the future become distressing. It was reminiscent of personal struggles as a track and field athlete, trying to fulfil aspirations within structures that excluded people because of their citizenship.

The impact of sports at the individual and societal levels has always been of personal interest. Sports can inspire people to live more active and healthy lives. Football has the added advantage of bringing people together in a community or country. Bi (2015) states that Association Football provides 'space for people to be involved into organic solidarity and plays a role in resisting the feeling of atomisation and alienation.' The sense of alienation frequently pervades several different contexts at the international level, not simply football or competitive sports in general. On delivering a presentation on football at an international academic at *The Future of Football Medicine – Isokinetic Conference* (2017) in Barcelona, Spain, I encountered adverse reactions from members of the audience, who stated Northern Cyprus had no right to be represented at the conference as it was an unrecognised state. Fortunately, the conference organisers disagreed, and the presentation went ahead. The embargo impacted many aspects of our lives and work, leaving people both 'atomised and alienated'.

This pressure can reach younger generations and cause a feeling of being left out, as if distancing ourselves from the world. The habit of continuing to compete with the same teams every year without going abroad limits aspirations and development. The resilience and opinions of the athletes impressed me, and as a sports scientist, I tried to find solutions for what can be done to improve their situation. As of March 2022, I have been working as the Women's Football Coordinator in the Education Supreme Board at the CTFA. After being appointed as the Assistant Coach of Cyprus Turkish Women's National Football Team in 2018, I was honoured to come to this position. I was very excited to be able to help the youth in Northern Cyprus with many football projects.

Aim And Objectives

Football, like sports in general, can act as a mirror for society (Frey & Eitzen, 1991). The alienation and atomisation experienced by citizens of Northern Cyprus because of politically motivated embargoes are reflected in the experience of football players within The Cyprus Turkish Football Federation (CTFA) Süper Lig.

Aims

The aim of this research is to define the extent to which the embargo-driven structural inequity experienced by football players from Northern Cyprus impacts players' careers.

1. Examine the existing knowledge on structural inequalities in football.
2. Investigate the cultural context in Northern Cyprus.
3. Explore footballers' experiences and perceptions of structural inequalities and their impact on careers.
4. Provide recommendations for addressing these issues in the future.

Structure of the Thesis

Chapter One: covers the sociopolitical context of this study. Cyprus's political history played a significant role in this research. Therefore, this thesis begins with a contextual background discussing the history of Cyprus, how Cyprus became a divided state, and what happened in the past to separate the football federations of Northern and Southern Cyprus, leading to the formation of the Cyprus Turkish Football Association (CTFA).

Chapter Two: Outlines my research journey and my positioning within the research. Explores key aspects of the research process. It examines how the research influences various factors, discusses the impact of biases and the researcher's perspective, details the methods used to gather data and how any resulting issues were managed, assesses both the strengths and limitations of the study, and maintains a steadfast focus on ethical considerations, ensuring respect and integrity for all involved individuals.

Chapter Three: Starting with an explanation of the methods utilised in identifying related literature, including the MeSH Database and the PRISMA Flow Chart. This is followed by a review of the identified key literature. This chapter covers the conceptual framework underpinning the research.

Chapter Four: Presents data analysis and discusses findings within four themes: structural inequality, loss of identity, isolation/invisibility, and oppression. The Study 1 involves interviews with 15 players from Yenicami Ağdelen SC, analysed from a pragmatist perspective.

Chapter Five: Explores and discusses the structural inequalities in Northern Cyprus's football system through data from questionnaires. It analyses perceptions from 201 professional players and 78 referees across all Süper Lig teams in the Study 2.

Chapter Six: Synthesizes theory and critically reflects on findings from the literature review and two data sets, addressing each research aim and objectives. Summarizes the study's findings on the socio-political and economic challenges facing football players in Northern Cyprus, including the impact of FIFA non-recognition. It discusses how these issues affect players' careers and identities and suggests interventions to address these inequalities. The chapter also recommends directions for future policy and research.

CHAPTER ONE: HISTORY OF THE FOOTBALL IN CYPRUS

1.1. Introduction

This chapter aims to evaluate the evolution of Cyprus as a country and why there are political tensions between Northern and Southern Cyprus which has led to the structural inequalities between the regions which has had an impact on sport, particularly football which is the focus of this research. This background will allow the reader to understand why there are tensions and how footballers in Northern Cyprus do not have the opportunities of players who live in the south who have recognition from the football governing bodies such as FIFA and UEFA.

Football and physical activity play a crucial role in improving physical and mental health, helping in the formation of personality, and developing positive character traits (Dhuli et al., 2022; Hallal et al., 2012). Sports facilitate adaptation to the environment through the development of knowledge, skills, and abilities. In addition, these activities are performed to challenge, feel excited, compete, and prevail within the limits of competition, according to specific rules (Yetim, 2000). In other words, football is competitive, socialising, and integrating with society while supporting mental and physical development. It is a collaborative cultural phenomenon (Yetim, 2000).

Sports and physical activities are now important for maintaining health and well-being in Western societies. Football is the most popular sport in the world, and this can be used as a vehicle to help promote health and wellbeing. Changes from more physical to more sedentary work life are related to several health issues, including obesity, poor mental health, and some cancers. According to the World Health Organisation, 1.9 billion adults were overweight worldwide in 2016 "Health Topics" (Szymonik, 2023). Circulatory and respiratory system diseases are increasing, especially in developed countries (Pagidipati & Gaziano, 2013). Sports provides a solution to the challenges of modern life by creating an environment that is dynamic and away from the stresses of modernity.

Therefore, sports are significant in developed countries. Sports and physical education programs are applied to children at an early age (Öztürk, 1998; Stork & Sanders, 2008). Sports are considered one of the phenomena that play an essential role in the development and change of societies and the formation

of shared values (Gümüş, 2002). While sports are shaped by the concepts of "peace, brotherhood, friendship", it is accepted as a part of the elite culture with the concepts of "competition based on rules, struggle and winning" (Reid, 2006). Therefore, in many countries, football is being used as a vehicle to promote positive behaviours with programmes being developed by UEFA and FIFA to encourage diverse groups to engage in physical activity.

First, to enhance sports, there is a need for good sports management; thus, a healthy and orderly functioning organisational structure is needed to develop and disseminate sports. While all public and private sports organisations serving sports are supported, sports personnel should be provided with a better working environment, and their continuous professional development should be ensured through various training programs (Deniz, 2000). In Northern Cyprus, it could be argued that these functions do not exist due to sports not being recognised by international sporting organisations.

Turkish Cypriot youth face international isolation from the field of sports, as well as from all areas of their lives. Due to the long-lasting political stalemate of the Cyprus problem, Turkish-speaking Cypriot youth, who have talent in all branches of sports, cannot share their success with other youth of the world on international platforms. The motivation for sports is competition. Thus, those who compete with others in different sports motivate themselves and their competitors. The 2004 Athens Olympic Games Torch was prevented from passing to the North for political reasons by Southern Cyprus (Deniz, 2012). However, Turkish Cypriot youth lacked the motivation of the Olympic Games Torch. Sports are known for their unifying and integrated features (Kartakoullis & Loizou, 2009).

In contemporary societies, an individual's well-being depends on their complete and continuous physical and mental health. Sport is a competitive, cooperative, and cultural phenomenon that develops an individual's abilities and physical and mental health, integrating within the scope of individual or team leisure activities or taking full time under specific rules, with or without tools.

Sports, an important part of human cultural life, reflecting the civilisation and welfare levels of societies by incorporating humanising elements such as love, peace, brotherhood, tolerance, and self-sacrifice (Kılıç, 2007). The importance of sports as the most famous propaganda tool in terms of its contribution

to international peace and reconciliation is increasingly recognised (Jackson & Haigh, 2013; Kidd, 2008).

Sports is a universal, integrative activity which societies cannot ignore and interrupt. Thus, the phenomenon of sports, which has become intrinsic to civilisation in the world, reveals the necessity for extensive dissemination of sports (Sunay, 2010). Sports that enable healthy and dynamic societies should be encouraged and those involved in this activity should be supported in various ways.

1.1.1 Background of The Research

Because of my personal experiences, I became a sports scientist and tried to find solutions to the barriers encountered in my athletic career. Despite being trained as a professional, I was unable to compete in the international arena. According to the politics of sports in Northern Cyprus, athletes cannot perform at the international level, which demoralises them. For instance, I am a player of the Vakıflar Sports club; I have been playing volleyball in the northern part of Nicosia since 2001. The number of teams decreased because there was no competition between the clubs. Teams cannot improve themselves because of the economic and political situation in Northern Cyprus. Therefore, the number of players and clubs is decreasing.

When I completed my undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, I started to work as a volunteer in some clubs or join the training with the coaches' permission in different countries. I have tried to see the world from the perspective of an athlete in a different part of the world. Moreover, I saw the same problem in a different sport in Northern Cyprus. I then tried to look from other perspectives as well. However, the problem persists, and as a Turkish-speaking Cypriot, I am sadly saying that all doors are still closed.

Athletes work as professionals, but, due to the salary of an athlete and without a policy, they must use supplement income through a second or dual career. As a sports scientist and an experienced athlete, I can imagine what an athlete feels in this situation. For instance, people always try to improve themselves, not just in sports but in all aspects of their lives. The political situation, which do not allow

the football players to play international games means that professional teams cannot develop themselves by playing internationally under the FIFA or UEFA (Lekakis, 2015).

1.2 History of Cyprus

Modern football originated at the start of the 19th century and is rooted in medieval ball games. The Football Association of England (1863) has standardised these rules (Kitching, 2015). According to research, there is a prevalent opinion that football came to Cyprus with the British in 1878 and where it began to be played in schools (Keser, 2007). Football was gaining popularity in England in the years 1870-1880–England. Moreover, football became professionalised from 1888 when the Football League was formed (Taylor, 2005).

1.2.1 General Political History of Cyprus

It is the third largest island in the Mediterranean after Sicily and Sardinia. The closest distance is 74 km to Turkey in the north, 98 km from Syria in the east, 555 km from Egypt in the south, 550 km from Crete Island in the west, 450 km from Rhodes, 290 km from Israel, 221 km from Lebanon, 965 km from Greece, and 3000 km from England (Atay, 2010).

Throughout history, Cyprus has been invaded by many states for political, military, economic, and religious reasons. Hittites, then Phoenicians, Persians, Alexander the Great and Romans ruled over the island. Afterwards, first the Arabs (AD 647), then the Byzantines and Venetians dominated the island (Bolat, 2020).

In the 16th century, the Ottoman Empire, a regional country, wanted to establish dominance over Cyprus. During this period, the pirates who continued their existence on the island were attacking the trade and passenger ships in the Mediterranean. The presence of pirates on the island was causing economic damage to the Ottoman Empire. Following the Ottoman Empire's conquest of Egypt in 1517, the Venetian Ambassador, who met with Yavuz Sultan Selim in Damascus, agreed to pay taxes to the

Ottomans. Despite this, the pirate attacks around the island in 1570 disturbed the Ottoman Empire (Şeker, 2011)

In 1878, England leased Cyprus to the Ottoman Empire through the Berlin Agreement. England declared that it annexed the island in 1914 (Richter, 2014). On 5 November 1914, Britain took Cyprus unilaterally. Thus, the legal status of the Ottoman Empire on the Island for 36 years ended with this one-sided decision (Stephen, 1997)

1.2.2 Formation of the Republic of Cyprus

Following the negotiations between parties related to Cyprus, it was decided to establish an independent bi-communal republic in Cyprus. On 11 February 1959, Turkey and Greece reached an agreement in Zurich and received approval from the leaders of the UK and the two communities in Cyprus and London (Hatzivassiliou, 2005). The Zurich and London Treaties arose in this way; it was based on the principles of independence, the political partnership of the two communities, the autonomy in the social sphere and the guarantee of a solution by Turkey, Greece, and England (Heraclides & Çakmak, 2019).

In this agreement, a constitution envisaging a "Functional Partnership" framework, a Treaty of Guarantee that ensures the situation created by its primary articles, a Treaty of Establishment that leaves the UK two sovereign base areas, and a Treaty of Alliance that allows Turkey and Greece to maintain military units in Cyprus (Rynning, 2012). The Republic of Cyprus was officially established on 16 August 1960 (Hatzivassiliou, 2005).

1.3 Republic of Cyprus Period

1.3.1 1963-1974 Period Developments and Peace Operation

The Greek Cypriot leader Makarios believed that the 1959 agreements and the Republic of Cyprus could not serve the ENOSIS policy of the Greeks (Hatzivassiliou, 2005). When the proposal for the constitutional amendment was not accepted, the Greek Cypriots put the AKRITAS plan they had previously planned into effect (Hoffmeister, 2006). On 21 December 1963, remembered as a black or

bloody Christmas, the EOKA militants in civilian clothes attacked to a small Nicosia district and Nicosia Turkish High School was attacked with automatic weapons on 22 December (Keser, 2011). EOKA militants besieged the town, and ethnic cleansing was implemented within the framework of the AKRITAS plan. On 25 December 1963, with the low flight of Turkish warplanes over the island, the Greeks agreed to a ceasefire agreement with the mediation of Britain. On 27 December, under the command of the British General Peter Young, the soldiers of the three guarantor countries started to work under the name of "Peace Keeping Force". On 28 December, Nicosia turned into a black city (Keser, 2013). On 30 December, the Green, or Nicosia-Gönyeli line, separating the Turkish-Greek part of Nicosia was drawn by the British General Peter Young. Since he drew this line with a green pen, it was called the "Green Line" (Coates, 2014).

On the other hand, the war continued for the Turks, who remained in the southern part of the Green Line. On 1 January 1964, Greek Cypriot leader Makarios announced that he had terminated the 1960 agreements unilaterally (Hatzivassiliou, 2005). With the UN Security Council Resolution 186 on 4 March 1964, International Peacekeeping Force was deployed to the Island (Gazioglu, 2001). In this decision, the UN asked the "Government of Cyprus" to take all kinds of measures for peace on the Island. Peacekeeping forces were deployed on 27 March 1964 (Novosseloff, 2021).

The Cyprus Provisional Turkish Administration was established on 28 December 1967 (Göktepe, 2005). Cyprus' Provisional Turkish Administration President was Fazıl KÜÇÜK, and the Vice President was Rauf Denktas. A 19-item set of principles on the management of Turkish Cypriots was published. In addition, an entire federated state organisation was established by regulating legislative, executive, and judicial affairs.

On 20 July 1974, based on using the rights granted to him by the Treaty of Guarantee in the Zurich and London protocol to restore the old situation, Turkey started to land on the island (Duran, 2008, p.125). With the influence of international public opinion, a ceasefire was declared on 22 July, and the Geneva conference began (Dodd & Dodd, 2010). At this conference, Turkey argued that the two communities existing on the island are a reality and that the administrative structure should be in the form of a federation based on a geographical basis (Tezel, 2008). As these negotiations failed to

conclude, the second operation was carried out on 14 August 1974. Autonomous Cypriot-Turkish Administration was established on 26 August 1974.

The solution will be outside the framework of the 1960 Agreements, shaped by the new foundations of 1974. No decision could be reached at the inter-communal meetings held in 1977-79 and 1980-83. The UN took the resolution on 13 May 1983, emphasising the Greeks' right to control and sovereignty over the entire island and the decision to withdraw the invading Turkish soldiers from the island (Bostanci, 2015).

1.3.2 Turkish Federated State of Cyprus and Northern Cyprus

The Turkish Federated State of Cyprus held two general elections in 1976 and 1981, and its constitution was completed and accepted with a popular vote (Bozkurt, 2013). The active population in Turkey was settled in Cyprus to revive the economy, and this settlement aims to support to the Turkish Cypriot Administration in its economic, social, and political fields.

Turkish Federated State of Cyprus Assembly declared that Turkish Cypriots have the right of "Self-Determination" on the island. The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus was proclaimed on 15 November 1983 (Ker-Lindsay, 2017).

1.3.3 Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

The self-determination, rights, and freedom of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) was proclaimed on 15 November 1983. After the TRNC was declared, its official language was Turkish, its currency was the Turkish lira, and its capital was Nicosia (Kyle, 1997). The official language in the TRNC is Turkish, and English is widely used. Its capital is Nicosia. The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is governed by a semi-presidential system. The President is also the Head of State, and the Prime Minister is the Head of the Government. The country has a multi-party democratic regime. Executive power is exercised by the President and the Government. Legislative power belongs to the TRNC Republican Assembly (Goldman, 2016). However, apart from Turkey, the TRNC is unrecognised as an independent state by the rest of the world, (Özsağlam, 2018).

1.3.4 Unilateral Binding of Cyprus to the UK

EOKA, established with the support of the Greek Cypriot Church and the Turkish Resistance Organisation TMT, founded by the Turkish Cypriots, began to conflict in 1955 (Ioannou & Ioannou, 2020). Upon the intervention of NATO and the signing of the Zurich-London agreements, British colonial rule on the island ended with the declaration of the Republic of Cyprus as an independent state on 16 August 1960, based on the partnership of Greek Cypriots and Turks based on 70-30% partnership (Sakkas & Zhukova, 2012).

1.4 Development of Sport in Cyprus

1.4.1 History of Sports in Cyprus

Sports education started in the early 1900s in Greek Cypriot schools (Christodoulides et al., 2022). Unfortunately, physical education was not included in Turkish schools even in the 1920s. From the Ottoman period to the first fifty years of the British administration, sports education courses in Turkish Cypriot schools were not compulsory in the general education curriculum (Shaw, 2014). However, some progressive teachers voluntarily delivered the sports education course in Turkish Cypriot schools (Deniz, 2000).

As in other countries, the island of Cyprus has a long history. Organised sports events could not be determined from 1571 to 1878, when the Turkish population increased in Cyprus. Based on more power, activities such as wrestling, tug-of-war and javelin were held at weddings and holidays. British rule, which started on the island in 1878, opened a new page in sports (Christodoulides et al., 2022).

The first sports organisation in Cyprus (Pan Cyprus Games) was held in 1896 (Georgakis, 2003). Greek and Egyptian teams participated in this sports organisation. The first Pan Hellenic Games were held in Limassol in 1925 (Spanou, 2015). Physical education lessons began to be included in the school curricula by the end of the 1930s but adapted to the schools gradually, but it was not at the desired level. With the opening of the Omorfo Teachers College in 1937, physical education classes, which were

considered unnecessary and not taken seriously until those years, started to be implemented and become widespread (Atun & Fevzioğlu, 2003; Bolat, 2020).

Sports in Cyprus have always been at the level of Turkish and Greek clubs. On the other hand, athletic activities were carried out through the district athletics organisations, which were established and put into operation by the Greeks, who were only allowed to participate in the Greeks. These Greek Cypriot Athletics organisations were affiliated with the Hellenic Organization known as "Segas" until 1984. In addition, it is known that Turkish Cypriots achieved significant success in Pan Cyprus Athletic Races in the years when separate Turkish and Greek sports organisations were not realised (Deniz, 2000). Established in the early 1900s, it started its modern sports activities with athletics competitions and continued to promote football throughout the island in the following years.

Four significant schools contributed to this spread. These schools are English School (1900), Melkonyan (Armenian School), Gymnasium (Greek School) and Larnaca American Academy (1908). Especially the English School and Larnaca American Academy make significant contributions to promoting and disseminating not only football but also Hockey and Tennis sports on the island of Cyprus (Burgul, 1995).

1.4.2 Sports Management in Northern Cyprus

Borders were drawn by the Peace Operation on 20 July 1974 so that Greeks and Turks lived separately on the island of Cyprus. These two societies are organised separately in the sports field, as in all other fields. After this date, the Cyprus Turkish Sports Office organisation is responsible for organising, financing, and coordinating sports activities in the Turkish section (Lowe, 1989).

The importance of sports in the TRNC is stated in the 61st Article of the Constitution. According to this article, the State takes measures to improve the physical and mental health of citizens of all ages, ensure the spread of sports to the masses, build the necessary sports facilities, and protect successful athletes (Deniz, 2000).

The organisation of Turkish Cypriots in sports began with the establishment of the Cyprus Turkish Sports Department Organization, which was established in 1969; sports services and activities were tried to be carried out under this roof. The sports department is connected to many ministries. It is affiliated with many ministries, such as the Ministry of National Education, Youth and Sports, the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Labor, the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Environment, and the Ministry of Labor, Social Security, Youth and Sports.

The Cyprus Turkish National Olympics Committee was established in 1984. Although an application has been made to the IOC for membership, its membership has yet to be accepted. TRNC sports federations cannot organise international sports competitions at the national team level. This is because the TRNC is not recognised and, therefore, cannot be a member of the relevant International Sports Federation (Constantinou & Papadakis, 2001).

Gaining freedom and independence with the 1974 Peace Operation: The people of the TRNC, who had the opportunity to have an economic, political, and cultural life, started to carry out sports activities under Law No. 8/78 on Physical Education and Sports (Deniz, 2000). According to this law, organisations in the field of sports began, and sports gained a new identity. As a result of the activities carried out in line with the aims specified in the Physical Education and Sports Law, a good point has been tried to be reached. Of course, in the TRNC, as in the whole world, it has become inevitable to create a new law considering the changes and developments in sports, as in every field.

To address these changes and developments, a new Physical Education and Sports Law No. 7/99 was prepared and put into effect per Article 94 (1) of the "Physical Education and Sports Law" adopted at the meeting of the Assembly of the Republic of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, dated December 3, 1999, to develop and spread sports in the TRNC (Deniz, 2000).

The TRNC, a separate state, requests that young people be given the right to engage in sports by applying for membership in the International Federations. The world, which contradicts Universal Declaration of Human Rights principles, should see that the people of the TRNC started doing sports in the 1925s and should evaluate accordingly.

1.4.3 Sports Policy in Northern Cyprus

Cyprus Turkish Sports Writers Association, which has an important place in sports in the country, expressed a common opinion at the Sports Vision Training Seminar held on 7-8 January 2012 and expressed a standard view that there is no Sports Policy in Northern Cyprus (TAK, 2012). However, our sports policy is stated in Article 61 of our constitution and in the Law on Physical Education and Sports. In Article 61 of our Constitution, it is stated that "The State takes measures to improve the physical and mental health of citizens of all ages, to ensure the spread of sports to the masses, to build the necessary sports facilities and to protect successful athletes" (Deniz, 2000).

Even though Cyprus joined the European Union (EU) on May 1, 2004, the European attitude towards sports began more than 10 years earlier. By adopting the decisions of the European Conventions and the unanimous resolutions of the numerous conferences of the European Ministers on sport, the Cyprus Sports Organization (CSO) began to align itself with trends in European sport policy as well as with the Council of Europe's sports policy as early as 1994 (Alexopoulos, 2007). The Cyprus Sports Organization's pertinent papers were updated ten years later to reflect the same basic policy, demonstrating the group's ongoing dedication to Europe (Alexopoulos, 2007).

Simultaneously, Cyprus became a member of the European Union on May 1, 2004, after more than a decade of discussions and harmonisation processes. This monumental accomplishment assumes, on the one hand, that Cypriot institutions are in line with the European "common acquis" and, on the other, that they are likewise subject to EU law as of the date of admission. Sport, on the other hand, is an area in which the European Union does not wish to intervene, at least for the time being.

National autonomy, which refers to the fact that each country has its own sports system and structure, with certain parallels and variances in the legislation of each country as well as benefits and drawbacks for each system, defines how sports are organised in the EU member states. In addition, because sport is governed by the "principle of subsidiarity," concerns and difficulties in the sport must be resolved at the level at which they originate. The only issues that the various member states of the European Union are unable to resolve are those issues.

Furthermore, the Bosman judgement and the effects of the elimination of nationality provisions in employment contracts may play sports at the national level more difficult given the lack of a policy foundation for sport in the European Union while sport is still governed by EU law (Parrish, 2016). The fact that the organisational structures of sport are changing makes these difficulties much more striking for the more recent Member States, or the 10 nations that joined the EU as a result of the 2004 enlargement. This is due to the process of integrating sport into the larger democratic system and the capitalist economy is continuing (Petry et al., 2004).

Even though there have been and are now continuous initiatives at the political and institutional levels (Alexopoulos, 2007). There is minimal study on the viewpoints and expertise of Cypriot sports stakeholders about the influence of Cyprus' EU membership on both Cypriot sport and European sports policy. However, several polls have been carried out to determine the attitudes, hopes, and knowledge of the Cypriot populace towards the nation's membership in the European Union (Eurobarometer, 2004). These surveys of public opinion reveal that integration was greeted with a mixture of optimism and scepticism, as well as a range of expectations.

It is reasonable to suppose that Cypriots who participate in the sport industry have hopes and concerns about Cyprus's membership in the European Union as it relates to Cypriot sport. To have reasonable expectations of EU membership, one must have adequate knowledge and awareness of the existing sports policy in Europe as well as a comprehension of the many expressions of sport in the EU. It might be expected that erroneous perceptions and a lack of knowledge regarding European sporting problems can result in either unfairly high expectations or negative reactions to Cyprus's EU membership. According to preliminary research (Alexopoulos, 2007), which focused on a small group of Cypriot students majoring in physical education, the students' understanding of EU sport policy was insufficient, which caused them to display conflicting emotions of optimism and fear as well as false beliefs about the EU's capability in the field of sport.

1.4.4 Cyprus Turkish Football Association

Turkish Cypriot teams competed in championship and cup competitions until the end of the 1954 -1955 season. The following season games were postponed, in accordance with a letter from Yiannis Rossides that was printed in the newspaper Neon Ethnos in 1955, for "security considerations.", (Kartakoullis and Loizou, 2009), which are not clearly explained.

Turkish Cypriot teams were forced to withdraw from the next championship (1955–1956) because the local commission of SEGAS (the federation of Greek Athletic Associations) made the decision to forbid teams or athletes from any other nation from using the sports facilities in October 1955. This decision was made after consultation with Cyprus Athletic Stadia officials. This choice was made in order to avoid conflicts between Greek Cypriots and other members of the island's ethnic minority and to preserve their cordial relationships until the disturbances subsided (Kartakoullis & Loizou, 2009).

By "riots" was meant the anti-colonialist struggle of Greek Cypriots against British colonialism that had begun in April 1955. The main objective of this struggle was enosis, a union with Greece, with which the Turkish Cypriot community disagreed. The announcement underlined that the decision "was taken because of the abnormal conditions on the island and will be revised as soon as 'circumstances permit'". The announcement also stressed that the decision was made "without being inspired by any political or racial motive - which is inconsistent with the high ideals of the sport." Following this development, despite the Cyprus Football Federation announced that it was not excluding the Turkish Cypriot 'brother clubs' as members, the Turkish Cypriot teams decided to form their association and championship. The Temporary Turkish Cypriot Sports Organisation was established in 1955 (An, 2008). Then, the Turkish Cypriot Sports Congress was organised in 1955 to agree to establish the Cyprus Turkish Sporting Organisation by all the Turkish Cypriot clubs, departments, and organisations (An, 2008).

According to the records, a temporary board was appointed under the leadership of Ahmet Sami to prepare the by-laws. The Turkish Cypriot leagues started on 19 December 1955, with 40 Turkish Cypriot teams becoming part of the Cyprus Turkish Sporting Organisation (An, 2008). The "Cyprus

Turkish Sporting Organisation" name was replaced with "Cyprus Turkish Football Association" at the Assembly General on 5 April 1959.

Although researchers have sought to find the reasons for this decision in numerous sources, such as CFA minutes or Pancypria Athletic Club archives, they have been unsuccessful (GSP) (Kartakoullis & Loizou, 2009). The precise facts are still unknown since it has not been possible to locate any references that explain the events leading up to this choice. Island's independence in 1960 failed in the unification pursuits of football between the two communities. The inter-communal war of 1963 and the Turkish invasion of 1974, which resulted in the de facto separation of the two communities, only served to worsen the situation. Due to the war in 1963, leagues were interrupted for five seasons. In addition, the leagues restarted, and the training of the trainers began in 1969. CTFA's numerous applications and contacts were made to become a member of the International Football Federation (FIFA) but did not generate any results (Lekakis, 2015).

In 1974, leagues and games were stopped due to the war in Cyprus. Furthermore, FIFA, which gave special permission for foreign relations in 1975, cancelled this permission in 1983 following the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus proclamation (Lekakis, 2021). Due to the embargoes imposed upon Turkish Cypriot sports, the teams could not even have games with the Turkish teams.

Since their lengthy separation, the CTFA has tried unsuccessfully to join FIFA and UEFA, as the two federations could only accept a single national association from one state as a member, albeit a unique 1975 arrangement permitted Turkish Cypriot sides to play friendly matches with international teams (Kartakoullis & Loizou, 2009). When Turkish Cypriots were proclaimed in the north in 1983, a move that has only been recognized by Turkey, the situation was drastically altered.

Following that, matches between Turkish Cypriot teams and teams from other nations could no longer be scheduled in an official capacity, which resulted in the exclusion of Turkish Cypriot football (Lekakis, 2015). In order to avoid any sort of acknowledgment of the illegitimate state established in the north, the Republic of Cyprus has refused to recognise the CTFA's formal authority. After the 2004 referendum, which was the most significant step in the endeavour to reunite the two communities, but

it was rejected by Greek Cypriots as it did not meet their criteria for a permanent solution, these efforts have strengthened in subsequent years and in the spirit of those efforts. As a result, the CTFA requested for FIFA membership once more. At a meeting with FIFA in 2006, CTFA representatives agreed to recognise the official authority of the CFA Sport and to become members of the CFA. Regrettably, Turkish Cypriot politicians opposed this encouraging progress, so it has not been possible to implement the package proposed by FIFA to date (Kartakoullis & Loizou, 2009).

The Federation became a member of the N.F.-Board (Nouvelle Fédération-Board), a federation of football associations established on 12 December 2003 (Menary, 2010). The members of the NF Board are not affiliated with FIFA. The Confederation of Independent Football Associations has overseen international football played outside of FIFA since 2013 (CONIFA) (Menary, 2023). The worldwide governing organisation for association football groups not linked to FIFA is called CONIFA. The North Cyprus national team joined the CONIFA for the 2016 World Cup in Abkhazia, which followed the inaugural World Cup CONIFA that began in 2014 in Abkhazia. From that date, North Cyprus's professional football players played in a national team in the CONIFA tournaments. That is the only organisation North Cyprus can play under the Republic of North Cyprus flag. To find a route to represent North Cyprus, the Akdeniz Spor Birliği Women's Football team registered in Turkey and competed with the Turkish Women's Second League (Belge, 2014).

Negotiations are still ongoing to become a member of FIFA. In 2007, FIFA made efforts to unify football in Cyprus (Lekakis, 2021). The FIFA announced a significant agreement wherein the CTFA would end its international isolation by seeking membership in the CFA, the sole association representing the island globally. Approval from the general assemblies of both institutions is required. The contract allowed unilateral or mutual termination, alongside specific technical provisions. In such cases, actions taken at national and international levels would be deemed ineffective (Lekakis, 2021). In 2014, the CTFA sent a letter to Mr. Koutsokoumnis, president of the CFA, indicating their readiness for the next steps (CTFA, 2014). However, they did not receive a response. In 2020, another letter was sent to the FIFA General Secretary, highlighting the lack of progress in implementing the agreement (CTFA, 2020).

However, there were no actions until CFA President Yorgos Kumas addressed the press regarding CTFA, recalling the provisional agreement they had signed (Eyaziyor, 2024). At the same time, CTFA President Mr. Sertoğlu also made statements.

"... Mr Giorgios Koumas, the president of CFA, who was then in 2013 the vice president, declared that they were ready to implement the agreement. It is quite apparent that our pursuit in finding alternative ways to integrate our youth with the international football arena has been the main reason for CFA to declare their will to implement the agreement after 10 years. Our ultimate goal is to play football in the international arena free from politics. " (CTFA, 2024)

1.4.5 Sports Management in The Republic of Cyprus

The athletics and Hellenic games provided the roots of football in Cyprus, and subsequently, with the introduction of football on the island, the athletes chose to play football, but before that, the foundation of the sport was formed. Cypriot athletes enjoyed a successful reputation in Panhellenic and Olympic competitions in Olympia, Pythia, and Isthmia throughout the Byzantine era. Ancient stadiums in Curium, Salamina, Paphos, Kitium, and Lapithos functioned as meeting places for locals to attend social and athletic activities during this time. The first gymnastics club was founded in Limassol in 1897, which cleared the path for further gymnastics clubs to be created around the island. (Kartakoullis et al., 2009). According to Kartakoullis et al. (2009), gymnastics had an impact on sports; there were six gymnastics clubs in large cities. In 2004, there were also 60,000 athletes of all ages registered with 42 federations.

In 1969, the Cypriot government formed the Cyprus Sports Organization (CSO) to encourage sports. According to Kartakoullis et al. (2009), the C.S.O. is a non-profit organisation that offers funding to help associations and clubs for the development of sports programmes, as well as for the building, maintenance, and operation of sports infrastructure, such as stadiums, indoor and outdoor sporting facilities, and the upkeep of critical equipment.

The C.S.O.'s major goals are to promote Cyprus in the world sports community, develop additional sports for athletes of all ages, and organise sports for the people of Cyprus. An administrative board that oversees the C.S.O. is made up of nine members who are chosen by the Council of Ministers and are each appointed for a minimum of three years. Four departments make up the organisation: Sports, Sports Facilities, Financial Management, and Human Resources (Kartakoullis et al., 2009). The International Journal of Sport Management, Recreation & Tourism 48 History of the C.S.O. is split into five time eras, from 1969 to 2005, each with a distinct goal (Kartakoullis et al., 2009). Cyprus's accession to the EU on May 1, 2004, strengthened the integration of Unity for Europe, which was the focus of Period Z, 2001–2005. The Centre for Sports Research was also established at this time, working with other institutions in Europe to assist athletes in achieving their optimum performance. The "Sport for All" programme was started in 1985 at the initiative of Mr. Kyriacos Neocleos, then President of the C.S.O. It operates across Cyprus in 180 sports centres and benefits 15,000 children in six different sports (Kartakoullis et al., 2009).

The Cyprus Olympic Committee (COC), created in 1974 (Charalambous-Papamiltiades, 2013), is an essential member of the world sports movement and actively participates in all athletic events. The major responsibility of the COC is to defend the Olympic Movement's goals and principles while adhering to and enforcing the laws outlined in the "Olympic Charter" (Kartakoullis et al., 2009). As a result of the Cyprus Olympic Committee's unification with the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in 1979, the COC was granted parity with the other IOC bodies (IOC). The 35 organisations that make up the Cyprus Olympic Committee elect the eight members and chairman of the Executive Council. The Executive Council makes ensuring that Cypriot athletes participate in both Olympic competitions and competitions with which the IOC has partnered. As part of their collaboration, the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the European Olympic Committee (EOC) Federation, and other National Olympic Committees sponsor events that are supported by the Cyprus Olympic Committee. As a result of its succession, the COC's standing within the IOC and the international sports committees is continuously rising. The COC is jointly in charge of creating and signing agreements for collaboration with other nations.

It is also responsible for organizing the Union of European Olympic Committees and the Union of Every year, the Executive Committee has meetings. The National Olympic Academy earned credit for a significant initiative that was assigned to the COC. The National Olympic Academy (NOC), which was established on March 30, 1987, collaborated with the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the International Olympic Academy, and other sporting authorities to advance the Olympic Idea (Kartakoullis et al., 2009). The NOC's objectives are to provide Olympic Education to sports participants, to advance understanding of Olympic Values, and to advance the societal ideals of Olympism (Kartakoullis et al., 2009).

In the next chapter, I will explore the researcher's perspective and journey. This exploration will cover biases, philosophical standpoints, data collection implementation, limitations, and ethical considerations. By examining these aspects in detail, this discussion aims to offer insights into factors influencing research processes and shaping our understanding of study ethics.

CHAPTER TWO: RESEARCHER'S PERSPECTIVE AND JOURNEY

This chapter will allow the reader to understand my research journey and how this has impacted my choice of research topic. It will outline my positionality and explore the essential elements of my methodological grounding in this research and how this aligns with the methods I chose to conduct this research.

In research, a core principle is having a solid methodological foundation. This foundation is crucial because it brings several important qualities to research, such as being systematic, transparent in terms of methodology, and capable of producing reliable and valid results (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The primary objective is to offer my understanding of the intricate processes involved in conducting rigorous and well-founded scholarly research. This comprehensive investigation examines several critical aspects. It initially delves into how research can yield an impact, considering the potential consequences and ethical considerations across diverse contexts.

2.1 Researcher Journey

I started getting into sports when I was in primary school. I joined athletics and volleyball, and surprisingly, I even got to represent our country in international competitions at a young age. Now, football is my thing. It all began as a cool hobby just watching matches for fun. Cheering for my team, especially in games abroad, made me feel like I was part of this massive sports family. We celebrated victories and felt the lows together.

After undergoing surgeries due to the consequences of inadequate sports training, I had a moment of realization. I told myself, "Alright, it's time to take this seriously. I not only want to recover and get back in the game but also to truly understand the principles of proper training. My goal shifted from just being an athlete to aspiring to become a better coach."

This change in perspective powered my determination to delve into the difficulties of effective sports training. I wanted to understand the mechanics behind injury prevention, the science of physical conditioning, and the psychology of athletic performance. It wasn't just about my recovery anymore; it became a journey to equip myself with the knowledge and skills necessary to guide and mentor others

on their athletic paths. The experience of overcoming those challenges ignited a passion for coaching, and I've been committed to learning and sharing that knowledge ever since. During my summer breaks, I took the opportunity to delve into the world of football teams in the north of Cyprus. Becoming an observer during their training sessions, I absorbed valuable insights into their techniques and methodologies. Additionally, I took a chance to work with a diverse group of high-level athletes while undertaking a volunteer internship in bustling Istanbul.

Reflecting on my experiences, especially my participation in international competitions, I began to reassess the challenges I had personally faced during those times. It was only after gaining a more comprehensive understanding through additional training and heightened awareness that I started questioning the dynamics at play. As I prepared to contribute to the athletic community in Northern Cyprus with the education I had acquired, I found myself contemplating the broader issues. I began to question how external influences might be impacting our athletes and whether, in terms of facilities and overall development, they could be trailing behind their counterparts in more developed countries. These considerations weighed heavily on my mind even before I officially embarked on my thesis journey.

The weight of this issue became even more apparent to me, particularly following the disheartening reactions I encountered from academics in the south of Cyprus. The emotional impact of phrases like "you have no place here" during an international academic conference organized at Camp Nou in Barcelona lingered in my thoughts long after the event. Rather than letting these discouraging comments deter me, they ignited a deeper introspection into the root of the problem. The dismissive attitude I faced prompted a more profound consideration of the academic divide between the north and south. It underscored the urgency of addressing not only the physical and developmental gaps but also the need for a more inclusive and collaborative academic environment. These experiences really made me want to bring football enthusiasts from both regions together. I imagine a place where we can share our love for the game, learn from each other, and chat about football.

My goal is more than just dealing with the challenges from our different regions; it's about turning these challenges into chances for us to grow and work together in the football community. I picture a space where, no matter where we're from, we can team up and add to the ever-changing world of football.

I just want football to be something that brings us all together, no matter where we're from. It was disappointing to find out that there weren't any studies focusing on football-related aspects of this subject after I finished my research. I think a solid study has the power to not just point out the problems but, if it includes academic findings, can also encourage the government to actively deal with and fix these issues. Principally, good research does not only show the problems; it can push for real solutions based on well-informed and evidence-based suggestions.

2.2 Philosophical Standpoint

I have discussed my extensive involvement in sports, notably in representing North Cyprus at the international level, and how this has profoundly influenced my approach to this research. As I explored deeper into this enquiry, it opened doors to a vast array of information, which expanded my insights. Despite not having firsthand experience playing football, my roles as a manager and coach within football teams have provided valuable perspectives on the sport. Although I have not directly experienced the challenges of football players, my background in athletics and volleyball has instilled a mindset attuned to the demands of athletes. Enduring rigorous training, competing across various levels, and understanding psychological aspects shaped my empathy and understanding of an athlete's journey. Additionally, specialised psychological training helped me grasp the mental fortitude and complexities involved in sports performance. It has helped me comprehend the psychological dimensions crucial to an athlete's experience. Hence, while my direct involvement in football may be limited, my broad sports background and socio- psychological insights offer a detailed and informed perspective that guides my exploration of this topic.

As a pragmatic researcher, I can empathize with athletes and understand their perspectives. This pragmatic approach emphasizes practical solutions and effectiveness in addressing real-world issues,

allowing me to view situations not only in a negative light but also with optimism and potential for positive outcomes. This study intends to academically investigate a real-life problem and potentially uncover solutions or raise awareness about certain issues.

Pragmatic ideology refers to a strategy that prioritises practicality, efficacy, and results over theoretical or abstract concerns (Rahi, 2017). It emphasises practical solutions based on real-world situations and individual circumstances rather than rigorous adherence to theoretical concepts. This viewpoint emphasises the significance of achieving real results and addressing practical difficulties in a culturally relevant and successful way.

The pragmatic viewpoint is distinguished by a dedication to practical solutions that prioritise effectiveness in addressing real-world problems. In this approach, knowledge is considered a tool that emphasises its utility in attaining certain objectives (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019). Pragmatists prioritise the consequences of beliefs and actions, valuing real-world influences, and judging ideas based on their outcomes. Pragmatists are experimental and adaptable, meaning that they are willing to explore new ways and adjust strategies based on their outcomes. Pragmatism rejects permanent facts, seeing reality as dynamic and reliant on context and practical results.

Pragmatists' philosophy asserts that human actions are intricately linked to past experiences and beliefs forged from those encounters (Almeder, 2007). According to this perspective, thoughts and actions are inseparable. Individuals perform actions by weighing the possible outcomes and leveraging the results to anticipate consequences in similar future scenarios. This philosophy highlights the perpetual connection between thought processes and actions, emphasising the ongoing impact of past experiences on decision making.

Pragmatic investigations have several advantages, including their clear description and reporting, adaptability in dealing with unexpected findings from previous studies, facilitation of data generalisation, assistance in designing and validating research instruments, and capacity for holistic analysis by integrating various relevant factors (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). However, they have limits. Challenges may include lengthier preparation and execution durations than traditional

paradigms, possible discrepancies across different data kinds, and complications in establishing the order of data collecting in longitudinal investigations. Nonetheless, many research approaches, like mixed-methodology, Q-methodology, and general qualitative inquiry, are consistent with the pragmatism research ethic.

In this study, pragmatism serves as the philosophical foundation, guiding the research's pragmatic approach to address real-world challenges. Employing a mixed-methods research design, this study's conceptual framework emerged, addressing prominent issues such as structural inequity, loss of identity, isolation/invisibility, and political and economic oppression. This conceptual framework provides a lens through which to examine the dynamics of the research, shedding light on the intricate interplay between these factors within the context of the study.

To successfully address the research questions, I plan to use my practical application knowledge. Specifically, I am going to identify and explore the core impact of embargoes on player performance who are associated with the CTFA. Through the application of theoretical concepts and approaches to empirical data and observations, my objective is to get a deeper understanding of the players. By using a pragmatic approach, I will be able to recognise trends, advantages, and disadvantages of different circumstances on professional football player, which will help me clarify the effects of being excluded from the international arena.

In the context of research on CTFA professional football players' roles, using an interpretivist paradigm would include attempting to comprehend the subjective meanings and interpretations that players, coaches, and other stakeholders assign to various positions in the Northern Cyprus football. This approach acknowledges that positions are formed not just by their physical placement on the field or tactical functions, but also by cultural norms, team dynamics, personal preferences, and other subjective variables.

Table 1
Applying the Perspective of Pragmatism to This Research

| | | |
|---------------------|---|--|
| ONTOLOGY | Objective/ Subjective | Examines the critical relationships between globalization, culture, and identity, specifically within the context of professional football players. |
| EPISTEMOLOGY | Knowledge is obtained by doing and acting | Understanding Social Structures and Injustices |
| METHODOLOGY | Mixed-methods research, action research, design science | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi- Structured Interviews (15 Professional Football Players) • Questionnaire (201 Professional Football players) • Questionnaire (78 Referees) • Primary Data • Researcher's Perspective |

From: McBride et al., (2022)

“Ontologically, pragmatism is focused on “actions and change; humans acting in a world that is in a constant state of becoming” (Goldkuhl, 2012, p.139).

In alignment with the ontological perspective of pragmatism, which underscores the dynamic nature of actions and change within an ever-evolving world, the outcomes of this thesis may carry considerable implications for professional football players in Northern Cyprus.

2.3 Data collection strategies

An essential part of the research process, the collection of data has a significant impact on the quality of research findings. It includes the use of techniques that are sensible and consistent with the research questions, objectives, and contextual requirements (Tracy, 2019). This comprehensive collection covers a wide range of data collection methods, including surveys, interviews, observations, experiments, and archival research (Bryman, 2016).

Methodical discernment guides the selection of data collection strategies, factoring in their intrinsic strengths and limitations (Axinn & Pearce, 2006). For example, surveys provide quantitative data at the expense of depth, while interviews provide qualitatively rich data, although they are often temporally intensive (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Methodological transparency requires comprehensive documentation of the data collection process, covering the methodology's sampling rationale, data collection instruments, and the precise chronology of data collection (Young et al., 2018). This detailed documentation enhances research transparency and enables potential replication by other scholars (Aguinis & Solarino, 2019). Complementing this careful documentation, data collection requires a strong commitment to ethical principles and procedures.

Semi-structured interviews will be employed as the primary data collection method, facilitating exploration of the players' experiences and perspectives (Harrell & Bradley, 2009). Guidelines from previous studies on interview analysis (Smith & Sparkes, 2016; Jones, 2022) were used to shape the process. Data analysis and representation guidelines from previous studies with interviews were adapted to create summary tables following the approach outlined (Biddle et al., 2001). Subsequently, thematic analysis techniques will be applied to elucidate patterns, themes, embedded within the data, contributing to a holistic understanding of the research phenomena. Thematic analysis is a qualitative research method that obtains deep insights from data by identifying patterns and themes (Vaismoradi & Snelgrove, 2019). It effectively captures participants' perspectives, enriching understanding of their experiences. However, the method is based on the researcher's interpretation, which may cause bias (Vaismoradi et al., 2016). Although it lacks standardized procedures, which can lead to variations in analysis, and is time-consuming due to the detailed coding process, it remains a powerful tool for

uncovering complex human experiences (Thomas & Harden, 2008). The research process is designed around a semi-autoethnographic paradigm to balance intellectual and methodological rigour with both the author's and players' personal epistemologies. This approach utilises researcher/participant shared experience to enable the co-production of evidence. Autoethnography is used in social research with research experience, culture, politics, and analytical thinking. The researcher uses deep and careful self-reflection when using this method. This method helps to illustrate the challenges that people face and strive for social justice and a better life (Adams et al., 2017). Autoethnography takes self-narrative from the domains of storytelling and memoir into that of the creation of data and it leads to new knowledge and/or new understanding of areas of old knowledge. According to Andrew and Le Rosignol (2017), autoethnography provides the opportunity to embody personal experiences and identify and illuminate the ways of social positions for football players.

Additionally, primary source documents from the CTFA will be utilized, alongside surveys completed by Süper Lig professional football players and questionnaires filled out by referees. This comprehensive approach is going to allow for a multifaceted examination of the research topic, incorporating diverse viewpoints from key stakeholders within the football community.

From the researcher's viewpoint, conversing in Turkish during the data collection process significantly contributed to the football players expressing themselves more effectively. The shared language created a comfortable and accessible platform, enabling the players to convey their thoughts and experiences with greater clarity and nuance. Additionally, being in the same geographical context likely played a role in enhancing communication by fostering a sense of familiarity and trust.

Nevertheless, it's essential to recognise that, to fully grasp the diverse perspectives of the players, some individuals may have opted not to delve deeply into certain aspects of their experiences. This choice could stem from personal preferences or a desire to maintain a level of privacy during the interaction.

2.3.1 Case Study

A case study method will be used in this study in the study 1. The purpose of using the case study in this study is to collect data from professional football players from different perspectives through semi-structured interviews. The aim of this method is to reduce the potential for bias (Harrison et al., 2017). According to Yin (1989), a case study is a detailed examination of a particular case within this context. A case study can also be defined as a detailed study of one or a small number of related individuals. With the detailed interview, information about a person, group or institution is obtained. In such a study, questionnaires, interviews, observations, and document analysis can be used as data collection tools (Gürbüz and Şahin, 2014).

According to Verschuren (2003), a case study is a strategy. It is an opinion or approach rather than a method such as observation or interviews, although these can be incorporated into a case study. It is experimental because it depends on the evidence gathered about what happened in light of the information received from the interviewer. It pertains to the study of a particular subject and particular event (Verschuren, 2003). According to Berberoğlu et al. (2013), qualitative research is effective in understanding human behaviour in depth.

2.3.2 Semi- Structured Interviews

The interview technique, which is a qualitative research method, was used. Qualitative data from semi-structured interviews were used in conjunction with a questionnaire to enable the researcher to obtain a picture of CTFA Süper Lig football players and to examine the data (Appendix C). The conversation can be between two or more people. It is a mutual and interactive communication tool in which one of these people tries to get answers by asking predetermined questions in order to get information from other people (Sparkes & Smith, 2013).

Using the interview method, it is also possible to learn the main reasons for the behaviour and attitudes of participants, with the opportunity to express themselves first-hand and allows the researcher to form a deeper understanding of the meanings, perspectives, feelings, thoughts, and experiences of the people

they are interviewing (McCracken & McCracken, 1988). According to Jamshed (2014), semi-structured interviews are in-depth interviews lasting between 30 minutes and more than an hour, in which participants must answer predetermined open-ended questions.

"Semi-structured interviews are a common data collection method in qualitative research, and the quality of the interview guide fundamentally influences the results of the study. " (Kallio et. al., 2016, p.2955).

Key themes arising from these interviews will be identified and examined.

To achieve thematic saturation in the data analysis, 12-16 interviews were considered adequate (Francis et al., 2010). According to the researchers, salient ideas can be gleaned as effectively from a small sample as from an extensive study. Therefore, 15 semi-structured interviews have been completed in this research project. The interviews lasted between 30 minutes to 45 minutes overall.

In line with the UCLan procedure for research, the ethics panel approved the use of semi-structured questions. In terms of the advantages of the interviews, it enables the researcher to understand the participants' perspectives. Following researchers such as Legard et al. (2003), this study works with the understanding that personal interviews provide an open means of discussion with the flexibility afforded to participants in the way they can answer questions. According to de Villiers et al. (2022), online interviews offer participants a chance to feel more comfortable. However, traditional researchers prefer face-to-face interviews because they allow for the use of visual cues to enrich communication, visually assess participants, and maintain contact with interviewees.

2.3.3 Surveys

Surveys are a key research method for gathering valuable data and insights from a target group (Ponto, 2015). In order to get data on certain subjects, attitudes, opinions, or behaviours, questionnaires or interviews are used (Brewer et al., 2015). Surveys can be carried out using a variety of approaches, including online platforms, phone interviews, paper-based questionnaires, and in-person interviews.

According to Ponto (2015), surveys provide researchers with a number of benefits. According to Evans and Mathur (2005), surveys provide participants the chance to freely express their ideas and opinions in an anonymous manner, which encourages more honest and real responds. The themes that emerged as a result of thematic analysis from the interviews will be analysed for a wider community together with surveys. This link between qualitative interviews and quantitative research aims to strengthen the validity of the findings by providing a comprehensive look at the issues facing the Northern Cyprus football community.

The opinions of football players will be collected through surveys (Appendix D). Additionally, as stakeholders of the CTFA, the opinions of referees will also be collected through surveys (Appendix E). In addition, it will be exposed how the problems are seen with other stakeholders.

2.3.4 Participants

This thesis will present a study of the professional male football players, age 24.1 ± 6.6 , from Yenicami Ağdelen S.K, a leading club in CTFA Süper Lig since 1951. The club chosen based on success in the CTFA Süper Lig is Yenicami Ağdelen Sports Club, which has been the most successful club in Northern Cyprus over the last five years. Rather than worrying about the 'generalisability' of the findings by 'random sampling', the researcher choose to go into more detail for a particular group. In such a study, the researcher aims to investigate the topic more comprehensively through 'purposive sampling' (Setia, 2016). Fifteen professional male players were interviewed. Furthermore, 201 CTFA Super Lig professional football players completed questionnaires and 78 surveys from referees of the CTFA.

2.4 Implementation and Impact Mitigation Strategies

Implementation and impact mitigation techniques play an important role in assuring the successful execution and efficacy of research strategies. (Proctor et al., 2013). This work necessitates the combination of ethical issues with practical imperatives. According to Creswell and Creswell (2017),

effective mitigation requires researchers to actively engage with stakeholders, particularly people and communities whose interests are directly related to the study findings.

Using this method helps to create more effective reaction strategies by enhancing the understanding of potential study consequences. In some circumstances, participants' informed agreement or involvement in decision-making is required (Bell & Bryman, 2007). Additionally, researchers must present their findings in plain, understandable terms to practitioners as well as academics (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The impact of researcher positionality on the research process and results is a major issue in advanced academic studies (Muhammad et al., 2015).

Researcher positionality is a complex combination of personal qualities, cultural origins, philosophical ideas, and experiential perspectives that form the research paradigm. This complicated connection has significant implications for research, influencing many elements of the academic endeavour. One of the most significant consequences is the potential of researcher bias (Miyazaki & Taylor, 2008).

A researcher's positionality can add cognitive and interpretative biases, influencing the development of research questions, study design, and result interpretation. These biases, whether subtle or overt, have an important influence on the objectivity and validity of research. Researchers' positionality may cause them to choose certain qualitative or quantitative methodologies, altering the depth of data collection and the insights obtained. Furthermore, positionality can influence participant interactions by altering replies based on views about the researcher's background, influencing the richness and authenticity of the data obtained (Berger, 2015).

Researcher positionality has a significant impact on data interpretation. Personal experiences, cultural viewpoints, and philosophical ideas all influence how data is perceived and contextualized, demonstrating that the same data may be received differently depending on the individual's perspective. Ethical considerations in research are likewise entwined with positionality. Decisions pertaining to informed consent, confidentiality, and the treatment of sensitive topics are subject to the researcher's ethical compass, which may be influenced by their own values and worldview. Researchers typically choose subjects that reflect their own interests and experiences, which may limit the scope of their research. To maintain objectivity in my study, I am committed to continuous self-evaluation. This implies that I routinely assess my perspectives and how they may affect my job. Being conscious of my

biases enables me to recognise and correct them, making my research more credible and ethical. I also make an effort to reflect on my ideas freely and honestly, while preserving openness and ethical standards to ensure the trustworthiness of my results.

2.5 Limitations and Strengths

It's important to recognise that research has its limitations. Researchers must be open and honest about their limitations. This helps readers to assess how reliable and relevant the study is (Price & Murnan, 2004). Limited resources, technique issues, or poor data quality can all contribute to these restrictions (Bryman, 2016). According to Dillman et al. (2014), acknowledging one's limits promotes critical analysis from readers and academics and shows intellectual honesty. Researchers, on the other hand, should emphasise the qualities of their work, such as methodological consistency (Queirós et al., 2017). It is critical to recognise research's inherent limitations and prioritise honesty in documenting them. This enables customers to critically evaluate the validity and reliability (Price & Murnan, 2004). These limits, such as resource constraints or data quality difficulties, might occur for a variety of causes (Bryman, 2016). It is more credible to highlight contributions to academic knowledge and highlight strengths in addition to problems (Lim & Koay, 2024). Recognising all points of view helps to maintain academic discipline and increase intellectual conversation.

2.6 Ethical Issues

Ethical issues are crucial in research. The researchers stated that researchers to treat individuals with respect (Panter & Sterba, 2011). This includes requesting people for their consent to participate in research, respecting their privacy, and keeping their information confidential (Corti et al., 2000). According to Bell and Bryman (2007), obtaining consent, maintaining confidentiality, and maintaining the health of participants are crucial components of research ethics. Getting permission is quite crucial. According to Nijhawan et al. (2013), the purpose of the study, possible risks, and the rights of participants. According to Petrova et al. (2016), maintaining confidentiality of information and showing consideration for those who belong to special groups are also crucial. According to Bell and Bryman

(2007), researchers often require clearance from specialised organisations before beginning any research.

Informed consent is a vital element in ethical issues. Moreover, according to Sidin (2016) informed consent forms should explain of the objectives of the study, any possible risks, and participant rights. According to Nijhawan et al. (2013), researchers have a responsibility to ensuring that participants are fully informed and provide their permission voluntarily.

At the beginning of the data collection, participants will be informed about the study, and they will sign the consent forms (Appendix A for the information form and Appendix B for the consent form). They will know that they have the right to withdraw from the study in the next 6 months because data will be anonymized. UCLan's ethical guidelines will govern all aspects of the interviewing process, including transcription and storage of interviews throughout the project duration. The electronic data will be stored in University approved location with restricted access for the next 5 years.

Moreover, maintaining confidentiality of information is an important responsibility in the ethical discipline. According to Surmiak (2020) researchers are required to guarantee the strictest rules for protecting participant names and data. Professional football players will be assigned numbers, such as interviewer 1 and interviewer 2, from the beginning of the study, while keeping the names of the participants anonymous. Researchers are also responsible for upholding moral principles. According to Rodrigez et al., (2003), researchers have a responsibility to protect the rights and dignity of all participants in the process. When conducting a study in a complicated socio-cultural setting, making changes is critical to maintaining both the research's validity and the researcher's confidence (Thorne & Saunders, 2002). The purpose is to improve the evidence and explain the research methodologies used. It was critical to my research to protect the professional players' confidentiality and perspectives. Every effort was made to preserve their anonymity, confidentiality, and respect. The study strictly followed ethical criteria, ensuring that all participants' rights were protected. This dedication to ethical behaviour had a significant role in the study's success.

2.7 Biases, The Researcher's Positionality

Research biases have the potential to seriously affect data collection, processing, and interpretation as well as risk the validity, reliability, and correctness of findings (Mohajan, 2017). Researchers add their own viewpoints, attitudes, and beliefs to scholarly study, which introduces possible cognitive biases and subjectivity (Field and Derksen, 2021). As a result, it is critical both in terms of ethics and intellect to recognise and remove these biases in order to maintain the research's reliability, fairness, and consistency. According to Dunne et al. (2005), the first step in addressing bias is for researchers to examine their own positionality. Researchers can detect hidden biases and blind spots in their work by carefully reflecting on their views (Schoorman & Bogotch, 2010). According to Morris MacLean et al. (2019), it is crucial for researchers to be transparent and reliable about their biases.

One of the important methods to effectively reduce prejudice is to help eliminate prejudices (Jana and Freeman, 2016). Moreover, the use of research methods characterized by transparency and systematic procedures helps to avoid influencing the results. The most important way to reduce bias is through constant reflection (Olmos-Vega et al., 2023; Starfield, 2013). Constantly examining the researcher's biases helps us remain aware and manage them throughout the research process (Clarke and Davison, 2020). Researchers increase the credibility and trustworthiness of their work by self-evaluating, collaborating in various ways, using rigorous methods, and maintaining ongoing reflexivity (Jones, & Stanley, 2010). It ensures that research is carried out in line with the principles of meticulous research, impartiality, and ethical standards.

The autoethnographic research approach allows researchers to examine their own perspectives and experiences within the framework of their studies (Houston, 2007). This approach is a unique tool for understanding complex issues owing to its deep understanding of social and cultural phenomena. It is crucial to acknowledge its limits, such as any potential biases resulting from the researcher's raising beliefs and worldview (McIlveen, 2008).

Positionality is a crucial factor for the development of autoethnographic narratives. Personal experiences may provide distinct perspectives but can also contribute to subjectivity and prejudice (Cayir et al., 2022). The researcher's position is quite strong in autoethnography because it can influence participants' interactions and responses by influencing their perceptions of the researcher's authority and

objectives. The validity of the collected data may be affected if participants purposefully or inadvertently change their narratives in response to the researcher's positionality and relationship with the subject (Kamlongera, 2023).

Autoethnography faces challenges such as maintaining objectivity, researcher bias, and the limited generalisability of findings to broader contexts (Ellis & Adams, 2014; Araújo & Davel, 2024). Despite these limitations, the autoethnographic approach's rich and in-depth insights remain valuable, providing a level of understanding that other research approaches may not deliver. As a result, I must carefully navigate key conflicts, maximising this approach's strengths, while also being aware of its possible difficulties and limitations.

In this study, I held an insider position, in respect to being an athlete within Northern Cyprus and experiencing many of the issues the players faced within the study. This proximity provided unique insights into the lived experiences of participants and the socio-political dynamics influencing the sport.

Being an insider allowed for a nuanced understanding of how structural inequalities and exclusion from international football shape identities, emotions, and actions within the community.

Being an autoethnographic researcher provided the advantage of speaking the same language as the participants and understanding the situation they came across clearly. To prevent bias in my research, I used the active listening method during the interviews and asked if they could explain more without commenting. Instead of suggesting answers or comments, I wanted football players to express themselves comfortably in response to the questions. In addition, it is thought that the fact that a large part of the study was conducted online due to the pandemic conditions made the participants more comfortable in their comfort zone. Moreover, during the interviews, online platform makes easier to controlling facial expressions or emotions when compared to the face-to-face interview (Saarijärvi & Bratt, 2021).

During the interviews, football players expressed themselves more comfortably by creating a positive effect on the athletes who knew me because they lived in the same country as me. However, being in a position where I had no influence on the football players and interviewing them only as an autoethnographic researcher did not have a negative or positive effect to prevent bias. All interviews

were checked by the supervisory team, and the names of the participants were coded, thus minimising bias. By embracing these positionalities and acknowledging limitations, as an autoethnographic researcher I could produce a rich, reflective account of Northern Cyprus football that situates personal experiences within broader social, political, and cultural frameworks.

2.8 Impacts

In research, impacts are the outcomes of a study, whether positive or negative, that researchers must carefully analyse (Penfield et al., 2014). According to Creswell and Poth (2016), these effects can be observed in a variety of contexts, including the environment, economics, society, and policies. Researchers must carry out a thorough assessment both before and after their study in order to address these consequences (Bryman, 2016). According to Ozanne et al. (2017), this assists in their ability to predict potential outcomes and take action to reduce negative consequences and enhance positive ones. According to Morsing and Schultz (2006), it involves communicating with relevant stakeholders, evaluating risks, and maintaining communication. Being open and honest about potential effects is crucial. When reporting or presenting their findings, researchers should be very clear about the potential consequences of their research. This benefits everyone. It's important to be transparent about possible impacts. Researchers should clearly explain in their reports and presentations what might happen because of their work. This helps everyone better understand and encourages responsible research (Meredith, 2021; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006).

A researcher's impact in academic world goes beyond just their academic work and is related to the researcher's research ethics and responsibility (Agunloye, 2019). A researcher's impact is felt in many areas such as academic publications, policies, society, and even beyond the borders of their country (Creswell and Poth, 2018).

To effectively address and manage impact, I as the researcher must engage in continuous self-assessment and reflection throughout my research trajectory (Bryman, 2016). I will consistently consider the ethical implications of my research to prevent any potential harm to others, and I will ensure to regularly review my research process. This comprehensive approach empowers researchers

to anticipate potential consequences, proactively institute measures to mitigate adverse effects, and optimize the positive contributions of their work (Ozanne et al., 2017).

This approach necessitates active engagement with stakeholders, diligent risk assessment, and the establishment of transparent communication channels to foster responsible and ethical conduct in research and beyond (Morsing & Schultz, 2006). In research, it is critical to anticipate probable consequences and take strategies to reduce negative effects while increasing good outcomes. This includes identifying risks, involving stakeholders, and maintaining transparency. By doing research responsibly and ethically, researchers can ensure that our findings serve society while causing no harm to persons or communities.

Moreover, transparency is critical in ethical research ethics. Researchers must openly discuss both the expected and unexpected of their study. This helps everyone in the scholarly community understand better, promotes accountability, and maintains high ethical standards in research (Miguel et al., 2014). By doing so, they enhance the collective understanding of the scholarly community, reinforce scholarly accountability, and uphold the highest standards of research integrity and ethics (Miguel et al., 2014).

As a researcher, I need to acknowledge that my impact goes beyond the academic to influence policy, societal changes, innovation, and public discourse. In my role as a knowledge creator and agent of societal change, I carry a significant ethical responsibility. I must approach my work with care and integrity, always aware of the potential consequences and ethical responsibilities that come with it. As I reflect on this thorough framework for evaluating and addressing my impact, it emphasises the deep connection between my academic work and the broader socio-cultural landscape. Recognising my dual responsibilities as a knowledge producer and a change agent, I understand the need of handling my research projects and their broader societal implications with care and ethical integrity.

The next chapter will review the literature on structural inequality to allow the researcher to understand how the literature will shape the research design.

CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter delves into a review of the existing literature, drawing from personal experiences, educational background, and research journey. It explores various topics to identify gaps in the literature. With extensive experience in this field, a systematic approach has consistently been applied to research, leading to the emergence of significant themes.

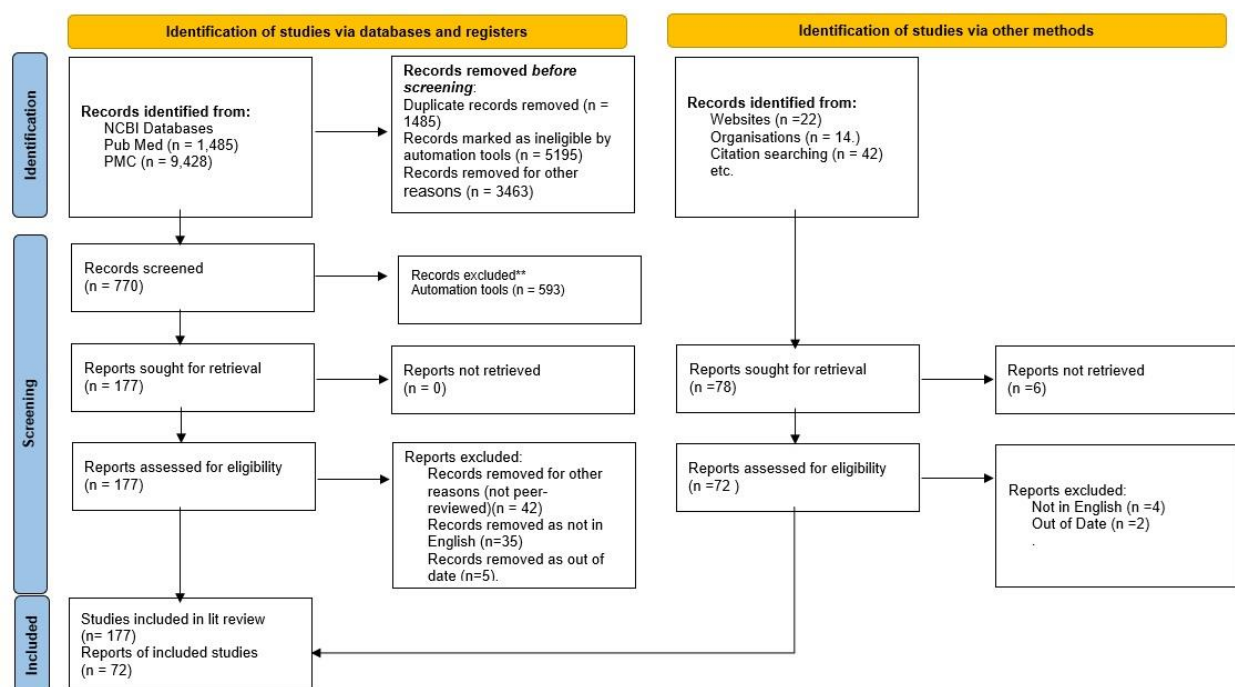
The underpinning scientific studies were identified using MeSH terms. The Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) thesaurus is a 'hierarchically organized vocabulary' of terms developed by the National Library of Medicine. MeSH is used for searching for a wide variety of health studies. MeSH uses subject headings from MEDLINE/PubMed, the NLM Catalog, and the NLM databases. The MeSH on Demand tool was used to identify key terms for the search. This involved uploading a synopsis of chapter contents to identify key words and terms. The results are outlined below:

Also, custom terms on the NCBI (NLM) databases were generated:

- Motivation/ Professionalism
- CONIFA
- Education status
- Injury Anxiety/ Soccer
- Turkish Cyprus/ Socioeconomic Factors
- Turkish Cyprus/ Athletes
- United Nations/ Turkish Cyprus
- FIFA membership

Other studies were identified by using EndNote Online, Google Scholar, citation searches, recommended reading, FIFA, and UEFA websites, as well as the United Nations, and archive material from the CTFA. The results were then analysed using the PRISMA flow chart process. PRISMA is an evidence-based minimum set of items for reporting in systematic and literature reviews. PRISMA 's

focus is interventions but can be a useful tool for other studies with different objectives than ‘evaluating medical interventions. Using the PRISMA 2020 checklist as a guide, records were identified from NCBI Databases Pubmed (n=1485) and PMC (n=9,248). 1485 studies were removed before screening because of duplicate records. 5195 studies found in eligible by automation tool and 3463 studies removed because of other reasons. 770 unique studies screened, and 539 articles removed by automation. Resulting in 177 studies being assessed for inclusion and exclusion criteria. A total number of 82 studies excluded because they were: not in English (n=35), not peer-reviewed (n = 42), and as out of date (n=5). Furthermore, studies were identified from websites (n= 22), organisations (n=14) and citation searching (n= 42). Resulting in 78 reports, assessed for inclusion and exclusion criteria and 6 reports excluded. 249 reports included in this research. The outcome of the process was recorded on a PRISMA Flow chart Template (figure 1).



From: Page MJ, McKenzie JE, Bossuyt PM, Boutron I, Hoffmann TC, Mulrow CD, et al. The PRISMA 2020 statement: an updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. *BMJ* 2021;372: n71. doi: 10.1136/bmj. n71. For more information, visit: <http://www.prisma-statement.org/>

Figure 1. PRISMA Flow chart Template.

The final identified studies were reviewed as appropriate to the core sections of this thesis.

Four themes were identified through the literature search which will formulate the structure of this thesis, structural inequity, loss of identity, isolation/invisibility, and political and economic oppression. Sub-themes include socio-economic histories; the role of the Cyprus Turkish Football Association (CTFA) and sports in political contexts involving the UN and FIFA; cultural, educational, and lifestyle factors; and the psychosocial impacts of these issues.

3.1 Structural Inequity, Theme 1

Structural inequity refers to the unequal distribution of resources, opportunities, and power within a society or institution that systematically disadvantages certain individuals or groups based on their social identities (Royce, 2022). This can result in disparities in income, education access, employment opportunities, and representation in decision-making processes.

This often leads to inequalities in areas such as education, healthcare, employment, and social mobility (Williams et al., 2018; Mansyur et al., 2009). These disparities can contribute to the perpetuation of a cycle of inequality, where certain groups are systematically disadvantaged due to their cultural psychosocial differences.

Structural inequality in sports is the unequal distribution of resources, opportunities, and power within the sporting domain (Spaaij et al., 2015). Recent studies have shown how structural inequality persists in relation to gender, race, and socioeconomic status (Iqbal & Nijalingappa, 2021; Hoeber, 2007, Pike & Smith, 2023). The lack of women in leadership roles, racial disparities in coaching and management positions, and limited access to quality training for those from low-income backgrounds are examples of inequalities in sports (Spaaij et al., 2015).

The roots of structural inequality can be traced back to a legacy of segregation and discrimination, resulting in enduring disparities in access to resources, opportunities, and representation (Washington & Karen, 2001; Pike & Smith, 2023; Spaaij et al., 2015). Structural inequality in sports can perpetuate social divisions and exclusion within communities (Jarvie, 2011). The unequal distribution of resources

and opportunities based on socioeconomic status, race, and gender can lead to division and a sense of unfairness (Cunningham et al., 2021; Tandon et al., 2021). Furthermore, the lack of representation and accessibility can limit the sense of belonging and participation in sports, leading to the alienation of certain groups within the sporting community (Cunningham et al., 2021). Throughout its history, football has faced with inequality, facing challenges such as historical exclusion based on race and current inequalities in funding for women's football (McCrone, 2005; Dworkin & Messner, 2002; Sawyer et al., 2013). According to Bradbury (2017), minority players in Western European football still face limited opportunities to advance into coaching and management roles within professional men's clubs across Europe. Efforts to reduce income inequality are in line with making football more accessible to individuals from all backgrounds and thus improving national football performance (Wan et al., 2020).

Cultural psychosocial differences, on the other hand, relate to the cultural norms, values, beliefs, and behaviours that influence individuals' psychological and social well-being (Kusow & Eno, 2015). These cultural psychosocial differences can contribute to and perpetuate structural inequities by influencing access to resources, social support networks, and opportunities (Singer et al., 2016). This intersection between structural inequity and socio-cultural differences can create barriers for marginalized populations, exacerbating health disparities and limiting individuals' ability to live healthy and fulfilling lives (Diderichsen et al., 2012).

When studying cultural differences within a country, it is important to consider the historical context and power dynamics (Hankivsky & Christoffersen, 2008). Cultural norms and values change over time and are shaped by societal structures (Inglehart & Baker, 2000). This can lead to discrimination against certain cultural groups that deviate from dominant norms, leading to ongoing social exclusion and inequality (Kabeer, 2000).

In the context of professional footballers in Northern Cyprus, structural inequalities can result from the South being recognized by FIFA while the North is not. This can lead to unequal access to training facilities, coaching resources, and progression opportunities. As the FIFA provides financial and

logistical support to 211 affiliated associations (Plumley & Wilson, 2022), this turns out to be an advantage to Southern Cyprus when compared to Northern Cyprus.

Due to the North of Cyprus not being able to access FIFA and UEFA resources, players who are professional players do not have the financial support to sustain throughout their lives, therefore when they finish playing, they will have to pursue another career, the following section will discuss the importance of end of career transitions.

3.1.1 Athlete Career Development and Transitions

Early studies on athlete retirement, career development, and transition research and literature have made significant advancements (Baillie & Danish, 1992; Mihovilovic, 1968). The findings of these research suggest that the idea of career development and transitions has taken on a life span perspective, promoting retirement as well as internal career changes, a more comprehensive approach to athlete career development and transitions, and a rise in interest in athletes' dual career experiences, which combine sports professions with academic studies (Ryba et al., 2015). The difficulties of striking an adequate balance between the demands of the athlete and the student roles have received more attention in the context of young athletes (McKenna & Dunstan-Lewis, 2004; Stambulova, et al., 2015), along with the benefits and difficulties of combining study and performance sport during adolescence (Aquilina, 2013; Jonker et al., 2009).

In addition, research has shown that pursuing a dual career affects an athlete's sense of identity, purpose, and well-being (O'Neil et al., 2021), and how the difficulties of doing so coincide with issues such as relationship difficulties, the development of life skills, social life, and identity (Tekavc et al., 2015).

While young football players in their research made a concentrated attempt to reconcile academic and athletic expectations, Christensen & Sørensen (2009) underscored the relevance of sport-specific cultural elements and discovered that while young football players were expected to put football before

other matters, such as their education, this expectation was a fundamental principle of football culture. This frequently led to early identity foreclosure and the rejection of continued educational advancement. Many different methods of transition intervention have been described, such as Stambulova's (2010) five-step career planning strategy and life development intervention. These methods have typically placed a strong emphasis on helping athletes develop their goal-setting abilities as well as positioning their current demands in relation to both their past experiences and their desired future. Along with these improvements, athlete lifestyle programmes, such as the Career Assistance Programme for Athletes, have been developed to assist athletes in dealing with their concerns about the future and preparing them for retirement from their sport and the pursuit of a new career (Petitpas et al., 1992), the United States Olympic Education Center, and the Australian Athlete Career and Education program. Today, Olympic sports and some professional sports in the United Kingdom receive the Performance Lifestyle program from national sports institutes, such as the England Institute of Sport.

The Welsh Rugby Union and other professional sports organisations have developed their own, similarly focused support systems. The Personal Development and Welfare (PDW) program in cricket is currently provided to the England National teams by professionals working for the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB), and a related PDW program is provided to professional domestic county clubs by professionals working for the Professional Cricketers Association (Devaney, 2019). Only a small amount of academic literature has specifically addressed the types of support offered by lifestyle programs.

However, Stambulova et al. (2021) acknowledged that the "more than 60" programs they have identified globally exhibit significant diversity. Nevertheless, the researchers declared that sports psychology specialists are typically the ones who deliver these programs, with a primary focus on offering education, direction, and skills to aid athletes in getting ready for life after sports and managing athletes' demands outside of their sport. In a study conducted by Day-Garner (2018), critical transitional phases and recommendations for male football players were stated in senior female football player research in Europe. It was stated that psychological support would be beneficial to athletes during the transitional stages, and that information should be provided about the transition periods at a young age. Numerous

explanations of what lifestyle assistance should comprise have been published, but none has described or analysed what lifestyle practitioners really perform. Official documents state that the ECB's PDW programme, which was the subject of the current investigation, offers "integrated, impartial support to players and the team environment, to develop resilience in and outside of cricket as a personalised service within the three areas of well-being, lifestyle, and personal development" (Devaney et al., 2021).

According to the program's objective, this organisation encourages a support system that is more integrated, relational, psychologically informed, and performance-focused than what is discussed in the academic literature. Additionally, in this institution, lifestyle support is not within the scope of sports psychologists, but rather that of a practitioner who may have been an athlete in the past, or who holds a degree in a field unrelated to sport or psychology (Devaney et al., 2021). Despite the diversity that is present in other sports organisations, sport psychology research has produced the most pertinent guiding literature for lifestyle programs.

For both lifestyle specialists and sports psychologists with whom they interact, this has resulted in a lack of role definition. This may be somewhat attributable to the way that lifestyle support is portrayed in the literature, which emphasises the development of practical skills over some of the more relational components of the role. Therefore, there is a need to better understand lifestyle practitioners' actual methods as well as the contextual and culturally particular issues that prompt elite athletes to seek assistance.

According to Nurmi (2004), adolescence is essential for the formation of identity, cognitive-motivational strategies, and social and organisational abilities that may affect people's educational and professional objectives. According to Nurmi, adolescence is an excellent research context. Since there has not been any prior research that employs a methodology that can present footballers' perspectives and capture their daily lives in particular contexts (Ronkainen, 2014), attention must also be paid to the individual meanings that footballers attach to these lifestyle issues. In addition, Stambulova and Ryba (2014) called for research that is more sociocultural and contextually informed, and that is aligned with career development, transitions, and assistance, as well as research that combines applied and theoretical.

3.1.2 Dual Career in Athletes

Most athletes follow the combination of sports pursuits alongside education or vocational endeavours (Morris et al., 2021). Additionally, athletes who have reached the age of compulsory education prefer to pursue a dual career that allows them to balance their commitments to sport and education (Aquillina, 2016).

In other words, a dual career is described as combining academics with a career in sports, which may assist players both during their sporting careers and after they retire from the sport by providing social, health-related, financial, and developmental advantages (de Subijana et al., 2020; Park et al., 2013).

It is essential to understanding the lifestyles of dual-career athletes at different phases and growth, according to Graczyk et al. (2017). Furthermore, multiple occupations give elite athletes with a sports-education-work balance while also lowering the unfavourable risks of discontinuing or abandoning athletics (Conzelmann & Nagel, 2003; Donnelly & Petherick, 2004; Wylleman & Reints, 2010).

Optimal dual-career balance is defined as a combination of sports and work that helps students or athletes achieve their educational and athletic goals, live fulfilling private lives, and support their health and well-being. A dual career (i.e., combining sport and education or sport and work) has proven to be a satisfactory solution to balance sport and other areas of athletes and prepare them for post-sport life (Stambulova et al., 2015). Li and Sum (2017) used a qualitative meta-synthesis method to review the literature on the dual-career experiences of elite athletes between 1996 and 2015. The results show that elite athletes are exposed to some individual problems (including psychological, physical, and emotional impact on athletes), interpersonal problems (related to the interactions or relationships of elite athletes in their families, school, or training), and external problems (related to practical support, conditions, and environment) in their career development.

Grey-Thompson (2017) highlighted that schools should be informed to support talented young athletes pursuing dual careers. With the notion of early specialisation in sport, the issues related to dual careers may arise even at the stage of primary school, but the likelihood will be enhanced when athletes have increasing training hours and competitions while having academic workloads in adolescence and early

adulthood (Sallen et al., 2018). In other domains related to early specialisation, such as music and dance, a small number of talented young people can develop a professional level of career in the end (Ronkainen et al., 2018); they might need to decide on their commitment to sports, music, and dance in adolescence to accelerate their elite career pathways (Patrick et al., 1999).

A study conducted by Wylleman and Rosier (2016) found that young athletes begin their rigorous training and competition at the age of 12 to 13 and advance from junior to senior level at the age of 18 to 19, which typically corresponds with the commencement of their undergraduate education at colleges. Regarding this, issues of burnout, psychological distress, and injuries associated with increasing demands in sports and education have been reported (Von Rosen et al., 2018; Sorkkila et al., 2017). Hence, the importance of understanding talented young athletes' dual career pathways has been underlined (Ronkainen et al., 2018).

Australian rower James Tomkins, who is busy winning three golds and a bronze in the Olympic Games, took part in a total of six Olympic Games, and worked full-time, shared his experiences of having a double career. Tomkins, who is also a member of the IOC Athletes Commission, offers some advice on the benefits of balancing sport with a career and how this can help you become a better athlete (Gordon, 2003).

3.1.3 Injury

Within athlete transitions injury is not accounted for as it is often unpredictable, however this can have an impact on players continuing to play approximately 80% of football players face lower-limb injuries worldwide (Arliani et al., 2016; Despard, 2002) conducted empirical research in his study titled "Career-Terminating Injury in Sports: Individual Success and Social Pain". As a result of the study, it was emphasised that, in general, former athletes as heroes struggle with serious injuries and the psychological effects of quitting sports.

Herman (2002), in his study titled "Transition Losses and Athlete Identity: An Ethical Obligation, Assisting NCAA Athletes in the Process of Quitting Sports", interviewed five female NCAA basketball

players who quit sports and 6 NCAA executives. In addition, two questionnaires were administered to 40 female basketball players who had quit sports.

Koukouris (2005) conducted in-depth interviews with 19 elite gymnasts in a study titled 'Elite Greek Gymnasts Quitting Sport Early'. As a result, it has been determined that quitting sports is not dependent on a single factor; quitting is multidimensional, and coaches are responsible for elite gymnasts quitting sports.

North and Lavalley (2004) included 561 elite athletes in their study "A Study of Potential Users of Career Transition Services in the UK". Thirty-seven individuals and team athletes took part in the study, and as a result, it was revealed that young athletes were reluctant to quit sports and devoted a significant amount of time to make concrete plans for their careers after quitting sports.

Young et al. (2006), in a study titled "Withdrawal from Professional Tennis Tournaments: A Study of Exploring the Experience and Reactions of Elite Female Athletes", reached out to 28 women who quit tennis in Australia and applied a questionnaire. As a result of the study, it was decided that the women who quit tennis by planning described this period as "easy", while the women who quit without planning described it as "difficult". Most women (66%) who quit professional tennis had no regrets, and none of the participants tried tennis again. In terms of injury related anxiety, when the athletes injured, anticipatory anxiety have an impact on the athletes' psychology and it decrease the confidence of the athletes, increase stress levels and fear of re-injury levels increase (Ford et al., 2017).

FIFA apply injury prevention programs only to member countries which affect non-member countries as a discrimination as leave these areas vulnerable to injury (O'Brien & Finch, 2017). Moreover, FIFA Medical and Research Centre (F-MARC) aimed to decrease the injury risks in football players (Al Attar et al., 2016). This unequal treatment and lack of support not only deepen the existing cycle of injury and oppression but also emphasize the systemic inequalities within FIFA's practices. The FIFA World Cup 2022 gained global attention and raised concerns about severe abuses against migrant workers. However, these workers in Qatar were denied compensation and justice despite enduring injury and mistreatment (Liu et al., 2020).

Sports have a huge impact on developing individual and societal identities (Steele et al., 2020). Globalization and international competitions can affect the sporting environment and identity of regions, including Northern Cyprus. The issue of loss of identity in sport in Northern Cyprus is important because it depicts the constant struggle to maintain cultural, social, national, and dual identity uniqueness in a society dominated by lack of recognition by international organisations.

3.2 Loss of Identity, Theme 2

3.2.1 Exploring Social Identity

Researchers in several social and behavioural science fields have intensively examined the topic of social identity (Hogg & Williams, 2000). Their goal has been to comprehend the relationship between social group dynamics and individual psychology. Researchers have developed many theoretical frameworks and concepts of social identity because of their research (Reicher et al., 2010). These concepts include person-based identities, relational identities, group-based identities, and collective identities. Political psychology will be significantly impacted by these various conceptions of social identity (Reicher et al., 2010). Political psychology relies heavily on an understanding of social identity to better understand how people see themselves in relation to social groups and how these views influence their political actions (Huddy, 2001).

The basic principles of identity construction have been discussed in the study of social identity. In the study by Stets and Burke (2003), it is stated that there are two premises in the sociological theory of identity. The first is that there must be social interaction to create an identity. The second is that from social interaction, we see the emergence of common symbols and classifications that define identity. Moreover, a role identity should have a "traditional" structure and a "special" structure (McCall and Simmons, 1978). In this study, role identity was defined as the role that a person designs for himself as a resident of a particular social position.

Stryker (1980) mentioned that role identity is organised in a hierarchy based on the salience of identity. He stated that the salience of identity depends on the degree of commitment of the person to the identity. For example, if eight people out of ten see an athlete and only two people see a student, the identity of the athlete will dominate. In this instance, the person will find themselves closer to the identity of an athlete.

According to the literature, the difference between personal identity and cultural identity is defined in the context of Ericson's (1950, 1968) work through the introduction of the concept of psychosocial identity. As reported by Erikson, personal identity represents some personal goals. For example, the values and beliefs of individuals are a particularly important aspect of personal identity. In the study by Van Hoof & Raaijmakers (2002), it is the extent to which these sets of goals, values, and beliefs are internally consistent and integrated that creates the constant sense of self.

Consistent with Erikson's research results, skills, orientation, and self-recognition are related to identity within the sociological structure of society (Schwartz, 2001). According to Waterman (1999), personal identity includes people's values, goals, beliefs, political selections, religions, family relationships, friendships, and individual preferences. In the context of football within Northern Cyprus Erikson's (1950,1968) and Schwartz's (2001) view that historical and cultural context forms people's sense of identity. Football's influence on social identity goes beyond just providing a sense of community and shared identity (Newson et al., 2018; Stott et al., 2012). One of the key aspects of football's influence on social identity is its ability to create a shared language and culture among fans (Stodolska & Tainsky, 2015). Its ability to unite people, celebrate cultural heritage, and promote inclusivity positions it as a powerful catalyst for shaping social relations and identities (Bordas, 2023).

The concept of identity in Northern Cyprus is particularly complex due to the region's unique political and cultural history. The social identity of the people there is deeply connected with their cultural and national identities. The historical and ongoing division of Cyprus has led to a distinct sense of identity among the population, influenced by factors such as historical events, language, religion, and political affiliations (Vural & Rustemli, 2006; Birol et al., 2016).

3.2.2 Exploring Cultural Identity

Cultural identity describes how people see their cultural background, including their beliefs, habits, and values. It is about identifying with a certain cultural group and sharing its traditions and practices (Karjalainen, 2020). Cultural identity is formed and developed, highlighting the importance of a comprehensive approach that takes into account intersectionality and the interaction of many identities (Chiu et al., 2010).

Studies have shown that cultural identity emerges as an effect of global and local events. Religion, war, exile, and migration have significant impacts on cultural identity. According to a study conducted by Sarıkaya (2023), cultural identity is a concept consisting of a shared past and social norms and traditions. In this context, cultural identity in Northern Cyprus is shaped by the recent past.

"There are at least two different ways of thinking about 'cultural identity'. The first position defines 'cultural identity' in terms of one, shared culture, a sort of collective 'one true self', hiding inside the many other, more superficial, or artificially imposed 'selves', which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common. Within the terms of this definition, our cultural identities reflect the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provide us, as 'one people', with stable, unchanging, and continuous frames of reference and meaning, beneath the shifting divisions and vicissitudes of our actual history. This "oneness", underlying all the other, more superficial differences, is the truth, the essence." (Rutherford, 2003, p.223)

According to Stuart Hall, who has focused on the problem of "cultural identity" since the late 1980s, new identities are formed by the harmony and mixing of various traditions, perspectives, and lifestyles. Cyprus is an island where diverse cultures come together and considering that distinct cultural groups resided together in the recent past, it is unsurprising that the people of Cyprus have diverse cultural identities. This diversity is reflected in the different identities of the individuals playing football. Whether the meeting of cultures leads to conflict, or adaptation and progress, it is vital to understand what makes cultures different and yet functional (Fukuyama, 2000). Due to recent wars and the pressure

of not being recognized, the cultural identities of football players are also affected. Epistemic violence in the international arena affects the cultural identity of professional football players. The factors brought about by being ignored in the international arena can be traced to the cultural identities of footballers as inequality and learned hopelessness (Akşar, 2009).

Research has shown that football can serve as a powerful tool for the preservation and expression of cultural identity (Petersen-Wagner, 2017). From the chants and rituals of fans in the stadium to the styles of play and tactics adopted by different teams, football reflects the cultural nuances of the communities from which it originates (Stone, 2013).

The island's political division has significantly shaped the cultural of its people. The Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots possess distinct cultural identities, often stemming from historical complaints and efforts to assert their place on the island. As a result, Northern Cyprus exhibits fragmented cultural identities as various groups position themselves within the broader political landscape (Loizides, 2007).

3.2.3 Exploring National Identity

Concepts of 'national identity' are complex in structure, consisting of many closely related ethnic, cultural, territorial, economic, legal, and political elements (Donnan & Wilson, 2021). According to Psarrou (2003), the complexity of national identity allows it to remain a resilient and pervasive influence in contemporary society and politics, integrating with other influential ideologies while maintaining its unique character. Identity is an essential component of psychosocial functioning (Meca et al., 2015). Identity covers how people see themselves and predicts several important psychosocial and relational outcomes. The subject of Identity is conducted from several perspectives. According to this perspective of identity and discourse, identity creation comprises a two-step process in which identity is identified by a history of discourses, ideas, and pictures of who we are, and we identify ourselves by reacting to the presentations that have already identified us (Ngo, 2008). The different components of identity have their roots in different theories and sources, each of which inspires a separate literature.

"...all states are faced with the problem of reconciling a paradox when it comes to the management of identity. At the heart of the paradox is the pressure to establish and project a

sense of national unity on the world stage, but through means of a limited and increasingly uniform set of strategies, including, for example, the adoption of national anthems and flags, the issuing of national currency, the formation of armed forces, the design of tourism products, membership of major international organisations such as the United Nations, Council of Europe, and the International Olympic committee, and participation in major international sports events." (Houlihan, 1997, p.120)

The fact that sports is a tool for international peace and social cohesion does not apply to football players living in Northern Cyprus. The effects of the pursuit of national identity, commitment to society, and integrity of the national team are on professional football players. Paulo Freire (1985) said,

"When we think of identity, we must consider it from different aspects. We must think of culture and language. But when we speak of culture and language, we must speak about social classes, values, etc. Even in a country like this whose complexity is very great, you have social classes. I am my culture. I am my language. But my culture and my language cannot be understood outside of my position and social class." (Brass et al., 1985, p.20)

The acceptance of football as a new symbol of national identity shows not just the lessening importance of the connection with Britain, (Holmes, 1994). This redefining of identity is successfully embodied in football. Football offers a worldwide stage in addition to that.

"National identity is one pattern of orientation within a set of multiple social identities which become relevant in different contexts. It concurs with other identity narratives. All are important for cohering social groups and for the fostering of individual self-esteem. Identities are constructed and identities may be deconstructed as well. Identity may be seen in the form of ugly chauvinistic nationalism and out-group hostility. It may also be defined and constructed as a kind of constitutional patriotism, as a pride in social welfare state or pride in policies of social inclusion policies. Hereby, a pride in democratic performance, in societal values and in peaceful policies becomes important." (Kersting, 2009, p.290)

It is indisputable that football is a factor in bringing people together (Gannett et al., 2014). The role of football icons and heroes cannot be overlooked in the construction of national identity (Jiang, 2013). Famous players and their achievements often become synonymous with national pride and are celebrated as examples of the collective spirit of a nation (Allen, 2013). Kyris (2020) presents the argument that the sense of national identity in Northern Cyprus has been gradually eroded due to "hegemonic structures such as globalization and 'Europeanization' which, in the case of Northern Cyprus, have shaped decisively collective identity (trans-)formations. He goes on to argue that 'both the negative economic conjuncture that has affected the TRNC and its guarantor power, Turkey, and the consequent aspirations of the Turkish-Cypriot community for material advancement within the EU played key roles in this process.' As a result, Kyris (2020) believes 'Turkish-Cypriot identities have shifted from a rigid national identity to more, hybrid, flexible, and plural identifications such as Kıbrıslılık-Cypriotness', or the shared identity of Greek and Turkish Cypriots. Cyprus had several wars, and both the south and north have suffered losses. National teamwork cannot be performed regularly and on a regular basis in the Northern Cyprus. National match calendars are not created by FIFA since they are not recognised by FIFA. The national squad should be able to improve upon its national identity to qualify for the CONIFA championships. For the first time in 2022, a worldwide renowned business entered sponsorship negotiations with CTFA and signed the deal to create the uniform for the national team. Puma's first unique original national team jersey presented and expected to inspire that attitude among football players (KTFF, 2022)

The concept of national identity is significant in the context of Northern Cyprus, where historical and political divisions have shaped a distinct sense of national identity among its inhabitants (Kizilyürek, 2003). The pursuit of political recognition and the struggle to assert their national identity globally have significantly affected the people of Northern Cyprus. The absence of international acknowledgment has led to feelings of isolation and marginalization, shaping a distinct national identity within the region (İlter & Alankuş, 2010).

3.2.4 Exploring Dual Identity

Many young people who aspire to be athletes start pursuing their academic goals and athletic aspirations concurrently during their teenage and early adult years; this practice is referred to as a dual career (Cartigny et al., 2021a). A common way to achieve this is to strike a balance between their required academic coursework and athletic training (Cartigny et al., 2021b). According to Tekavc et al. (2015), having two careers can cause people to create multiple identities in which they identify as athletes and learners/employees. This dual identity can significantly influence a person's performance, well-being, and overall development (Condello et al., 2019). Individuals with dual careers must handle the hurdles and adjustments that come by balancing their sports and academic/vocational ambitions (Cartigny et al., 2021a). Student athletes may have tensions and difficulties because of their multiple identities because they are expected to perform well in both areas while also efficiently managing their time and upholding a positive work-life balance (Steele et al., 2020).

According to Day-Garner (2018), having a second identity helps to a successful transition from sports. Athletes may benefit from continuing their second professions after their sports careers end since different sports have age limits on when athletes may retire from sports.

The unification of North and South Cyprus has the potential to redefine the national identity of the entire country (Vural & Özuyanık, 2008). Furthermore, the unification could help deal with old problems and bring together different opinions that have caused divisions in the area's national identity (Drath, 2004).

Northern Cyprus, which is only recognised by Turkey, is isolated internationally, which has an impact on its football and other sports organisations. Northern Cypriot football players and teams are unable to compete in international competitions, making it difficult for them to showcase their skills on an international level (Lekakis, 2015). Invisibility in football represents a broader geopolitical exclusion that has an impact on national identity and demonstrates the huge consequences of political conflicts on social and cultural areas (Darby, 2000)

3.3 Isolation/invisibility, Theme 3

The theme of isolation and invisibility in Northern Cyprus football has a significant impact on different sub-themes that describe the psychological and educational consequences on players. Players may struggle with motivation and lack support due to limited international participation. These possible forces push players to focus on personal achievements rather than global recognition, which may increase pressure on professional football players. Due to restricted opportunities, football players in Northern Cyprus sometimes focus on personal and local successes above international success, affecting their training and future goals.

The experiences of marginalized groups in sports such as women of colour, the elderly, ethnic minorities, the disabled, and rural communities are often isolated and made invisible within the context of sports due to social, economic, and cultural barriers (Dashper & Fletcher, 2013; Spaaij et al., 2015). The impact of invisibility on the well-being and participation of these marginalized groups in sports (Robinson, 2018).

Research indicates that limited representation and visibility can lead to feelings of alienation, low self-esteem, and a sense of not belonging within sports communities (Steward et al., 2009). Moreover, the lack of role models and recognition for their achievements can hinder the motivation and aspirations of individuals from these communities, impacting their long-term engagement in sports (Morgenroth et al., 2015). The psychological and physical health benefits of sports are often inaccessible to marginalized groups due to the barriers they face, exacerbating existing disparities in well-being (Child et al., 2019). The specific factors that contribute to isolation and invisibility, stakeholders can develop tailored interventions that dismantle systemic barriers, foster a sense of belonging, and create an equitable sporting environment for all. In addition, intersectionality plays a crucial role in understanding the experiences of individuals facing isolation and invisibility in sports (Cunningham et al., 2021). The unequal access to education can restrict participation in sports for marginalized groups. Limited school resources, including sports facilities and coaching, may slow down athletic development and interest in sports among students from disadvantaged backgrounds (Azzarito & Solomon, 2005). According to Wylleman et al. (2004), the transition from athletic retirement often involves a significant adjustment,

which can feel like losing social connections and experiencing isolation. Athletes may be perceived as "dead" despite being very much alive. This process includes denial and isolation, where athletes initially resist acknowledging the end of their careers, and anger as they fight with these changes. Education plays a crucial role in this transition by providing athletes with the tools to navigate these challenges and build new pathways beyond their athletic careers.

According to Bradbury (2017), UEFA needs to enhance its relationship with underrepresented minority coaches and address institutional racism through improved processes and practices.

"[...] UEFA, national football federations, elite level professional clubs, and players' unions in each of the countries under review should listen to and work closely with minority coaches and campaigning organizations to critically reflect on and then purposefully dismantle the structural and cultural barriers which have thus far constrained the upward career mobility of minorities in the sport." (Bradbury, 2017, p.331)

3.3.1 Psycho-social Dynamics of Football Players in Northern Cyprus

Individuals living in the northern part of Cyprus experience psycho-social differences due to external social factors (Zorba, 2015). International oppression for political reasons leads to a sense of hopelessness at an early age in society, keeping the Northern Cypriots one step behind the rest of the world (Akşar, 2009; Göktürk, 2007). A comparison study between the Southern and Northern parts of Cyprus by Zorba (2015) revealed that participants from Northern Cyprus reported significantly more negative attitudes. According to Haugen (2022), cultural identity and oppression, influencing athletes' well-being and performance. Therefore, the psychology of football players is very important, especially in this study. Psychology plays a huge role in sports; according to the international society of sports psychology, mental health is significantly important in athletes' lives, and a healthy individual cannot be classified without good mental health (Schinke et al., 2018). Furthermore, World Health Organization (WHO) explained the term "health" for an individual. According to the WHO, health can be expressed as good physical, mental, and social well-being (World Health Organization, 2022).

Oltmanns & Castonguay, (2013) stated that athletes can come up with different psychological consequences due to the training load, sports injury and competitiveness. Frederick-Recascino and Schuster-Smith (2003) and Bailey et al. (2006) stated a positive correlation between psychological motivation and the rates of achievement and success.

Behjati et al. (2011) used the following explanation for a healthy athlete provided by the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

"... a state of successful performance or mental function, resulting in productive activities, fulfilling relationships with other people, and the ability to adapt to change and to cope with adversity." (Behjati et al., 2011, p.705).

Gardner and Moore (2006) found a new model for athletic performance, which is an integrative model of athletic performance. This model focuses on performance in three phases: pre-performance, performance, and post-performance. These phases include internal and external psychological factors for the readiness for a competition, self-control, goals, and mental dysfunction.

3.3.1(a) Support

According to Masten & O'Connor (1989), resilience, which is hidden in the individual's power of self-recovery and can also be defined as the ability to return to the abilities and behaviour patterns that were already present in him before the stressful event, is the ability of the individual to recover himself, adapt, or adapt himself in the face of difficult life experiences. It is the ability to cope effectively with change or disruptive situations.

Dally (2006) evaluated social support as a "message of attachment" to another person in a communication network where the person receives love and respect. In this context, it is thought that it is important to determine what social support can be that feeds inter-individual interaction. In the literature review, it is noteworthy that the types of social support are classified in different ways.

According to research which is carried out by Cakir and Inman (1993), stated that social support has two components. It was determined as the perception of the existence of people who can apply when a

need arises and the degree of satisfaction of the individual with the existing support. Caplan (1974) classified the types of social support that provide guidance and feedback to individuals into five groups.

- a. Emotional support based on the communication of feelings of interest, love, and trust,
- b. Support of appreciation for the acceptance of the individual, together with his/her problems and flaws, and respect for himself/herself,
- c. Financial support is characterised by the provision of financial assistance, equipment, and services.
- d. Providing information to solve problems, informational support based on teaching necessary skills,
- e. Togetherness support is based on spending free time together.

Tardy (1985) classified social support in another way, examined it in five dimensions and argued that these dimensions should be used when defining the concept of social support.

- a. Direction: receiving and giving social support,
- b. Tendency: availability and availability of support resources,
- c. Definition of support: its evaluation,
- d. Content of support: informational, emotional, instrumental, feedback,
- e. Social network support: Support offered by different social groups.

On the other hand, defined six different support areas while addressing social support, namely.

- a. Material assistance; tangible assistance in the form of money and other material and physical objects,
- b. Behavioural assistance; sharing of tasks through physical labour,
- c. Close interaction: Behaviours that do not contain guiding content, such as listening, paying attention, showing respect, and understanding and expressing them,
- d. Guidance; giving advice, information, and suggestions,
- e. Feedback; providing feedback to individuals about their behaviours, thoughts, feelings of help,

f. Positive social interaction; social interaction for fun and relaxation engaging in social interaction for fun and relaxation (Barrera and Ainley, 1983).

It has been reported that the presence of support resources has a positive effect on confidence and performance when an individual needs them. Vealey (2004), self-confidence; It defines it as the degree of belief in the achievement of success in sports, overcoming the problems and setbacks faced by the athlete, recovering quickly after a negative performance, focusing on mistakes after an inadequate performance, and focusing on regaining even though the victory did not occur. According to the literature, supporting athletes has effects on athletes.

Doğan (2019) also concluded because of his research that the increase in individuals perceived social support levels causes an increase in their self-confidence. According to the definitions in the literature, self-confidence is the state of being able to make decisions and act without fear, be at peace with the environment, feel valuable, and be content with oneself. It was observed that perceived social support in the development of the qualities is also effective in terms of combat athletes.

3.3.1(b) Family Influence on Sports Participation

The family continues to play a significant role in shaping lifestyle practices, serving as the primary platform for children's socialization, even though other institutions such as education and leisure also contribute to this function (Sanders & Turner, 2018). The structure, status, and cultural capital of the family affect all cultural practices that children participate in. Therefore, it is possible to see the effects of family in sports, which is an important cultural practice (Wheeler, 2012). The family effect is evident from the child's participation in sports and the goals of sports (Horn & Horn, 2007).

Studies have shown that the most basic factors that direct people to sports are interest, curiosity, and ability to participate in sports (Chen et al., 2017). Making use of their children's free time is the most important educational task for family members (Quarmby & Dagkas, 2010). If a child who comes home from school does not find occupations suitable for his interests, he will surely find some work for himself, and some of this will be harmful, disrupting his education. To allow the child to live a normal

social life, the idea of recognising him and adopting attitudes and behaviours suitable for their development in the social environment began to dominate, and families, realising the importance of this social environment, began to be an encouragement rather than an obstacle for their children to consciously turn to an area of interest. Parents have a vital influence on children's participation in physical activities and make physical activities attractive to children (Allender et al., 2006).

Psychologists draw attention to the importance of the age of 0-5 in the development of personality (Amman et al., 2000). These ages are a period when external influences are negligible, and the child spends a great deal of time with the family. Therefore, the family played a dominant role in the socialisation of the child during this period.

Family and family influences, which are the first step of the socialisation process and an important part of the child's psychological development, affect the decisions of the child, and are shaped by the emergence of interest, talent, and capacity, ranging from the child's sports orientation to which sports branch this orientation will be (Amman et al., 2000). All the findings reveal that the family has a significant impact on children's participation in sports and that sports is one of the most important gains in the socialisation process.

Sports skills can help children develop their self-confidence (Guerrero et al., 2016). While these skills enable children to be physically fit, they can also provide them the opportunity to successfully participate in fun games and activities. A child who is below normal in motor development usually does not participate in the games of his higher-skill playmates. He or she may encounter problems with friendships and self-esteem (Skinner & Piek, 2001). Several studies support the claim that sports and other physical activities contribute to the development of self-esteem (Fox & Magnus, 2014; Ouyang et al., 2020).

3.3.1(c) Goal Orientation

Goal orientation has specific importance in sports. Goal orientation can be supportive for the athletes in the context of better performance outcomes and practice to improve skills (Tello et al., 2010). Goals

orientation and its importance in the life of an athlete was evident from the beginning. White and Zellner (1996) conducted a research study on goals orientation and its influence on anxiety traits. Furthermore, cognitive anxiety was also found in the actual athletic contests of athletes in performance-related situations (Mahoney & Meyers, 2021). Researchers also stated that goals orientation can be further divided into two major types of ego orientation end task orientation-based goals (Roberts et al., 1996). Task orientation-based goals help to draw positive psychological impact on the athletes. However egocentric goals orientation increases the risk of anxiety and psychological issues in the athletes (White & Zellner, 1996).

Goal orientations have three main types: performance-avoidance, mastery, and performance approach (Smith et al. 2002). In the last few years, goal orientation is the prime attention of behavioural research studies. Several research studies are conducted to estimate the outcomes of goal orientations on the performance outcomes of students, goal orientation impact on the performance outcomes of employees, end goal orientations impact on the performance outcomes of athletes (Peng & Zhang, 2021). The research studies mentioned in this literature review section will indirectly relate to the goal orientations impact on the psychology of athletes. However, several research studies are conducted on the topic of goal orientations and their impact on anxiety, stress, satisfaction, negative behaviour, negative thinking, positive behaviour, positive thinking, and emotional stability of athletes.

A research study conducted by Sari (2015) collected empirical findings regarding the impact of goal orientation in young athletes on the satisfaction of psychological needs. In this research project, researcher obtained information from 261 males and 142 females with a total research sample of 403 athletes from diverse types of sports, including volleyball, football, basketball, and handball. The researcher used a custom questionnaire to gather data from the research subjects. They concluded that an athlete's goal orientation is linked to anxiety and other psychological behaviours (Sari, 2015). Researcher used Maslow motivational hierarchy to represent the relationship between psychological needs and goals orientation.

The correlation test showed that there is a statistical relationship between an athlete's goal orientation and their basic psychological needs. Sari (2015) found the highest positive correlation between

relatedness and goal orientation. Apart from this autonomy and competence represented a negative correlation between goal orientation and basic psychological needs. However, the searchers also found a surprising result of the relationship between autonomy and predicted task orientation. According to the findings, young athletes do not indicate the need for autonomy to predict task orientations. However, satisfying a person's psychological needs can enhance an athlete's performance outcomes. Apart from these researchers also found demographical profiling based on the variance between the findings of relationship strength and direction put the selected research variables (Sari, 2015).

Another research study focused on goal orientation theory collected information from 278 athletes to test the relationship between goal orientation theory and flow experience. Stavrou et al. (2015) found that goal orientation is significantly associated with the feelings of an athlete during a competition. Considering this association, researchers obtain responses from the athletes at two different time durations: one hour before the start of the competition and 30 minutes after the completion of the competition. Based on the research findings researchers concluded that athletes with lower egos had a better and positive experience of mental state during and after the competition. Goal orientation was used as a triggering factor for flow experience to indicate the higher task. According to the research goal orientation can enhance task involvement which is beneficial to get observed in activity however it can reduce the enjoyment of athletes during the competition. Consequently, athletes experience a negative mental state and extensive stress during competition. Athletes highly focused on objective outcomes of a sports competition represent higher levels of anxiety which has a negative association with their mental state and psychological health condition in long term. Athletes with higher ego orientation and goals orientation represented somatic anxiety and pre-competitive state cognitive anxiety when they were not expecting to win the competition. Although goals orientation has a positive impact on the performance outcomes of an athlete to some extent however it can bring negative impact on the psychological condition of an athlete by enhancing anxiety, stress, aggression, and emotional instabilities (Stavrou et al., 2015)

The relationship between performance and mental factors in 122 elite football players at the championship level was studied (Kalinowski et al., 2022). The results showed that the task-oriented

motivation and performance effectiveness of football players were directly related. Furthermore, players with a higher task-oriented motivation coped well with stress.

A research study conducted on female youth athletes in Mexican America in 2000 obtained original responses from 196 female volleyball players and provided specific research findings on the impact of anxiety in female athletes (Voight et al., 2000). A multi-dimensional and multivariate relationship testing approach considered 3 dimensions of anxiety trait which includes concentration disruption, worry /concern, and somatic anxiety. Multiple regression analysis uses a hierarchical model to study the anxiety dimensions and meditating role of confidence in female athletes. According to the research findings, self-confidence and goals orientation have a direct association with the stress responses of female athletes. Goals orientations change the anxiety level and concentration disruption for the athletes by changing their task involvement (Voight et al., 2000).

3.3.1(d) Understanding Pressure in Football Players

The world of football is both physically and mentally demanding, with players facing immense pressure to meet the expectations of their coaches, fans, and themselves (Mason & Lovell, 2000). According to Sarmiento et al., (2018) the capacity to handle this pressure can significantly impact a player's performance on the field. Several studies have examined the effect of pressure on football player performance, focusing on specific stressors such as the importance of success and the presence of spectators (Leitner & Richlan, 2021; Reade et al., 2020; Calleja et al., 2022).

For example, Thelwell et al. (2006) explored the role of self-talk and imagery in helping players cope with pressure situations. Their findings suggested that positive self-talk and visualization techniques could be effective in reducing the negative effects of pressure on performance. Additionally, in a study researchers focused on the physiological responses of football players to pressure, highlighting the importance of stress management and emotional regulation in optimizing athletic performance (Robazza et al., 2004). Furthermore, research has also examined the different sources of stress that football players experience. These sources include in-sport stressors such as coach pressure to win

(Kristiansen et al., 2019) and conflicts with teammates (Pensgaard et al., 2018) as well as external stressors like family problems and disputes with the press or fans (Heidari et al., 2019).

Furthermore, the previous Olympic championship winner athletes were further interviewed by these sports psychologists and the coaches. Based on their explanation, individuals in the competition were forced into two faces pressure situations, and it did not induce any adverse impact on their performance and psychological conditions (Ötting et al., 2020).

Zhou and Zhou (2019) worked on cognitive neural mechanisms and competition pressure sources in athletes. The pressure sources of different types which cause stress and the question in this research were related to the abroad issues, cognitive neuroscience, and meticulous investigation (Zhou & Zhou, 2019). The participation of different athletes in the general administration of sports, a scientific project, was based on this psychological pressure. The natural language process and machine learning technology were applied by using clustering over algorithms to identify the impact of the pressure of competition on the athletes. The reverse calculation of the breakdown was used to identify how the depressed players performed with no confidence and how the competition pressure-induced impacted their performances. In this research study by da Silva Borin et al. (2013), female athletes were selected as the research population to investigate the impact of pressure caused by muscle problems. According to the results, the pressure was negatively associated with the performance of female athletes. The pressure was associated with stress and anxiety, which influence the overall performance outcome of female athletes. According to the research findings, pressure needs to be controlled by external therapies, consultancies, and appropriate motivational strategies employed by the training coaches to help female athletes overcome the pressure and negative factors influencing their psychological health condition and overall performance outcomes during the competition (da Silva Borin et al., 2013).

Leff & Hoyle (1995) conducted a research study on parental pressure regarding the career choices of athletes. According to research findings, female athletes were highly influenced by external pressure compared to male athletes. According to the research study, negative outcomes of stress and pressure are inappropriate for the performance of athletes. Some negative outcomes include guilt, complaints, somatic anxiety, and fears of failure. Researchers also found that feelings of burnout also associate with

the external pressure to outperform in a competition. For instance, pressure from coaches and investors also increases stress and anxiety in the athletes which contribute to enhancing psychological issues (Leff & Hoyle, 1995).

According to research findings, athletes experience stress and anxiety in specific roles and situations. Athletes also faced some psychological situations such as the pressure of the game by the coaches and investors. Furthermore, uncertainty and anticipation also cause enhanced psychological issues. According to the researchers, physical stress and psychological issues arise when athletes remain away from their friend's families and daily routines in an unknown environment during competition and training sessions (Dehghansai et al., 2021).

Another research report published by the government of Australia phone that athletes require Wellness in everyday life to treat their mental health issues. There are several factors that can cause well-being and psychological issues in athletes, such as sleeping, disturbance, and nutrition (Chang et al., 2020). The researchers' athletes should focus on their minor mental health issues as well instead of assessing only major issues. Comprehensive clinical treatment plans and Wellness checking is highly important for athletes.

When athletes fail to compete with their competitors in the game, they go through depression and stress. Psychological distress is a highly reported psychological issue in athletes. According to the survey, self-esteem, anxiety, and stressful ports are early symptoms of depression in athletes, which is a major psychological issue.

According to a survey, 35% of athletes experience mental health disorders at some stage of their career which can include anxiety, depression, substance abuse, and burnout. Such mental health issues can be triggered by several external factors, such as the pressure of the selection committee as well as premature retirement, which constitute promote dismal and suicidal thoughts in athletes (Xanthopoulos et al., 2020). Unstable emotions, eating disorders, and aggression also represent psychological problems faced by athletes. A research study reviewed 15,000 research articles on the topic of mental health disorders in sportsmen and athletes. According to the research, athletes have insufficient information

and awareness regarding psychological situations; therefore, many times, athletes do not speak about confronting psychological issues. The research implied that further awareness and support programs are required to gain information about the psychological situations through which athletes get mental health disorders and abnormalities (Rice et al., 2016).

According to Jackson & Beilock (2007), different competitive athletes encounter choking problems when the pressure gets high in their athletic careers. Choking can be explained as any individual in a stressful situation, and being under pressure is a frequent problem in athletes when they fail to control pressure. The pressure can be caused by any external or internal reason, such as pressure from parents and coaches. While on the other hand, internal pressure can be a desire to win a competition. Researchers found that trait anxiety and self-consciousness also relate to the choking phenomena of athletes. Athletes having greater create anxiety and self-consciousness had a greater risk of choking under pressure. However, sometimes athletes also choke because of other psychological and physical issues. However, from the medical research studies, the very mature reason behind the choking of athletes was linked to psychological issues such as anxiety and stress (Jackson & Beilock, 2007).

The ability to handle pressure is crucial for athletes in football. Studies examined different stressors, including success, spectators, in-sport and external factors. Psychological strategies like self-talk, imagery, and stress management techniques have been highlighted as effective ways to reduce the negative effects of pressure.

Education is a crucial sub-theme within the larger discussion of isolation and invisibility in Northern Cyprus since it has a direct impact on professional development and the options available to young athletes (Wylleman & Lavalley, 2004). The school system in Northern Cyprus is affected by international isolation, which limits support for sports education courses (Mertkan-Ozunlu & Thomson, 2009). This lack of support restricts the growth of possible professional sports careers and reinforces the region's invisibility on an international level.

3.3.2 Structure of the Education System in Northern Cyprus

Education is the process of intentionally creating the desired change in an individual's behaviour through his own life. In general, education is a system of influences carried out with the aim of providing certain developments in human behaviour in terms of knowledge, skills, understanding, interest, and other personality qualities (Troisi et al., 2018).

According to Brough (2021), education, in its broadest sense, is the process of educating people for certain purposes. The education system in Northern Cyprus is divided into three main sections: formal education, special education, and non-formal education. Compulsory basic education, which lasts from the age of 5 to 15, is free in the country. This section includes kindergarten, primary and secondary school education. Kindergarten is not compulsory, although it is included in basic education. After the compulsory basic education period ends, the secondary education period begins. This period is not mandatory, and its duration may change. Education in high schools and vocational high schools is three years. In colleges, fine arts high schools and apprenticeships, education is four years.

After secondary education, students can continue in the period of higher education. During this period, undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral education were provided. Students who have completed secondary education at the age of 18 or 19 can continue their higher education optionally.

The purpose of education and sports stated in the physical education and sports law numbered 67/99 of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus: To organise, develop, and direct activities for individuals to improve their physical and mental abilities, to evaluate their work time in sports terms, and to develop health (Deniz & Yonel, 2013).

Plans and programs were prepared and implemented in accordance with the national plans to be prepared at the end of the sports council, the general objectives of physical education and sports, and the directions of the Ministry. All activities related to physical education and sports are subject to the supervision, control, and permission of the Ministry (Deniz, 2000).

The development, dissemination, and continuity of physical education and sports throughout the country are planned and realised by considering contemporary and scientific developments and the

realities of the country. Planning and realisation work in this direction is carried out in unity and coordination with the Ministry and all relevant sports organisations. The development of physical education and sports is ensured by considering contemporary developments and country realities, as well as environmental characteristics and requirements. It is essential that the venue, personnel, building, facility, equipment and capacities of sports federations, sports clubs, and sports associations participating in official competitions are in accordance with international standards (Eralp, 2001).

Understanding the structure of the school system in Northern Cyprus gives background for comprehending the significance of education in sports development. Education is an important process for athletes and an important dimension in the development of sports (Comeaux & Harrison, 2011). Academic failure is seen as a reason for quitting sports (Gelen, 2021). There is a positive relationship between sports and academic failure. It has been determined because of the research that individuals who do sports are more successful in their academic life and can show themselves better in their lessons (Osman and Alkan, 1997). With education, football players can be able to develop themselves more sociologically and psychologically (Comeaux & Harrison, 2011). According to Fuller et al., (2011), FIFA delivered health education programme to the children to encourage them to be healthy and play football in Mauritius which is recognised by FIFA.

3.4 Political and Economic Oppression, Theme 4

The theme of political and economic oppression is important in this research because it influences how power imbalances, oppression, and discrimination influence societies and change people's lives. By investigating the impact of political and economic oppression, we may gain a deeper understanding of the complexities of social institutions and their devastating consequences for marginalised populations.

3.4.1 Impact of Socio-Cultural Concerns and Learned Habits on Professional Lives

The sub-theme is important it explores how deep-rooted cultural norms and habitual behaviours established by a society's political and economic structures influence professional outcomes and

possibilities. Gender roles, class expectations, and racial biases are all common sociocultural problems that influence professional choices, workplace interactions, and even business chances. Understanding these implications is critical for reducing structural barriers and establishing equitable working settings. Social concerns and learned habits in individuals who grow up in this society can significantly impact their professional lives (Shonkoff et al., 2012). Over time, individuals facing unsolvable challenges may perceive their responses and experiences as disconnected. This kind of learning can hinder future learning and result in a sense of passivity. As a consequence, the individual may struggle to solve similar problems in the future, even when solutions exist (Mohanty et al., 2015). This is revealed as learned hopelessness, which increases anxiety (Odabasi, 2013; Al-Masry et al., 2022). Learned hopelessness affects social anxiety among professional football players in Northern Cyprus (Akşar, 2009). According to Freire's critical pedagogy, one of the biggest challenges to igniting the community development process is to find a way through the hopelessness that oppression usually brings' (Ledwith, 2015).

"thwarted by injustice, exploitation, oppression, and the violence of the oppressors; it is affirmed by the yearning of the oppressed for freedom and justice, and by their struggle to recover their lost humanity. Dehumanization, which marks not only those whose humanity has been stolen, but also (though in a different way) those who have stolen it, is a distortion of the vocation of becoming more fully human." (Freire, 2005, p.44)

According to Freire, when the oppressed acknowledge that their capacities equal those of the oppressors, they declare their ability to oppose the oppressors in the same manner. The oppressed are "things" in the eyes of the oppressors, whereas they are human beings (Freire, 2005). The oppressed have no other rights; their sole one has existed from the beginning of time: the right to "survive." The oppressors desire total control over everything. For them, money is the most important thing, and having more is their top priority. They want to fit into the category of "owners" in this way. They consider it harmful to raise the oppressors' consciousness, humanise them, and free them. However, they are unaware of how the oppressors' humanity is diminished by this scenario. They mix up the meanings of the words "to have" and "to exist." The oppressors are inept, unappreciative, and enemies; they have but do not exist. Things and the oppressed are merely "things" to them. The downtrodden are obligated

to obey the demands of their oppressors and view their condition as a destiny. The phrase "man" according to Freire, "at the heart of educational administration," has its roots in Marx's theory of the growth of individual awareness and alienation in contemporary society (Øversveen, 2022).

The oppressors desire total control over everything (Bishop, 2023). They begin with the oppressed asking themselves why their consciousness has been destroyed. In sports, we might also observe this pressure. For instance, financially powerful teams may easily compete with weaker clubs during the transfer period. Likewise, it is unfair to the oppressed party for strong institutions to exclusively consider their own interests when making judgements. Humanizing pedagogy in an ongoing conversation between the revolution's leaders (teachers) and the oppressed people is the most powerful weapon in bringing about this knowledge (students) (Law, 2015).

Sports have always been seen as a platform for social integration and equality, bringing together athletes from diverse backgrounds to compete on a level playing field (Washington & Karen, 2001). Athletes often face various forms of oppression, including unequal treatment, discrimination, and lack of opportunities (Singer, 2005; Hextrum & Cameron, 2023). The lack of representation of minority coaches and executives in major sports organizations, the unequal treatment of transgender athletes, and the perpetuation of harmful stereotypes in sports media all serve as ongoing examples of the complex interplay between sports and social oppression (Cooper et al., 2020). Athletes from marginalized communities often face barriers in obtaining proper training facilities, coaching, and financial support (Vandermeerschen et al., 2017). FIFA, as the governing body of international football, holds considerable influence over the sport and its athletes. Despite its global authority, FIFA has been criticized for its part in continuing oppression and inequality within football (Bishop & Cooper, 2018; Duval, 2022). According to research by Duval (2022), FIFA applies separate rules for women and men, lacks representation of women in its executive bodies, and also lacks economic resources.

Since FIFA does not recognise professional footballers in the Northern Cyprus (Lekakis & Xenakis, 2022), they are unable to represent themselves in international competitions (Lekakis, 2021).

"Violence is initiated by those who oppress, who exploit, who fail to recognize others as persons—not by those who are oppressed, exploited, and unrecognized. It is not the unloved who initiate disaffection, but those who cannot love because they love only themselves. It is not the helpless, subject to terror, who initiate error, but the violent, who with their power create the concrete situation which begets the "rejects of life." It is not the tyrannized who initiate despotism, but the tyrants. It is not the despised who initiate hatred, but those who despise. It is not those whose humanity is denied them who negate humankind, but those who denied that humanity (thus negating their own as well)." (Freire, 2005, p.55)

In 2005, FIFA began a project called "Football for Hope" to help improve social development globally. This program aimed to reach out to children and young people, raising awareness and promoting social development initiatives (Gannett et al., 2014; Thornton et al., 2021). This project opened Football For Hope Centres around the world and with this centre it was offered opportunities to those football players who would like to escape hopelessness (Forde, 2023).

The factors influencing player contracts, the effect of health and pension insurance, are important under the title of political and economic oppression. Investigating the effects of political and economic oppression can help researchers to understand the complex structure of social institutions and their negative implications for marginalised groups.

3.4.2 Professional Football Contract

The Professional Footballer Contract is the contract concluded between professional footballers and football clubs. A professional football player contract is also an employment contract concluded by professional football players and clubs or licensed representatives of both parties and deals with the execution of football activity for a certain fee (Magee, 2006).

In the modern world of football, contracts should be signed with players before they join the team. Contracts outline the duties that are present with the player and the club. The details of the contracts, including wages, bonuses and what was offered by the club, should be written in the contracts. The

definition of "professional player" in FIFA regulations is clear; "A player who has a written employment contract with a professional club and is paid more for his active football activity than for his expenses." (Parrish, 2015).

According to Greenfield and Osborn (2001), professional football players agree to play their best performance in all matches which they choose to play, attend all training, and adhere to the laws of association football for the whole season. Not only have national transfers increased, and also international football transfers are increased in these years. Therefore, football turned into a transfer market. The players' employment contracts and international transfer agreements regulated by the FIFA Procedural Rules, which is the universal standard of civil litigation (Łukomski, 2020).

In professional sports, it is defined as the consent agreements between athletes and clubs that impose mutual responsibilities on the parties (Katz, 2011). The following definition can be used to express a Professional Footballer's agreement.

Making a contract is an essential prerequisite for a football player to achieve professional status (Gomtsian et al., 2018). In other words, it is necessary to form a contract in order for a football player to play professionally (Mavromati, 2011). The professional football player contract is the result of negotiations led by experienced managers with specialized expertise in this area. Both parties consider each other's personalities, and while they may have advantages to use as leverage, there isn't a significant difference (O Leary & Caiger, 2000).

On the other hand, the philosophy of amateurism, and presumably that of amateur clubs, is that sport is done for its own sake as well as its function in fostering citizenship, character development, and other ideals (Holt, 2003). Amateur clubs may be supported by the money, taxes, and volunteer time of players, their families, or local communities. Amateur players have somewhere to play at the amateur clubs in normal circumstances. Natural selection will result in some individuals showing higher potential than others. Away from the amateur club, such talents may be refined by practise, either alone or with others (Dabscheck, 2006).

Furthermore, FIFA stated the unregistered football players as;

"Any player not registered at an association who appears for a club in any official match shall be considered to have played illegitimately. Without prejudice to any measure required to rectify the sporting consequences of such an appearance, sanctions may also be imposed on the player and/or the club. The right to impose such sanctions lies in principle with the association or the organiser of the competition concerned." (FIFA, 2003, p.13).

3.4.3 Health and Social Insurance of Professional football

This subject is important because it covers the critical issue of social security and welfare for marginalised groups, particularly those living in economically unstable or politically isolated locations. Health and retirement insurance are critical for long-term well-being and financial stability, helping people to manage health risks and maintain a fair quality of life after retirement (Pilipiec et al., 2021). These advantages are frequently risked under political and economic restrictions, putting disadvantaged groups at risk of being poor and disease. Thus, exploring this issue may show the larger implications of structural inequities.

The physical demands of the sport put them at a higher risk of injury, and the pressure to perform at a high level can take a toll on their mental and emotional well-being (Soligard et al., 2016; Sadigursky et al., 2017). As a result, it is crucial for professional football players to have access to comprehensive health and social insurance coverage to address their specific needs (Weir et al., 2009).

Pensions or social security retirement, it distributes social security to the public against occupational, physiological, and socio-economic risks. The main aims and purposes of social security are to supply economic support to individuals living in society, protect society against events or phenomena that are considered risky, and establish a system to ensure the development of everyone living in society (Weir et al., 2009). According to McGillivray et al. (2005) professional women footballers often have short careers with little job security and no occupation pensions. Therefore, in order to secure themselves in women's football in England, education beyond sport is also crucial for their future (Culvin, 2023).

Nowadays, the obligations imposed on the club in the contracts of professional football players include articles such as “taking care of the health of the football player within the principles of the articles on illness and injury and taking the necessary precautions during competitions, training, camps and travels” (Cengiz et al., 2021). Schlossberg (1981) mentions three main factors affecting adaptation in transition. The first is role change, the second is psychological competence, and the third is environmental characteristics that include physical adjustments. Socially learned tendencies, behaviours, activities, and characteristics that are internalised by individuals affect the lifestyles of individuals and distinguish them from each other.

In fact, although general professional retirement and retiring from elite or professional sports seem to be similar, retiring can be a more distressing process for an athlete. Because this situation includes a big life change, changes while quitting sports can affect people's psychological status, abilities, and quality of life (Erpič et al., 2004).

Retirement can be divided into two categories. This depends on whether athletes retire voluntarily or involuntarily. While voluntary retirement can be defined as ending one's career voluntarily, involuntary (compulsory) retirement can be grouped into four basic functions, especially age, disability, mediocre performance, and special reasons. These functions are shaped psychologically, socially, and physically during the transition to retirement (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994; Alfermann et al., 2004). The phenomenon of retirement differs in athletes compared to other occupational groups. To divide these differences into two, the first is that individuals start sports at an incredibly early age and spend all their time in training and competitions. For this reason, according to our experience, people's communication with the outside world decreases. This communication problem creates a barrier between society and athletes. Since the individual targets sports as the priority of his life, the phenomenon of retirement can be described as a great trauma for him.

Since the identity integrity formed by the athlete over time is completely related to the sport, the athlete experiences negative transitions during retirement. This process brings about a loss of self-esteem and identity confusion in the athlete.

Retirement is a loss for most elite athletes. In ending his sports career, the athlete is faced with some negative personal, social, and professional changes (Weir et al., 2009). These changes affect the athlete in psychological, emotional, and behavioural dimensions. Although general professional retirement and retiring from elite or professional sports seem to be similar based on effective resistance, retiring can be more distressing for the athlete. Because this situation includes a great life change, changes during quitting sports can affect the psychological status, abilities, and quality of life of individuals.

Due to the nature of sports, there will be a winner and a loser. This perspective places emphasis on the survivor and less on the losers. Another factor, discrediting, is a harsh process that can occur at any level of competitive sports (Sanderson & Weathers, 2019). Loss of popularity, like Darwin's theory of natural selection, expresses a natural process in which those who always improve themselves and can adapt to a game can exist in sports (Hull, 2005). Research shows that the "competition" factor wears out the individual during the period when the athletes are interested in active sports. Secondly, it affects the athlete psychologically; loss of popularity, that is, "loss of status".

3.3 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework evolved in response to the literature review and the main issues that the research presented, such as structural inequity, loss of identity, isolation/invisibility, and political and economic oppression. The work of Fricker on Epistemic Injustice (Fricker, 2017) and the concepts of Epistemic Violence/Testimonial injustice discussed by Dotson (2012) help to explain the 'silencing' of players' voices and how they are made epistemically invisible by being excluded. Freire (Gibson, 1999) provides a framework to understand oppression, and Stuart Hall (1993) helps understand the critical relationships between globalisation, culture, and identity.

3.3.1 Stuart Hall and Identity

The "Che Guevara" of academic, Stuart Hall (1932-2014), has been regarded as a legend. He pushes into a lot of new territory, starts attacks, and wins. This was how he lived a full life, setting an example for future explorers every time he ventures into the wilderness and retreats (Grossberg, 2015). In this regard, he possesses a multi-layered academic "identity" or image. In the late 1950s, he was a key figure in the Second British New Left, as well as a link between the First and Second New Lefts (O'Connor, 2016). He dedicated himself to cultural studies during the 1960s and 1970s, earning the titles "Father of Cultural Studies" and "Real Founder of the Birmingham School" (Zhang, 2017). He established the well-known term "Thatcherism" and led the charge in denouncing the Thatcher administration in the 1980s (Jiménez Botta, 2022). His reflections on his own "identification" as a coloured immigrant after the 1980s came to an end greatly contributed to the emergence of "identity" politics and cultural pluralism (Hall, 1993; Hall 1996). It is challenging to connect these "identities" since they are distinct from one another, which leads to the problem that many researchers lack a thorough knowledge of Hall's "identities". Some racial studies experts, Grant Farred possibly being the first, start to create a more accurate picture of the "black" Hall as the politics of "identification" gain momentum (Alexander, 2009). The inherent logic that permeates Hall's academic life is attempted to be explained in terms of ethnic "identification" and its awakening. However, their justification minimises his many other well-known "identities" which are seen as little more than "dead skin" that is being removed off him as he continues "growing up ". According to Hall;

"It (the approval of identity) originates from the narration of the self. As fictional as the essence of the process is doomed to be, the effects of discourse, material or politics of the process would never be damaged, even if some components of the identity which are woven into a story partially exist in the imagination (and symbolism). Therefore, the identity is always partially constructed in the imagination, or at least in the realm of imagination." (Zhang, 2017, p.190).

3.3.2 Paulo Freire

Paulo Freire was born in Recife, Brazil, in 1921. In North-East Brazil, he started working with adult illiterates in 1947, and over time, he developed a working methodology that has come to be known as conscientization (Bhattacharya, 2011). He was Professor of History and Philosophy of Education at the University of Recife until 1964, and in the 1960s he was active in a popular education campaign to combat enormous illiteracy (Gerhardt, 2022). Since 1962, his technique has been widely tested, and the movement has grown with the support of the federal government. In 1963–1964 all Brazilian states offered coordinator training, and a strategy was developed to organise 2000 cultural circles to reach 2,000,000 illiterates (de Freitas Ermel & Hernández Huerta, 2022).

Following the 1964 coup, Freire was imprisoned for what the new authorities saw as subversive aspects in his teaching. The UN School of Political Sciences sponsored lectures on his work during his next appearance (Torres, 2014), which took place when he was living in exile in Chile. In 1969-1970, he was a Visiting Professor at Harvard University's Center for the Study of Development and Social Change.

In 1970, he accepted a position as a special consultant in the Office of Education of the World Council of Churches in Geneva (Torres, 2008). In that position for the following nine years, he started popular education projects with a variety of organisations and provided recommendations on educational reform. By 1979, Paulo Freire had been able to return to Brazil. In Sao Paulo, Freire joined the Workers' Party and directed its six-year adult literacy programme (Lownds, 2006). Paulo Freire was appointed as the city of Sao Paulo's Secretary of Education when the party won the elections that year and assumed control of the municipality. Freire's work on oppression, injustice and hope help to explain the situation of the footballers in Northern Cyprus this will be discussed further.

3.3.3 Miranda Fricker Epistemic Injustice

Miranda Fricker frequently goes into moral philosophy and social epistemology in her studies, but because feminist ideas have always been essential to what she is attempting to achieve in philosophy,

she thinks that much of her work may also be classified as feminist philosophy (Casciola, 2023). Feminist philosophical work which she studied as a student while completing an interdisciplinary master's degree in Women's Studies (1989-90) at the University of Kent, Canterbury, drew her back to postgraduate research in philosophy. She then finished my DPhil at Oxford in 1996, with the added benefit of being co-supervised by Sabina Lovibond and Bernard Williams, both of whom were and continue to be guiding lights (Queloz, 2021). The work's ongoing focus on the significance of social identity and power in every aspect of human behaviour supports its propensity to veer toward the areas on the frontier between epistemology and moral philosophy.

In social epistemology, she has investigated how epistemic virtues and defects might be entrenched in institutional structures, as well as in ethics, to our interpersonal moral psychological reactions such as blaming, apologising, and forgiveness (Kim et al., 2023). She investigates the notion that we ought to only foster reactions that support common moral convictions in the second connection.

Fricker does not want it to collapse into postmodern philosophy, but rather to remain loyal to the reality of "socially placed" people and groups (Avornyo, 2019). She insisted that "reason" should not be a term that is eliminated or disregarded. By implying that it is impossible for conversations to be free of politics, Fricker claims that by discussing "ethical-intellectual qualities" and attempting to identify "virtuous listeners," she really made it possible to debate "social political reform" (Betz, 2023). Epistemic injustice stems from epistemic, or knowledge-related, concerns. It is feasible to characterise these behaviours as "transmitting information to individuals through telling them and making sense of our social experiences"(Fricker, 2013). At this stage, the unequal circumstance to which a person is subjected to make sense of and communicate their own experiences results in epistemic injustice (Fricker, 2007). Thus, "epistemic" raises the social as a topic of philosophy as well as people's interactions with others.

"We should leave room for something called 'epistemic injustice' that is primarily a distributive injustice—someone's receiving less than their fair share of an epistemic good, such as education, or access to expert advice or information." (Fricker, 2007, p.1).

Football is a game that everyone can play anywhere in the world. Offering equal opportunities for the growth of football players in the North of Cyprus is a crucial consideration in terms of equality and fairness, much like Fricker stated regarding the inequality in education.

The North of Cyprus is not represented within international football dialogue for political reasons, muting the voices of professional football players which they believe is an injustice (Lekakis & Xenakis, 2022). This attitude leaves question marks on the concept of friendship, brotherhood, and peace between the countries of sports. Athletes are manipulated into believing they are not eligible to compete and do not look for opportunities (Donnor, 2005). According to Fricker's concept, people who play football in Northern Cyprus are epistemologically muted, and structural discrimination is a core cause of the problem (Fricker, 2017). People are educated to remain silent, and as a result, societal structures frequently perpetuate biases and enforce silencing policies (Fricker, 2017). According to Fricker (2017), power imbalances can silence marginalized voices. The football players do not have a voice within the recognised international football community, whereas south Cyprus football players are given open access as they are members of FIFA (Lekakis & Xenakis, 2022). The dynamics of oppression are internal and external. External forces deprive individuals or groups of self-determination, distributive justice, and democratic participation. It can be argued that political oppression, or the creation of material, legal, military, economic and other social barriers to the exercising of self-determination, distributive justice, and democratic participation, results from the use of multiple forms of oppression by dominating agents, who realise their own interests by putting pressure on people or groups in positions of powerlessness. Political and psychological forms of oppression are, therefore, dependent on each other. Those international agents who chose to hide behind a position of neutrality for their own gain are, in effect, contributing to structural inequity.

In the words of Paulo Freire:

"Washing one's hands of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral." (Freire, 1985).

From a CTFA perspective, Freire's quotation is explicit about how the international football community behaves regarding the decision to exclude Northern Cyprus from international games. Athletes are not allowed to compete internationally. This structural form of oppression also becomes psychological oppression within the player community.

Psychological oppression in football includes harmful practices that can negatively affect players' well-being and performance. These practices encompass undue pressure, abuse, discriminatory treatment, bullying tactics, and threats related to their performance (Nazarov, 2020). Research shows that these detrimental practices have a negative impact on players' psychological well-being, self-esteem, and overall performance on the field (Bennett, 2021). The impact can lead to higher levels of stress, anxiety, and depression among athletes. Addressing this issue is crucial for creating a safe and supportive environment for players (Finch et al., 2002).

Another manifestation of structural oppression at the international level is codified rules on Third World economies and World Trade (Prilleltensky and Gonick, 1996). Freire's concept of 'Learned hopelessness', or to use a psychological definition, Learned Helplessness (Hackfort et al., 2019; Maier & Seligman, 2016), is another important manifestation of oppression. Oppression, exerted through dominant international politics over a long time, affects the whole state, and this results in 'learned helplessness'. This cultivated incapability is also reflected sociologically within player identity. Individuals see themselves as hopeless and invisible in the international arena. The epistemologies of players are important. Epistemology is the philosophy of what knowledge is, how it is developed, and by what means. The knowledge of football players and the pressures applied to them until today have been differentiated over time. Football players have been structurally discriminated against due to the political status of the country they live in, and their epistemologies reflect the learned powerlessness of the oppressed. (Lekakis & Xenakis, 2022; Akşar, 2009).

The literature research finds a significant absence of research on professional football players in Northern Cyprus, indicating that there is a gap in academic literature. This study addresses key themes such as structural inequity, loss of identity, isolation/invisibility, and the effects of political and economic oppression on professional life. The planned study would go deeply into these underexplored

areas, focusing on themes such as health and pension security, the significance of cultural standards on career paths, and the psychological effects of professional solitude. These gaps will inform the design of interviews, which used the identified themes to develop a better understanding of football players' experiences in this geopolitically isolated location. In the next chapter, the interview analyses of professional football players will be examined in the light of these themes.

CHAPTER FOUR: STUDY ONE - STRUCTURAL INEQUALITIES IMPACT ON FOOTBALL AS A CAREER

Chapter four presents an analysis of the data and offers an analysis of the results and discussion using 4 key themes which are structural inequality, loss of identity, isolation/invisibility, and political and economic oppression. The study uses qualitative interviews with 15 professional football players from Yenicami Ağdelen SC, as discussed in chapter 2 this was the most appropriate research method to collect the player voice. The qualitative interviews presented the researcher with several key findings that will be discussed from a pragmatist perspective.

Four themes were identified through the literature review: structural inequality, loss of identity, isolation/invisibility, and political and economic oppression. Sub-themes under structural inequalities include athlete development, dual football careers, and injuries. The issue of loss of identity includes social, cultural, national, and dual identity's sub-themes. The isolation/invisibility theme covers psychological dynamics and education in Northern Cyprus. Finally, the theme of political and economic oppression explores the influence of socio-cultural concerns and learned hopelessness, as well as issues concerning professional football contracts, health, and social insurance (pension), and professional football players sub-themes. Considering the interview analysis and data shows are similar themes. This thesis focuses specifically on a sociocultural perspective.

The data is organized under the thematic heading of structural inequity, which focuses on career paths and professional approaches. This includes subheadings such as post-career plans and key factors influencing football players.

Structural Inequity, Theme 1

As discussed in the previous chapter, the disadvantages faced by certain individuals or groups due to their social, economic, or cultural positions can emerge as barriers. A sub-theme that emerged from the data was the end of career transition concept (Day-Garner, 2018), this was pertinent due to the structure of football in North Cyprus which is not fully professional in the sense that the player is not paid

substantial wages to afford to live post-football career, therefore they needed to plan a second career post-football.

4.1 Football Career Paths

This sub-theme investigates how structural issues, such as economic conditions, access to training, and political recognition by organisations such as FIFA, affect football careers. In politically and economically unstable places such as Northern Cyprus, these factors have a tremendous impact on players' professional paths and chances.

4.1.1 Post-career Plan of Football Players

As a result of the interviews and post-career planning results, professional football players highlighted the feeling of hopelessness regarding their future and the belief structural inequality was evident within Northern Cyprus with regards to professional football and the opportunities post career. The data are provided in the table below:

Table 2

Post-career planning (transitions)

| Post-Career Plan | Responses (n) | Percentage (%) |
|------------------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Undecided | 2 | 13.3 |
| Uniformed Services (Police) | 1 | 6.7 |
| Football Academy and Coaching | 12 | 80.0 |
| Work (Not Specified) | 1 | 6.7 |
| Business | 1 | 6.7 |
| Uniformed Services (Military) | 1 | 6.7 |
| Not Football (Other Not Specified) | 1 | 6.7 |
| Total Responders | 15 | 100 |

Based on the interview results of this study, most football players plan to stay in football after their careers. They explained that professional football players who think about this have plans to become a football coach or part of a football academy. One of the main reasons for this is that professional football players really love what they do.

The data on what professional football players plan to do after they stop playing gives us some essential information (Table 2). Most participants (80.0%) wanted to stay in football. They might want to work in football academies or become coaches. This shows that many players want to help the sport even after playing. However, two players (13.3%) are not yet sure what they want to do after they finish playing. This means that deciding what to do next can be difficult for them, so they might need help in figuring it out. According to the Day-Garner (2018) psychological specific help would be beneficial for the football players in the transition phase. In addition, it was suggested as a need for the football associations and clubs to have a football career advice support system to prepare the players for the transition phase. A small group, (13.3%), thought about joining the police or military. This means that they are interested in jobs that are different from football, where they can help others and have a structured job. Some players, around 20.0%, consider other options, such as working in different fields or starting their own businesses.

The explanation of the football player, who considers football to be the future, is as follows:

"It's a very critical question ... Even though I cannot say anything clearly for now, I have football in my heart. I can be a coach or take a job at the football academy [...] While continuing my football career, I thought that one day I could go in this direction, so I entered the coaching training courses organised by the Football Federation and obtained my coaching license. Although I have not practiced much until today, I can help young individuals who want to benefit from my experience and knowledge in football training. So maybe I would be a coach. " (Interview 14)

This is further exemplified by the following extract from a football player.

"Football is my life and I don't think I will be able to stay apart much after my football career! At first, I can start coaching U15 or U17 teams from youth teams. [...] For this, of course, while playing football, I entered the coaching courses of the football federation and I'm glad I did, now I have a coaching license. I may be a head coach in the future ... I have a good

experience for this, and I think I will train myself to be a head coach until then. " (Interview 11)

Professional football players also consider the opposite explanation. The football players' statements are as follows.

"I have concerns about the future ... I give years to football, but at the end of the day, even after an injury, I have no guarantee. I have no retirement from football as an option. Because it's not considered a job. " (Interview 1)

According to the psychology dictionary, learned helplessness is the result of encountering uncontrollable, antipathic situations and the possibility of escaping under the influence of this result. This is explained as a situation that prevents learning or causes it to take a long time under these conditions (Maier & Seligman, 2016).

The fact that a solution has not been reached for a long time in football emerges as induced despair in football players. Instilled incapability also brings hopelessness to individuals in the face of uncertainty about their futures. Football players have been indifferent to this unresolved situation and have now begun to accept it. In this way, instead of trying to find a solution instead of seeking their rights, they go to training and play games to save the day. After years, the performance levels can worsen daily, as the teams in the leagues do not match any outside team except each other. If there is no competition, development slows down and stops.

According to the researcher's perspective, it is sad to see the younger generations in this concept, and the development of a generation that puts this on their minds at a very early age will worsen day by day.

Further epitomised by the following extract from football players:

"I feel a little sad about this issue because the truth is that football is not enough in our country. A long time ago, I thought that maybe I would become a coach after quitting football. But my opinion has now completely changed ... Our resources are very inadequate in our country. There is not enough pitch, there is no equipment, and we are having problems with the ground [...] If I become a coach, these problems will not be solved and no matter what we do, they

will still be an obstacle. I don't think that's the value of football ... At least in world football, football is in a completely different position. " (Interview 5)

As the Northern Cyprus is not recognised by FIFA (Lekakis, 2015), this situation leads to lack of knowledge, end-of-career transition programmes, and lack of resources and opportunities for football players. According to the researchers, unequal distribution of resources and opportunities leads to injustice (Cunningham et al., 2021; Tandon et al., 2021).

From the researcher's perspective, football in Northern Cyprus faces inequalities in terms of not being able to access data or information when announced by FIFA. The fact that CTFA learns about every new initiative of FIFA first from the press and then by using its own limited resources causes a structural inequality. According to Fricker (2007), if everyone gets their rights and someone does not, this creates epistemic injustice. Additionally, epistemic injustice is imposed on Northern Cypriot football players. The future concerns of young football players affect their goal setting throughout their football careers. If they have concerns about the future, they will not want to set targets on the path they worry about. Thus, even if they have devoted their years to football, they will have to go in a completely different direction when they finish their football careers. Their doubts about the future, even after retirement and disability, are undoubtedly reflected in their performance to a certain extent.

Professional football players who do not think of football in the future express that they think in various ways. Some of these are like being a soldier, police officers, businesses, or going to work.

The explanation of the football player who made one of these explanations is as follows:

"To be honest, I'm considering going into the military. In fact, I am thinking of continuing my life as a soldier after the military. I aim to have a permanent job at the age of 27-28 at the latest so that I do not have any worries about the future. These are in my plans. I have never thought of being a coach until now; maybe I will consider it in the future, but I have no such idea at the moment. "(Interview 6)

From the player's statement, end of career planning has been implemented, apart from football. According to the researcher's perspective, one of the reasons for this may be anxiety and fear of the future in football, as other football players have said. If football players played in a country recognised

by FIFA, it is expected that these results would result in fewer concerns about the future, and football would provide them with better opportunities for the future.

4.1.2 Key factors influencing Football Players' Career

Table 3 which is shown below, demonstrates the key factors influencing career choice among football players. This shows that 53.3% of players were influenced by their fathers, making it the most significant factor. Additionally, 80.0% of the players stated that their career choice was their own decision, indicating personal independence. Other influences included neighbourhood culture and teachers, which collectively affected 26.7% of the players. Starting in a football academy was a major reason for many players (86.7%). However, it is crucial to consider how structural inequalities may have influenced these choices. Factors such as unequal opportunities due to socioeconomic status or racial disparities can affect decisions. Thus, while family, personal choices, and surroundings matter, it is important to address and minimise inequalities for fairer opportunities.

Table 3

Key factors influencing career choice among football players

| Influencing Factor | Responses (n) | Percentage (%) |
|--|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Started in a football academy | 13 | 86.7 |
| My decision | 12 | 80.0 |
| Father | 8 | 53.3 |
| Neighbourhood culture | 3 | 20.0 |
| Did not have to make a choice | 2 | 13.3 |
| Sister | 1 | 6.7 |
| Uncle | 1 | 6.7 |
| Teacher | 1 | 6.7 |
| Nobody wanted me to be a football player | 1 | 6.7 |
| Total Responders | 15 | 100 |

The opinions of professional football players who made a statement on this subject are as follows:

"I can say that my father started it at a young age ... If I were to choose, I would still choose football, but I also have an interest in basketball. If it wasn't for football, I would choose basketball. " (Interview 8)

Further epitomised by the following extract from a football player:

"My uncle started it when I was 5-6 years old. I would still choose football, but if there were no football games in the world, I would choose basketball. I like playing basketball." (Interview 10)

The expressions for professional football players are as follows:

"My father started it. I could have made a different choice according to my possibilities, but I had no other choice but football. " (Interview 4)

The thoughts of professional football players in the same situation are as follows:

"My father started it, he wanted it very much, then I was very curious too. At a young age, I choose football. It was more difficult to leave football even if the football material was low, contract, or professional. It is very difficult to leave football. I regretted my education for a long time, but I did not return. I stayed in football. " (Interview 6)

The statements of professional football players supporting the other statements are as follows.

"At home, my father already had a love of football. From there, we always had a connection with football. There was a trainer nearby; he used to collect us all and train us at a very young age. I used to watch the older brothers with envy when I was younger. With the tournaments, they instilled in me the football I love even more. My love for football has grown. With the influence of the coach, I said that I could go on this path, and football covered a large part of my life. I would still choose football, but I would like to work more professionally. I wish I was younger but had the experience and mind I have now. " (Interview 11)

The statements of football players who started football in different situations are as follows.

"I started playing football in the neighbourhood. I learned in the neighbourhood and started with the neighbourhood culture. In the past, we used to play mostly in the neighbourhood. At that time, I started sports with basketball, and I had other dreams and ideals. I have been in the football community a lot because of my family. Of course, I started with the encouragement of my father and then the influence of the coach."(Interview 14)

The explanations of professional football players who faced different situations when starting football compared to others are as follows:

"Nobody started it, even though nobody in my family wanted me to play football. But I had a lot of arguments with my family because of football, nobody wanted it, they finally gave up. My parents always wanted me to put my education first. Then we came to these times, of course they support now, but no one wanted it, I became a football player by force. "

(Interview 13)

As stated in the football players' statements, most professional football players started football with the support of their families. In addition, situations that started with friends and coaches were included in the statements of professional football players. Apart from that, there were professional football players who were asked not to start football at all and who did not receive football and family support. As stated in the literature, the physiological, psychological, and sociological effects of sports on an individual at a young age are enormous. Along with the happiness hormone, sports make people feel good. Naturally, this happiness is also observed in individuals who start sports at a young age. In addition to these, of course, coordinative abilities, friendship, belonging to a team, and self-confidence are among those that are seriously affected.

In many FIFA-recognised countries, numerous projects are underway aimed at promoting football and instilling passion for sports in children from a young age. However, upon reviewing the available data, which was carried out by (Gannett et al., 2014), it becomes evident that there has been a notable absence of studies or programmes addressing this issue in Northern Cyprus. It was observed that the choices made by the participants were significantly influenced by environmental factors. For instance, it was

discussed in the chapter three, according to Gannett et al., (2014), FIFA's 'Football for Hope' project applied in many countries to improve football in many countries, but nothing happened in the Northern part of Cyprus. From the researcher's point of view, the lack of studies in this region not only contributes to the progress of football but also poses a serious obstacle to its growth and development. Ignoring this region and not doing anything for these football players is a structural inequity. Without doing anything, the development of footballers and football living in the North of Cyprus is negatively affected.

4.2 Injury - Serious Injuries Reported by Football Players

This section explores the serious injuries reported by professional football players, drawing attention to the significant physical challenges associated with sports. The data collected from 15 participants showed that a substantial majority (73.3 %) sustained serious injuries during their careers (Table 4). These injuries include a range of conditions, from ligament tears and bone fractures to muscle strains, highlighting the high-risk nature of professional football. This analysis not only illustrates the common types of injuries that players endure, but also emphasises the imperative role of advanced sports medicine and comprehensive player health strategies in safeguarding athletes' careers and well-being.

The table 4 explores serious injuries among professional football players, showing that the majority (73.3 %) reported experiencing such injuries, whereas 26.7% said they had not. Various types of injuries have been reported, with 13.3% reporting posterior cruciate ligament injuries and ankle cracks. Other injuries included toe, hand, hamstring, inner lateral ligament, groin, and shoulder fractures, each mentioned by 6.7% of respondents. In total, 15 participants responded to questions about serious injuries.

Table 4*Serious injuries reported by football players*

| Type of Injury | Responses (n) | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Total Reporting Injury | 11 | 73.3 |
| Posterior Cruciate Ligament | 2 | 13.3 |
| Ankle Crack | 2 | 13.3 |
| My Toes | 1 | 6.7 |
| Lots (multiple injuries) | 1 | 6.7 |
| My Hand is Broken | 1 | 6.7 |
| Hamstring | 1 | 6.7 |
| Inner Lateral Ligament | 1 | 6.7 |
| Groin | 1 | 6.7 |
| I Broke My Shoulder | 1 | 6.7 |
| Total Not Reporting Injury | 4 | 26.7 |
| No Injury | 4 | 26.7 |
| Total Responders | 15 | 100 |

The opinions of the participants regarding the injury are as follows:

‘The sports where the most injuries occur are generally those that require one-on-one combat.

One of them is football and it is normal to get injured.’ (Interview 1)

From the researcher's perspective, while no athlete desires injury, it is crucial to consider environmental factors when they occur. For instance, if a player gets hurt because of a bad field or other environmental problems, these issues need to be fixed. Improving playing conditions and ensuring that athletes do not have to deal with unsafe environments can help reduce injury risk.

O’Brien and Finch (2017) stated that FIFA apply injury prevention programs for the member countries to minimise the frequency of getting injured and also strengthen the football players to not to get injury. According to the researcher’s view, the impact of injury can often highlight underlying structural inequities. For instance, access to quality healthcare and rehabilitation services may vary based on socioeconomic status, potentially worsening inequalities in recovery outcomes among individuals from different backgrounds. FIFA has the opportunity to the member countries to reduce the injury risks,

unfortunately football players in Northern Cyprus cannot get this opportunity by FIFA. In the concept of the epistemic injustice, Northern Cyprus cannot receive this opportunity and it creates epistemic injustice when it is compared to South. Moreover, marginalised communities may face greater risks of injury due to unsafe working conditions (quality of pitches) or inadequate access to resources for injury prevention, further perpetuating structural inequities within relationships and society. As discussed in the previous chapter, FIFA and F-MARC provides education about injury prevention, and in member countries.

The data collected for this thesis showed the effects of structural inequality and learned powerlessness on football players. The results showed that the players were under pressure and could not do anything. Not being able to be included in international arenas keeps football players away from being worried about the future, financially, and professionalising them.

Professional football careers are associated with an increased risk of injury. However, international players under the umbrella of the FIFA and UEFA have better access to comprehensive research and healthcare (Sadigursky et al., 2017). Individuals facing socio-economic challenges may encounter barriers to timely and adequate medical care, leading to prolonged recovery periods or complications.

Moreover, the emotional toll of injuries, as indicated by feelings of trauma and anxiety, could be worsened by existing social inequalities, such as limited access to health support services. As the CTFA does not have this infrastructure, international players within CTFA Süper Lig are attributed unequal status by denying them the healthcare privileges afforded to FIFA players. Structural inequity within international football leaves Yenicami Ağdelen S. K. players disadvantaged in terms of health care and injury management, leading to injury-related anxiety. Therefore, although the table does not directly measure structural inequity, it indicates potential inequalities in injury experiences that may be influenced by broader social and economic factors.

4.3 Professional Approach

The analysis of the attributes which is shown in Table 5 considered important for an elite-level professional football player shows several key insights into what is valued in the field of professional sports, particularly football. The data indicates that mental and emotional attributes are paramount, with "Work hard" being the most emphasised, cited by 60% of professional players. This suggests that dedication and effort are seen as the core of success in elite sports. Additionally, other mental traits like discipline, self-control, professionalism, and psychological management are highly valued, the importance of mental strength and emotional stability for achieving and sustaining success at the highest levels.

In terms of skills and talents, physical strength combined with intelligence is noted by 13.3% of professional football players, while a significant 26.7% emphasise the importance of natural talent. This shows that top athletes need to have both natural talent and a deep understanding of the game's strategies to succeed. It's not just about physical skills but also about knowing the game well. The data also emphasises important professional and ethical standards for elite football players. Traits such as job security, commitment, respect, and teamwork are essential and reflect the values needed in sports. Furthermore, ambition and the ability to inspire confidence are important for leading and motivating teams.

Furthermore, lifestyle factors, although less frequently mentioned, are recognised as foundational to on-field performances. Proper diet and comfort are essential according to interviews with professional football players.

Table 5*Attributes of an Elite Level Professional Football Player*

| Category | Attribute | Responses (n) | Percentage (%) |
|---|--|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Mental and Emotional | Work hard | 9 | 60.0 |
| | Discipline | 5 | 33.3 |
| | Must have faith in himself | 2 | 13.3 |
| | Must control himself | 3 | 20.0 |
| | Professionalism | 4 | 26.7 |
| | Must manage psychology | 2 | 13.3 |
| | Patient | 1 | 6.7 |
| | Must be mentally prepared | 1 | 6.7 |
| Skills and Talents | Physical strength and intelligence | 2 | 13.3 |
| | Must be talented | 4 | 26.7 |
| | Only interested in football | 2 | 13.3 |
| Professional and Ethical Standards | Future must be guaranteed | 2 | 13.3 |
| | Must be committed to his job | 2 | 13.3 |
| | Should give confidence | 1 | 6.7 |
| | Ambitious | 2 | 13.3 |
| | Must have respect | 4 | 26.7 |
| | Must have Team Spirit | 1 | 6.7 |
| | Must earn his living from football | 2 | 13.3 |
| Lifestyle | He should also pay attention to his diet | 1 | 6.7 |
| | Should be comfortable | 1 | 6.7 |
| | | | |
| Total Responders | | 15 | 100% |

Participants' opinions regarding the research question were as follows:

"The player must have a sense of professionalism. In other words, he should pay attention to his nutrition, sleep patterns, and mental work... he should work hard and be talented. People only evaluate the football player during the match he plays, and I think this is wrong. Because the football player makes many sacrifices from himself and his family to become a professional if he really wants to be a professional football player." (Interview 11)

The following statement came from another football player.

"Likewise, when asked what qualifications you think you should have to be successful as a professional football player, the experienced football player replied that "he should only focus on this job, and this should be his only job." (Interview 7).

Furthermore, remarkably similar thoughts of another professional male football player said that "his only job should be football, and nothing else. " (Interview 4).

One of the football players expressed his thoughts.

"It has to be professionalised. Stadium and sponsorship law should be made. There should be facilities and more investment should be made. Better training should be given to own resources. The embargoes have made us aimless. If we make an opening, we will develop our goals and improve ourselves more. In this way, we will be more successful." (Interview 15).

Another player's statement is as follows.

"If the embargos are removed, the football player will develop more and work harder. They can show themselves better in the international arena. Their lives and development depend on it. Improvement can be achieved with more work." (Interview 10)

Considering the statement by Bradbury (2017) which was discussed in the literature review, minor group of players came across with limited opportunities in Europe, this is in line with the Northern Cyprus football players still face this lack of opportunities and facilities, and resources.

Considering the pragmatist researcher perspective, access to resources and opportunities necessary for developing attributes like talent, discipline, and professionalism may vary based on socioeconomic factors, thereby contributing to disparities in the ability to become an elite-level professional player. Additionally, factors such as financial stability, access to quality coaching and training facilities, and social support networks can influence an individual's ability to focus solely on football and pursue a career at the elite level, highlighting potential intersections with structural inequities.

Football players in Northern Cyprus have a tough time earning enough money just from playing football to support themselves. Even if they can, there is no system to guarantee their future. For instance, if they cannot return to the field after an injury, there is no possibility of transition for the football players and then the football players may experience serious psychological traumas. This is because their contracts are not made, and they cannot be under the roof of FIFA. While many projects are being produced in the world for football players, especially for the transition period after football, there is no such project work in the north of Cyprus now. Football players must make several sacrifices if they are to live as professional. Unfortunately, they cannot receive significant backing because the clubs or the federation do not have FIFA as their roof (Lekakis, 2015). If the football player wishes to live like a professional, he must consult with his own psychologist, nutritionist, and physiotherapist. It is not feasible to earn a living through football.

As discussed in the literature review, individual and societal identities affected by sports (Steele et al., 2020). Furthermore, structural inequality brings many concepts like loss of identity due to the not recognised by the FIFA. The recognition and representation of Northern Cyprus is not allowed in the international arena. Therefore, it was discovered that in the previous chapters, identity of the football players needs to be explored.

The next theme is the loss of identity, which organizes the subheadings of professional football players' lifestyle with their human aspects.

Loss of Identity, Theme 2

4.4 Lifestyle - The Human Side of Professional Football

Professional football players consider themselves as fathers, good people, brothers, and good personalities. Below are statements from professional football players. Having strong friendship ties in football is one context that increases teamwork and team spirit. The friendships of a football team that can act as a team can positively affect players. Among the positive effects, it is important in terms of improvement in performance, increase in training level, and positive psychology.

The table 6 shows the different roles and identities that football players in Northern Cyprus associate with themselves. Professional football players, familial roles such as father and brother were mentioned by 6.7% and 6.7%, respectively. Friendship emerged as a significant identity, with 33.3% emphasizing its importance. Athlete and footballer identities were each mentioned by 13.3% and 20.0% of respondents, respectively, highlighting their dedication to the sport. Additionally, values such as being a good person or prioritizing fairness were identified by 13.3% and 6.7% of respondents, respectively.

Table 6

Identity of Football Players

| Identity | Responses (n) | Percentage (%) |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Family-Centric | | |
| Father | 1 | 6.7 |
| Want my children to always be by my side | 1 | 6.7 |
| Brother | 1 | 6.7 |
| Family is everything | 1 | 6.7 |
| Athletic | | |
| Athlete | 2 | 13.3 |
| It takes dedication | 1 | 6.7 |
| Can't live without sports | 1 | 6.7 |
| Friendship & Support | | |
| Friend | 5 | 33.3 |
| Friendship is very important to me | 2 | 13.3 |
| I am a supportive person | 1 | 6.7 |
| I act as a supporter on and off the field | 1 | 6.7 |
| Passionate Footballer | | |
| Footballer | 3 | 20.0 |
| My life is football | 3 | 20.0 |
| Good Character | | |
| A good person | 2 | 13.3 |
| Good person then a football player | 1 | 6.7 |
| A fair person | 1 | 6.7 |
| Tries not to discriminate | 1 | 6.7 |
| Total responders | 15 | 100 |

One participant explained his thoughts on the question below.

"I describe myself as a friend ... I define myself as a friend both on and off the field. I even acted as a brother to my peers. I even act as a big brother to my teammates who are a few years older than me ... it varies from personality to personality; I'm trying to be helpful as a friend." (Interview 6)

The other player's statement is as follows.

"Friend, I care a lot about the people next to me, and I love helping them ... I will be happier if I help them. Friendship is very important in my life." (Interview 13)

The other view stated from football player:

"I don't see myself as a football player right now. I still don't think I've reached that level ... If you say that you are a football player as a profession in this country, people may laugh at you, and in such a reaction, people may say to live in another country or go and play in another country [...] This can break the player and upset the player" (Interview 5)

The other view stated from football player:

"I am a normal personality. I used to have a lot of priorities. Then I started to prioritise. In the past, my only priority was football!!!" (Interview 3)

Some of the statements of the football player are indicative that the football profession in the north of Cyprus is not supported by the public and does not see it appropriate. A certain part of society disdains sports activities because sports in the country remain at a certain level, and no representation is allowed outside (Lekakis, 2015). When it is stating that he is a football player, he says that he does not have a football player profession in case he is ridiculed. In such a situation the football player indicates that he will feel humiliated. Professional football players' careers are underestimated by society and are not under the roof of any organisation, such as FIFA or UEFA, which has reduced their belief in the football profession. Professional football players psychologically affected by the fact that their work is not at

the FIFA level, and therefore, considered insufficient by some people in society. Alternatively, the statements of another professional football player express himself in a different way:

"When the word "Father" is mentioned, the flowing water stops. My relationship with my child is completely different, but if I put him out, I am totally a football player [...] I do not make mistakes in football because I approach it professionally. If I were a normal person, I wouldn't be able to experience what I've been through until now. When I go somewhere, they get to know me and come to see me. Let me tell you a memory ... I went somewhere, and the kid had a picture of me on his phone. I can't describe how I felt. It's always football. I wouldn't be able to live without football ... Although it is said that you are playing among yourselves, football is in a completely different place in my eyes. I impose this on myself because I owe everything, I win to football ..." (Interview 11)

Another player's statement is as follows.

"I am an athlete. It is not just football. I like every branch of sports; of course, I like football separately. If they say I can't live without sports, I can't live after this time. Even if I have the worst injury, I will switch to another sport. [...] If I can't do anything, I go to the gym, I work out, but I can never do without sports." (Interview 12)

A further statement supporting this sentiment is as follows.

"I say football player ... I get up in the morning and go to bed in the evening with football. My life is football, and I say I am a football player." (Interview 10)

In addition to these views, the statement of the professional football player who held a different perspective are as follows; "I say brother because to me family is everything." (Interview 4). The professional football player defined the order of priority as his family and was analysed based on his statements that his family was the most important for him. He also identified himself as a brother. The data suggests that the players do not all have a strong single identity as a footballer due to the structural inequalities already highlighted. The data suggests the players have a dual identity or do not even consider themselves as footballers.

According to Cartigny et al. (2021a) dual career people must balance their sports and academic/professional goals and solve their problems. Therefore, football players have to manage their balanced life with their decisions. Furthermore, in a study by Day-Garner (2018), athletes have second identity may be beneficial for the athletes after their sport career ends, they can continue to their profession career. It would be the case in the Northern Cyprus situation, to have the second identity may be an advantage for the football players as they are not competing in the same standards with the recognised countries. Kersting (2009) stated that social values and peaceful policies affect individuals' identities. Not being recognised by FIFA and unable to compete with the football team in the international arena, professional football players are trying to continue their football careers in the North of Cyprus in isolation from the outside. These situations can be difficult and psychologically challenging for them. Even though football cannot be played in the international arena and that football players have different responsibilities besides their football careers, some of the professional football players who participated in the study defined themselves as football players as shown in the Table 6. In the concept of the identities of the football players in Northern Cyprus has affected due to the Paulo Freire (1985) statement "I am my culture. I am my language. But my culture and my language cannot be understood outside of my position and social class." (Brass et al., 1985). In the perspective of the football players', it is complex to understand the identity of the football players. Moreover, it is in line with the Hall (1993) study as the researched stated that identities change from one to another.

In addition, the importance of friendships within football has once again emerged from the data. Good friendships are needed to share the emotions of sadness and joy as a team. Having good friendships within the dynamics of the team is very important for solidarity, particularly under difficult conditions. Even if they cannot earn their livelihood from football as professional footballers, the fact that they define themselves as footballers means that they dedicate themselves to football and make sacrifices to become a professional football player.

From the researcher perspective, the geography in which individuals were born and their occurrences in that geography affect the future of individuals and, in fact, their personalities as they form. Players born in the northern part of Cyprus could only be fortunate to be born in the southern part of Cyprus.

The data from the professional football players related to the loss of identity theme among professional football players, particularly in the context of disparities between footballers from the South of Cyprus and those affiliated with the CFA, recognized by FIFA. The absence of the international recognition shaping the identities in the area and led the individual feel alone (İlter & Alankuş, 2010; Kizilyürek 2003), political division in Northern Cyprus shaped the concepts of the national identity and it is struggling to asserts the identity of Northern Cyprus globally. According to the pragmatist researcher perspective, CFA-affiliated players have an advantage because the CFA is recognized by FIFA. This can make players who aren't part of the CFA feel hopeless. Also, many athletes struggle to see themselves mainly as football players. This shows how hard it is for them to feel like football is a big part of who they are. This highlights the significance of identity beyond one's career as a professional athlete, emphasizing the need for broader sources of self-definition and fulfilment. Overall, the connections drawn between structural advantages, learned hopelessness, and the struggle to define oneself solely as a football player underscore the complex interplay between identity loss and systemic inequities within the realm of professional football.

The next theme is isolation/invisibility, which organizes the data under the subheadings of psychological support, pressure, motivation, and education.

Isolation/invisibility, Theme 3

4.5 Psychological Support

In chapter three, the study discussed how the psychology of professional football players is impacted by their inability to compete internationally. The data below supports the literature previously discussed.

Northern Cypriot football players and their teams have difficulty demonstrating their talents at the international level because they are not allowed to participate in international competitions (Lekakis, 2015). Football players in Northern Cyprus are experiencing a loss of identity as a result of isolation and invisibility caused by political conditions.

Invisibility in football reflects wider geographical exclusion affecting national identity and demonstrates the serious effects of political conflicts on social and cultural spheres (Darby, 2000). In terms of the ‘epistemic injustice’ as it was stated by Fricker (2007), if someone receives less than their fair, that is epistemic injustice. Therefore, there is an epistemic injustice in the Northern Cyprus concept, as the football players cannot receive what the others receive in the international arena.

Table 7

Psychological Support by Club

| Psychological Support by Club | Responses (n) | Percentage (%) |
|--|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Yes, notified | 1 | 6.7 |
| No | 11 | 73.3 |
| No, we consult our coaches | 1 | 6.7 |
| Previous club had support with positive effect | 1 | 6.7 |
| No support provided before | 1 | 6.7 |
| Total Responders | 15 | 100 |

The Table 7 shows that most football players interviewed don't receive psychological support from their clubs. The table point out the theme of isolation and invisibility among football players, particularly concerning the lack of psychological support from their clubs. Out of the total respondents (15), 11 players, or 73.3%, stated that they don't receive any support. suggesting that many players may feel isolated in dealing with their mental health challenges. This absence of support can contribute to a sense of invisibility regarding players' psychological well-being within the club environment, where their emotional needs may go unrecognized or unaddressed. Only one player, representing 6.67%, said they do get notified, while another player mentioned consulting their coaches instead. Additionally, a few players noted the absence of support in their current clubs, although they had experienced it positively in previous clubs. Most players lack psychological support from their clubs, highlighting a potential gap in addressing mental health needs within the football community.

This is exemplified in the following extract from a professional player:

"I think that football is more than just a game to be won by training on the field. [...] Athletes need professional people who know this job, from whom we will receive psychological support. In the club I worked at before, we got help from the sports psychologist as a team, and this helped us with our individual problems and contributed to the team's dynamism. A football player cannot play with 100% while he has problems in his head!" (Interview 14)

Table 8 demonstrates the psychological support football players receive from their clubs or national teams. The analysis of psychological support within clubs reveals that most respondents, accounting for 93.3%, reported experiencing positive support. This included 93.3% who affirmed receiving direct support, 13.3% who felt supported by their club, and 26.7% who indicated support from both their club and national team. However, challenges were also prevalent, with 20.0% of respondents facing restrictions on playing in certain matches, 6.67% lacking support during injury periods, and 33.3% feeling unsupported during personal problems. Furthermore, 6.67% reported not feeling supported by their national team, and another 6.67% described their overall support as inadequate.

Table 8
Psychological Support by Club/National Team

| Psychological Support by Club/National Team | Responses (n) | Percentage (%) |
|--|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Positive Support | | |
| Yes | 14 | 93.3 |
| Supported by the club | 2 | 13.3 |
| Supported in club and national team | 4 | 26.7 |
| Challenges with Support | | |
| Not allowed to play in some matches | 3 | 20.0 |
| Not during injury period | 1 | 6.7 |
| Lack of support during problems | 5 | 33.3 |
| Not feel supported by national team | 1 | 6.7 |
| Not very supported | 1 | 6.7 |
| Total Responders | 15 | 100 |

The statements of professional football players are as follows.

"So, it's not discrimination, but when I played at ... I was the captain of the team, and I was the team's star. Even when he is the star of the team, the coach has a certain expectation, and when there is mediocre performance, the coach can tolerate the match more. I've had such tolerances in different teams, from a club standpoint and a coach, because I've always come here as a star player. The national team, frankly, is a completely different feeling for me. Everyone in the national team supports each other. After all, even though we cannot represent our country abroad, it is something different for us. If my performance was bad when we went somewhere as a national team, I performed very well in the previous tournament. If you were very good in the previous period, you can be preferred again. Such an athlete can be given support and confidence. Of course, I gave my best performance against them. So, it's actually a little bit about believing. When you believe, it is necessary to give confidence and give a chance for both sides. Of course, the national team is on a whole different level. ... my adventure was short-lived because I went to the team as a star again, everyone supported me. That region also has a huge fan base, and there was a time when we played badly as a team. There was a lot of expectation from me in the eyes of the fans, although I was good in terms of performance, but I was not supported as a result of the pressure of the fans." (Interview 11)

In support of this view, the statements of professional football player are as follows:

"I am definitely supported. The national team experienced a slightly different situation. No matter how much we are under an embargo, it is a national feeling, and that feeling of a national jersey is something else. Of course, there were cases where I was not supported. As a result of a game, I played badly, I got a reaction from the fans. In the same way, I saw a reaction from the hut. Every football player has games they play well or badly. The main thing is to know how they react. We have to react in the right way because we can't play every game well." (Interview 9)

The statements of a professional football player from another perspective are as follows:

"Thus, I was not very supported in terms of your servant because unless you have a name, you are at a certain level ... If you have a name, they will support you, and the club is in the coach. This is the case for all clubs. If you haven't made a name, they will support you up to a certain level. I don't have a problem with the trainer though. There were times when I felt unsupported. I couldn't get along with the trainer. I wanted to leave the club, unfortunately they didn't let me ... I didn't want to be club less either [...] There was a problem right after the league started, and I didn't want to go to training again and I didn't go to the matches. " (Interview 6)

It is exposed by the football players' statements that clubs give more tolerance to famous athletes or star players. Of course, even if they are professional football players, they are also human and can sometimes perform poorly. As can be seen here, the professional football player does not want to play there and be a part of that club when he feels that he is not supported. The effects of psychological support and social support on performance athletes have also been noted in the literature. The opinions of professional football players are like that. Support is very important to an athlete.

The human intellect in sports, a love of people and society, a human philosophy of sports, and the notion of being immanent to people are all excluded by fanaticism that is based only on blind faith.

In addition, the statements of professional football players are as follows.

"I feel supported ... There were times when I felt unsupported. Sometimes, when I was a younger football player, I felt like I was in the background. I feel like no one cares but this has changed in the past few years now I feel that support." (Interview 5)

Although the belonging of the supporters in the North of Cyprus is extremely strong in certain parts, since they have a small population as a society and football is not recognised, even if individuals support it, they do not come to the match and feel the passion of the fans. As a result, the games are rather quiet, and the players must play football in front of empty spectators. It's discouraging as a football player to watch the stands empty every time you are on the field. Without any kind of support, football players might

quit the game at the first sign of unhappiness. A person's ability to overcome learned powerlessness and hopelessness will increase with their level of motivation. In other words, as long as individuals feel powerless and hopeless as a result of prior situations and occurrences, their motivation cannot be anticipated to be high.

The fact that football players who experience taught helplessness, learned hopelessness, and loss of desire have come to terms with the circumstance means that they are not trying to change it. That is why, at a particular age, the family intends to withdraw their child from football instruction based on educational needs. Every family wants their child to grow up and be happy. Football players who have reached the age of university frequently abandon the sport because they believe they will never be able to overcome their acquired helplessness.

The statements of another player are as follows:

"I feel supported ... I had a national team experience when I was younger, but I did not feel the support there I felt that we didn't really care about the national team coach at that time. At that time, we were in the national team of the island, but no one cared, we were just happy to be a national football player. [...] Normally, there were situations where I was not supported in the towers. Of course, I was not supported after a bad game. Of course, no one will support you when you play badly." (Interview 13)

In addition to these statements, the words of professional football players are as follows:

"I feel supported ... I was also supported by the national team, which was interested in all of us. [...] There have been situations in which I feel unsupported. For example, when something is expected from you, everyone calls you and asks how you are; however, when there is no demand, not everyone calls. Of course, there were also supporters. I will never forget them, but those who called in the good days before do not call on bad days. " (Interview 7)

According to the pragmatist researcher, the feeling of support is very important for football players and is evident in the expressions of football players. When a football player feels supported, he can push himself in terms of performance. In addition, this was also stated in the words of the young football players. Doğan (2019) stated that people perform better when they feel more supported because it increases their confidence. The footballer is aware of who supports him in what situations and does not forget them. It is obvious that the importance of psychology in sports is indisputably very important (Child et al., 2019). Although the presence of individuals with different psychology or character in a football team makes it difficult for the club and the coach, one thing that should never be forgotten is that the performance of the football players will increase with the support.

These findings show that the support systems in sports organizations are often incomplete and sometimes inadequate, according to the researcher perspective, indicating a need for stronger and more consistent psychological support for athletes. The themes of isolation and invisibility, particularly when considering the context of North Cyprus, which is not recognized by FIFA. This lack of formal recognition may contribute to a sense of institutional isolation and can magnify the challenges faced by football players in such regions.

The inconsistencies and limitations in psychological support for football players might be linked to broader issues caused by their lack of international recognition. Players may feel isolated both within their own sports organizations, where support is lacking, and globally, since their national team is not recognized. This double isolation makes their struggles and needs less visible and makes it more difficult for them to get the same level of support and opportunities that players from recognized countries have.

4.6 Pressure

Chapter Three discusses the pressures faced by professional footballers. The following data supports this analysis. Table 9 shows the types and sources of pressure experienced by football players based on interview responses.

Table 9*Pressure on Players*

| Pressure on Players | Responses (n) | Percentage (%) |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Yes, there is pressure | 14 | 93.3 |
| External Expectation | 5 | 33.3 |
| Coach Expectation | 2 | 13.3 |
| Management Level Expectation | 2 | 13.3 |
| Pressure Management | 1 | 6.7 |
| Club and Team | 2 | 13.3 |
| Audience pressure | 2 | 13.3 |
| No pressure | 1 | 6.7 |
| Lack of fan group and media attention | 1 | 6.7 |
| Total Responders | 15 | 100 |

The data on player pressure reveals that the majority, 93.3%, feel some level of pressure (Table 9). External expectations are significant for 33.3% of players, while 13.3% feel pressure from coaches and management. Some, 6.7%, emphasise the need for pressure management. Pressure from the club, team, and audience affects another 13.3%. Surprisingly, 6.7% report feeling no pressure as there is not fan group and media attention, it did not create a pressure for the 14 professional players.

The statements of professional football players about pressure are as follows:

"Yes, definitely; in case of failure, you will be transferred to a club in exchange for something, whether financial or not. The club's president takes you to the club to achieve certain goals. He explains his goals and picks you up accordingly... This is also an element of pressure. Every club has a fan base. It is a sort of material pressure, be it the fans who love the club or the manager. There is a mass that constantly desires and expects something from the football player. When you fail, it will affect the next years; for example, it can affect the transfer next season [...] In order to be successful, there are many obstacles that you need to overcome. Even successfully passing this obstacle puts pressure on people. In long-term goals, especially in football, there is a period of 10-11 months to the goal, and within 11 months, there may be

constant obstacles, and we can constantly encounter something, which inevitably creates pressure ... There is a lot of pressure on us because of our responsibilities, whether it is the wages we receive or the desire to succeed. And there is constant pressure on us. For example, if someone from my family tells me how the match will go today, even that is a pressure on me." (Interview 11)

The views of another football player on the issue of pressure are as follows.

"Of course, there is pressure. For being a good football player, it is necessary to overcome this pressure to be a good football player. So, for example ... they expect a championship in your team. To give another example ... they expect you to play well in your team to the top teams." (Interview 13)

The statements of professional football players about the issue of pressure are as follows:

"Maybe, of course, he's under pressure. Many people expect something from players. There is more pressure when playing big teams. One of our trainers told us that the pressure was good. Let us not say the pressure of the club, but we also have pressure because everyone wants success. But when we lost, the club never blamed us Fans normally don't know what's going on the pitch; they just want to win. That's why we hear bad things from them, but the club has never put any pressure on us." (Interview 7)

The explanations of professional football players about pressure are as follows.

"In this business, it's a little bit about personality ... The league starts and has a certain course, but when it cannot show a certain performance, it puts itself under pressure. Alternatively, you can be transferred; if you cannot give the required performance, you may be under pressure. I am using sports psychology to overcome these types of situations, which is what I always do. The Player must first be able to overcome this problem. It should not turn into oppression; it is a question of capacity. If you are giving your best in capacity, you should not turn it into print. But this pressure thing happened to me when I was young. I am good with

young people; I help them to choose the right paths. But I see this pressure thing in young people." (Interview 14)

The views of football players who have different views on the issue of pressure are as follows:

"In other words, I do not think so because there is no attribution to put pressure on ... The number of fans is certain, and the media is at a certain level. Our coaches can create pressure, or maybe if he is a newly transferred player, there may be an expectation and pressure on him, but I think there will be no pressure." (Interview 3)

The different explanations of national professional football players about pressure are as follows.

"I do not think so. It should not be... because football is a fun game; I always looked at it that way and recommended it to many of my friends. ... I mean, have fun. Otherwise, it cannot give the performance it can give, which is the case for every sport. If you do not do a job having fun, you will not be able to give your performance. " (Interview 15)

When the data of professional football players were analysed, most of the participants in the study explained that there was pressure in their own words. This type of pressure is the pressure that a sincere person exerts on himself in terms of his character and personality, which some people do to push their best. Although this type of pressure is sometimes thought to give a good result, if the person puts too much pressure on himself, it may cause him to not show his performance. However, they also stated that pressure existed within the club. Similarly, the pressure within the club is in the form of professional football players winning the match or becoming champions. Thus, the goal was again successful. In the statements of professional football players, the fans do not know what we are going through in the field; they just want to win. In fact, it has been suggested that footballers and more clubs should strengthen the bond between social media and fans. In support of this issue, it is obvious that there is a deficiency in these issues from the statements of the football players that we do not have any pressure because we do not have fans or sports media. As it is stated by Heidari et al. (2019), there are external stress factors such as media and fan on the football player. When viewed from the football player's perspective in the north of Cyprus, it becomes clear that there is no pressure from fans and media, but on the contrary,

there are no fans. This can be seen as a loss of motivation. On the other hand, there are words of the football player, enjoying football and sports, and explaining that they show their best performance with pleasure. However, he is a football player who is fond of sports and has embedded this in his philosophy.

According to the researcher's perspective, interview data from professional football players show how often they feel isolated and invisible. Many players put a lot of pressure on themselves to perform well, which can make them feel alone because they are dealing with these challenges by themselves, which are unseen by others. This struggle is invisible to coaches, fans, and even teammates, who might not know how hard individual players work mentally and emotionally. Moreover, some players mentioned that not having enough fans or media coverage made them feel even more invisible, as their efforts and problems were not seen or supported by many people. This lack of support and recognition can worsen their feelings of isolation as they navigate their careers without the wider community backing that other athletes might have.

4.7 Motivation

According to the interview data from football players about their motivational techniques, a range of strategies was identified (Table 10). Individual players, each accounting for 6.7% of responses, cited preparing thoroughly in training, eating well, dreaming about football nightly, using imaginative visualization, drinking coffee to clear the mind, and listening to motivational speeches. A notable preference was shown for listening to music, mentioned by three players, and representing 20.0% of the total. The most common technique, however, was focusing on the game by eight players, which made up 53.3% of the responses.

Table 10*Players' Motivation*

| Player Motivation | Responses (n) | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Training preparation | 1 | 6.7 |
| Diet's impact on motivation | 1 | 6.7 |
| Football dreams | 1 | 6.7 |
| Imaginative motivation | 1 | 6.7 |
| Coffee for clarity | 1 | 6.7 |
| Motivational speeches | 1 | 6.7 |
| Listening to Music | 3 | 20.0 |
| Focus | 8 | 53.3 |
| Total Responders | 15 | 100 |

The explanations of professional football players about motivation are as follows.

"Motivation is very important to me. I think every game needs to be won, so I need to be fully motivated when I go out of the field. [...] For me there is no compensation for the mistake, and I cannot afford it for the team. While getting motivated, I think about these at the same time. Because I don't want to let my teammates down!!" (Interview 7)

this example, illustrates the importance to motivation, the player is putting pressure on himself so as not to let his team players down. From the data it is evident that motivation studies in this subject will be greatly beneficial for athletes and may help in decreasing the anxiety players are describing. It has been stated by da Silva Borin et al. (2013) study that pressure also increases anxiety. When the level of anxiety rises, the athletes cannot show their performance, and the desired efficiency cannot be obtained. The importance of psychology for athletes is once again demonstrated here.

The importance of motivation and how players motivate themselves in a season, as expressed by a professional player:

"All football matches in a season are actually one match for me. In other words, once the season starts, my game starts, and the only thing I think about and focus on in the season is

the championship trophy I will get at the end of the season. This is how I always prepare for myself [...] I imagine myself lifting the trophy at the end of the season. This gives me incredible strength and faith ... However, of course, complying with my routines while playing the match also prepares me for the match. " (Interview 12)

This is further exemplified by the following extract from a football player:

"I think motivation is also related to food. At least, it is for me. I listen to music before the game and undergo training to motivate myself. It is very good for me. It calms me down when necessary or, on the contrary, makes me energetic. Of course, the list of songs I chose for this is also very important. I choose my songs according to how I feel and what I think will be good for me that day. [...] Apart from music, I think about victory and try to do this with imagination and focus online with my own research. I have not received any support on these issues before, but I am trying to apply it to myself in line with my research so that I can improve myself and provide better motivation. If we get psychological support in sports, I'm sure this support will be reflected in our performance on the field because we do some things right without knowing it. For example, we can do better focusing or editing. If we get support, we can follow the correct path." (Interview 2)

The data shows how important it is for professional players to have a sport psychologist on their team.

The following extract is an example of how a footballer motivates himself during a season:

"I can say that I do not motivate myself before the game. I motivate myself before every workout, and I do my workouts that way. Because of this, showing performance in the match actually becomes a habit for me ... It is very important to me that I feel ready. I try not to think about anything before very important matches because I realise that thinking does not help motivate me. When I think before a very important game, I can't get motivated. Therefore, I decided not to think about it at all, and now I go to the match without thinking if it is a very important match. " (Interview 15)

From the researcher pragmatist perspective, the interviews highlight the importance of motivation in athletes. Some of the players do it consciously, some unconsciously. An unconscious and wrong focus can increase anxiety in the athlete instead of motivating the athlete. For instance, it is known that even the coach's speech before an important match sometimes increases the feelings of pressure and sometimes anxiety in the athletes. Along with these, it is sometimes very difficult for the athlete to focus on the match and maintain his own motivation during the match. For instance, an athlete's ability to stay motivated during a tough game is closely tied to their self-talk and level of self-motivation. According to Frederick-Recascino and Schuster-Smith (2003), there is a positive relationship between the motivation and achievement and success rates. Similarly, Bailey et al. (2006) stated that positive motivation enhances performance.

In other words, motivation and performance are inseparable. Despite facing isolation and invisibility, the resilience and strong motivation of football players help them continue playing the sport. It was analysed how the participants motivated themselves to the matches and it was revealed that the football players preferred the focusing method the most from the interview analysis.

Given the study's findings that football players did not receive psychological support from their clubs, it is particularly significant that most players emphasised the importance of focus as a key motivational strategy. This reliance on self-guided mental preparation techniques such as focusing intensely, using imagination, and listening to motivational speeches focuses how players navigate the lack of formal psychological resources. The players' emphasis on focus and other internal processes reflects their efforts to fill the support gap left by their clubs. This situation also emphasises the broader theme of isolation, not just at the individual level but institutionally, as these athletes often must manage their psychological well-being independently, making them both invisible and isolated within the broader infrastructure of professional football within Cyprus.

4.8 Education

The effects of isolation and invisibility are felt in the Northern Cyprus due to political reasons, and one of the effects of this is seen on the theme of education. The school system in Northern Cyprus is affected by international isolation, which limits support for sports training courses (Mertkan-Ozunlu & Thomson, 2009). Unfortunately, due to isolation, the training programs or development programs applied by FIFA to other countries are not applied to the Northern Cyprus (Wylleman & Lavallee, 2004; Gannett et al., 2014). This makes education is the sub-theme of the isolation and invisibility.

From the interview data, it is evident that professional players prioritize their education, this supports the dual identity that the players previously alluded to 40.0% of them have completed university education while the rest are currently pursuing their degrees. According to the Comeaux and Harrison (2011), football players improve themselves in terms of sociologically and psychologically with the education. This is why athletes pursue dual careers, they know that their football career may end early, and they need to find another profession where they can earn a living wage.

As studied by researchers, multi-occupation helps athletes balance sports, education and work and reduce the risk of discontinuation (Day-Garner, 2018). This area is important and supports the notion of the players having to plan a career once their short career in football ends. Everyone in the interviews came from a family in which education was valued. Most professional football players (approximately 67%) studied Sports Science. Fewer people chose other subjects such as Banking Finance, Economy, Food Technology, Business, Public Administration, and Psychology, as shown in Table 11.

Table 11*Education Choices*

| Education Choices | Responses (n) | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Educated family background | 15 | 100.0 |
| Studied Banking finance | 1 | 6.7 |
| Studied Economy | 1 | 6.7 |
| Studied Food technology | 1 | 6.7 |
| Studied business | 2 | 13.3 |
| Studied public administration | 1 | 6.7 |
| Psychology | 1 | 6.7 |
| Sports Science | 10 | 66.7 |
| Total responders | 15 | 100 |

This is exemplified in the following extract from a professional player:

"It was my dream to be a Sports Science and Physical Education teacher and that's why I chose it. I love sports [...] I'm not just the one who trained in my family." (Interview 9)

The results in Table 10 show that the education level was high owing to 100.0% of the participants' education. This supports the notion that the players have to undertake further training to enter into a second career due to the structure of professionalism in Northern Cyprus which does not allow for players to earn substantial wages from football. More than half of the participants chose sports science or physical education to teach the younger generation. Another professional football player explained:

"I wanted to get training in sports because when I was a university student, athletes were not supported much. Since I have been playing football since my childhood, I chose a sports-related education because I thought that if I received an education on sports, it would not be too difficult, and my football career would not be affected much during this training." (Interview 11)

In Table 11, 13.3% of the participants chose to study business because of their thoughts about the future of their careers. One of the participants explained himself with these sentences.

"I chose to study business because I thought it would be better for me. Although we work professionally in Northern Cyprus, unfortunately, we cannot earn the money that a professional earns. I wanted to take this education to get my business degree and, at least if my football life ends one day, to provide myself with another opportunity in the field of business and to take care of myself and my family. [...] I thought I would have more options in the business field. I need the security after my football career!" (Interview 1)

Another important point of the data is that most professional football players chose to study sports sciences, this may be a result of choosing an alternative career similar to football. The statements of a professional football player on this subject are as follows.

"It's always been my dream to read something about sports. I wanted to study physical education and sports teaching in the sports sciences. And now I am still studying this subject as a university student [...] I love sports and of course football ... The idea of being with children has always warmed the heart. I think it is very nice to be able to guide them and teach them something. I can provide better education to children, and the feeling of being together with children always makes me smile." (Interview 3)

"I am currently continuing my Physical Education and Sports teacher education in Northern Cyprus in the ... university. The biggest reason I chose this degree is that I have always been involved in sports since I was a child, and I chose sports because I thought it was good for me." (Interview 15)

"I am studying in the Department of Physical Education and Sports Teaching Faculty of sports sciences ... I have always dreamed of reading this department and becoming a physical education teacher since I was a child. I'm living that dream right now; it's 1 or 2 years before I become a teacher. But now I wish I had studied something else because there is a shortage of job opportunities for physical education teachers as well. And I don't know what to do when I graduate." (Interview 9)

The unemployment problem emerged with the words of this professional football player, who is present in the field of sports, as well as in other jobs. Of course, this problem is not limited to the field of sports. It is normal to encounter such situations worldwide. However, one point is that such a situation increases the future anxiety of professional football players. Anxiety about the future can affect a football player psychologically, and this is normal and can be reflected in his performance. Another view is expressed by the following words for a football player:

"I have been interested in sports since childhood. However, as a profession, of course, it influenced my family members. I chose to study business administration. As for a reason... I think that the business opportunities of the business are more than other degrees. I believe I will find a job easier this way. I love sports very much, but to be honest, I also loved this degree that I studied and graduated from. I enjoy this profession." (Interview 1)

The expressions for football players who have a different view from professional football players are as follows:

"I am studying psychology. In the last year of high school, university teachers were constantly coming to school. At that time, my current university teacher came and introduced the department, and I was impressed ... But until that seminar, I didn't have much desire to read. I wasn't kidding myself ... I thought I would choose my school accordingly. When the teacher came, I was impressed by the seminar he gave from the department, and I chose this department." (Interview 6)

The statements of professional football players with different views are as follows.

"I studied economics. I have been interested in mathematics and economics from a young age. I took economics as a course in high school age and realised that I liked it [...] My family also received education in this field, so I chose it." (Interview 8)

The results showed that a great majority of them could not separate their lives from sports besides their professional footballer lives, and they also received training at a sports-related degree. In fact, this can facilitate the lives of professional football players and make them more knowledgeable and conscious

footballers. Professional football players can help if they want to improve themselves. Since they have received education about sports, they can both improve themselves and add experience to their experiences by learning many points in terms of psychology, physiology, and trying different methods on their own. This, of course, can cause differences between them and other football players.

The analysis revealed that the football players who participated in the interview attached importance to their own education. According to the Gelen (2021), academic success has a relationship with athletic success. In order to perform better and improve themselves in terms of socially, psychology and financial football players choose to study. The education programme was delivered in FIFA recognised area to improve the children's health and encourage them to play football (Thornton et al., 2021). Offering equal opportunities for the growth of football players in the North of Cyprus is a crucial consideration in terms of equality and fairness, much like Fricker stated regarding the inequality in education (Fricker, 2007). Moreover, there are no training programme has been implemented by FIFA in Northern Cyprus to date to help players with end of career transitions, and these athletes are not even aware such programmes exist. From the researcher's point of view, while attaching importance to the education of these athletes, researching the education of the biggest institutions of football could take them to a better point. Following FIFA, globally, would perhaps give them a different perspective on what path they should follow in terms of education. It would be better if they had a little more awareness on this issue and followed more international educational programme. From the researcher's point of view, constant monitoring of international developments could better develop these athletes even if they could not prove themselves outside the island.

The interviews in this theme illustrate how psychological support, motivation and education exacerbate how the players feel isolated. Professional football players are experiencing difficulties in this situation.

The next theme, which organizes the data under the subheadings of career, dual career, insurance, and retirement, is political and economic oppression theme.

Political and Economic Oppression, Theme 4

4.9 Career

The table shows players' perspectives on their football careers, showing a range of opinions (Table 12). A significant 26.7% mentioned that their careers are currently progressing, while 20.0% expressed optimism about the beginning of their journey. Additionally, 13.3% described their career as the best and another 13.3% as good. However, some players acknowledged challenges, with 6.7% describing their journey as bumpy due to injuries and 6.7% expressing views late in their career or close to retirement. One player (6.7%) described their career as moderate.

Table 12

Players' Views on Football Careers

| Stage of Career | Responses (n) | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| At the beginning | 3 | 20.0 |
| The best | 2 | 13.3 |
| Bumpy, injury-related | 1 | 6.7 |
| Good | 2 | 13.3 |
| Late in my football career | 1 | 6.7 |
| Close to retirement | 1 | 6.7 |
| Moderate | 1 | 6.7 |
| Rising now | 4 | 26.7 |
| Total Respondents | 15 | 100 |

Professional football players must prioritize external perspectives and critically analyse their careers. This is crucial because individuals often struggle to evaluate themselves objectively and may lack the necessary level of self-criticism.

The following statement comes from a professional football player.

"I feel like I haven't had enough success yet ... Although I had the chance to play in the national team before, these are not enough for me. The number of matches we can play with

our national team is constantly changing. While we can play with many teams in some years, sometimes even a national team is not formed, or we can only play one match and disperse [...] Unfortunately, we cannot show ourselves. I need to be able to do better, and I want to do better. I want to play in better places. I work hard to be successful, and I want more success. I'm trying so hard to be successful, and I want more success" (Interview 12)

This view was supported by another football player.

"Although I was called up to the national team at an early age, I still think that I am at the beginning of my career ... We could not play many matches on the national team, and despite our hard work there were restrictions due to the country's situation. Of course, this upsets us footballers [...] Nevertheless, I continue to work hard, and I can say that my football life has just been shaped. I think the more experience I have, the better my football career will be. " (Interview 7)

In total, 26.7% of professional football players reported that their performance was on the rise. With this explanation, we can say that players are happy to see this development in themselves, but at the same time they continue to work hard and try to improve their careers. The words of the football player who made this statement are as follows:

"My football career, which I started at a young age, is on the rise, and now I am working hard ... I have to work hard so that I can develop better and come to better places." (Interview 5)

From these data, it is obvious that most professional players want to be higher than where they are. Wanting to rise psychologically indicates that athletes are ambitious and want to succeed. The effect of self-confidence can be observed in football players who say they are the best. While this self-confidence can give good results when combined with experience in football matches, it can also lead to bad results in inexperienced players with bad luck. Therefore, football players should always be confident in terms of their psychological performance. Frederick-Recascino and Schuster-Smith (2003) stated that strong psychology increases success. In general, professional football players want more development in their football careers and are psychologically prepared for it. If professional footballers are more widely

recognised internationally, they might feel pressured to prioritise their career advancement. For football players, being unable to participate in major global football competitions or constantly facing the same opponents can significantly impact their professional development and future prospects. According to Fricker's concept, people playing football in Northern Cyprus are epistemologically silent and structural discrimination is the main cause of the problem (Fricker, 2017).

From the perspective of a pragmatist researcher analysing data on football players' career perceptions, there is a clear connection between these individual experiences and broader socio-political and economic contexts. Players who report positive career progression or optimism likely benefit from favourable conditions, such as healthy support systems and rich resources, which are not as accessible in regions experiencing political and economic troubles.

On the other hand, those describing their careers as challenging, whether due to injuries or approaching retirement, may feel the effects of inadequate healthcare, poor training infrastructure, and insufficient professional support issues that worsen in less stable or economically deprived environments. Additionally, a player's description of their career as moderate suggests a potential lack of high-level opportunities, which are crucial for advancement but may be limited by systemic barriers. Therefore, considering the literature about the Fricker (2017), failure to provide equal opportunities affects football players as epistemic injustice. Through this lens, the varied individual experiences of these athletes can be seen as reflections of the larger economic and political forces that shape the sports landscape, offering insights into how such factors influence career trajectories in sports. Due to political not recognition of Northern Cyprus situation (Lekakis, 2015), the athletes in Northern Cyprus cannot improve their own performance level and have to play constantly in the same league. Disempowerment and dehumanization applied to football players and not giving change to compete made them insecure to themselves.

4.9.1 Recommendations for Young Football Players

The recommendations that professional football players have for young players entering the sport based on interviews are shown in Table 13. The most frequent advice given by 40.0% of the players was to

ensure that they received a satisfactory wage. Following this, 33.3% recommended chasing after their goals and working hard. About 20.0% suggested not focusing primarily on money and mentioned the importance of signing a contract. Other pieces of advice included not signing long-term contracts and the importance of health insurance, each highlighted by 13.3% of the players. Additional suggestions include leaving a club whenever one wants, choosing a club where one can be happy, and considering playing abroad.

Table 13

Recommendations for Young Players

| Recommendations for Young Players | Responses (n) | Percentage (%) |
|--|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Not to sign long contracts | 2 | 13.3 |
| Chasing after goals, work hard | 5 | 33.3 |
| Condition of leaving, whenever desired | 1 | 6.7 |
| Don't prioritize money | 3 | 20.0 |
| Choose a club for happiness | 1 | 6.7 |
| Health insurance importance | 2 | 13.3 |
| Sign a contract | 3 | 20.0 |
| Satisfactory wage | 6 | 40.0 |
| Consider going abroad | 2 | 13.3 |
| Total Responders | 15 | 100 |

The following words are used for professional footballers:

"Unfortunately, I regret to express these words, but the contracts are not signed. I would definitely advise young people to sign a contract ... One of the points they will pay attention to in this contract they will make with the club is that they have not made a deal for very long years. Years can bring them different options, so if they sign for many years, they will not be able to evaluate these options. [...] They should always try to negotiate with clubs that value football players, and they should not forget that this is very important for their lives.
“(Interview 11)

Professional players supported this view.

"At first, I suggest that he negotiate the fee he will receive with the club ... And I definitely recommend that you make a contract with us. I wish I had a contract; I wish I had signed a contract from the beginning." (Interview 13)

As his data shows, one of the 13.3% of professional football players who suggested to the football player leaving the northern part of Cyprus and trying his luck abroad expressed himself as follows:

"I recommend a young and talented football player to move abroad from the beginning of his football career. Let him go abroad and sign a club. One of the problems of being an unrecognised country is the unsigned contract with the football player. You go to the federation and sign a standard contract, but there are no clauses in it on which the football player and the club can agree. Players must sign separate contracts. That's why the young actor should go from the beginning and try his luck abroad. " (Interview 1)

Similarly, another professional player explained what he could suggest to young football players.

"I think the young football player should firstly get a good deal on health insurance and the fee he will receive." (Interview 15)

For professional football players to feel more secure, contracts should be established with the club. It can be understood orally, but a written agreement between both parties will protect both parties. According to Mavromati (2011), contracts are necessary in football and in order to be a professional football player, the contracts should be sign. Most players prefer contracts. Among these contracts, items such as health insurance, wages, and contract end dates are recommended by professional football players to pay attention to when signing contracts.

Furthermore, by signing contracts, both player and club have rights (Magee, 2006). One of the suggestions of professional football players for young football players is to play football where they are happy. Undoubtedly, when people enjoy working in a happy place, their performance can easily reach better places. One of the items highlighted by these data was that contracts should be signed. As a result

of the interview analysis, a 40% sufficient salary was obtained, with the highest percentage being 68.2%.

From a pragmatist researcher's perspective, the recommendations made by professional football players can be seen as practical strategies for navigating the economic and political dimensions of the sports industry in Northern Cyprus. Emphasising the need for a satisfactory wage reflects an understanding of the economic challenges inherent in sports, emphasising financial security in a career that is known for its unpredictability. Advice against long-term contracts and the importance of flexible exit conditions are protective strategies to avoid potential manipulation, which is particularly relevant in politically unstable or economically challenged regions. Stressing health insurance and selecting clubs that prioritise personal happiness speak to a general approach to well-being, addressing both physical risks and mental health in the high-pressure environment of professional sports. According to Freire (1985), political oppression and psychological oppression are related to each other. Due to the political oppression on the football players in Northern Cyprus, the economic and psychological pressure applied to football players emerges. Moreover, encouragement to explore opportunities abroad suggests an awareness of the varying political and economic conditions that can impact a player's career.

4.9.2 Safer Football Career

The analysis of football players' perceptions of safety in football indicates mixed opinions, as shown in Table 14. While 40.0% viewed football as overall safe, with 20.0% noting improvements compared to the past and 6.7% perceiving ongoing improvement, a majority of 53.3% expressed concerns about safety. According to Akşar (2009), football players in Northern Cyprus, learned hopelessness affect social anxiety. Moreover, Ledwith (2015) stated that when consider the Freire's critical pedagogy, the greatest difficulty in starting the process of social development is to find a way to escape the hopelessness that oppression often brings. The factors contributing to this perception include financial instability, lack of recognition, and uncertainty about the future. Additionally, 6.7% highlighted the absence of contracts as a source of insecurity, whereas others mentioned inadequate facilities and the

perception of football being treated as a hobby. Some football players (13.3%) feel that opportunities abroad offer a safer future, while others (6.7%) see safety as being influenced by country conditions.

Table 14
Safer Career

| Perception of Safety | Responses (n) | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Yes (Safe) | | |
| Overall safe | 6 | 40.0 |
| Better than before | 3 | 20.0 |
| Football is improving | 1 | 6.7 |
| Moderately good | 1 | 6.7 |
| No (Not Safe) | | |
| Overall, not safe | 8 | 53.3 |
| Financial instability | 1 | 6.7 |
| Treated like a hobby | 1 | 6.7 |
| Uncertain future | 2 | 13.3 |
| No contracts, insecure | 1 | 6.7 |
| Lack of facilities and recognition | 1 | 6.7 |
| Miscellaneous | | |
| Abroad offers a better future | 1 | 6.7 |
| Governed by country conditions | 1 | 6.7 |
| Total Responders | 15 | 100 |

One player's comment that career safety depends on "country conditions" points to the influence of national economic and governmental support for sports. Shonkoff et al. (2012) stated that social concerns and grow up society significantly effect on professional lives. According to the researcher's perspective, this demonstrates how the safety and stability of football careers can differ greatly based on where players are based, reflecting varying degrees of sports development and support across countries.

The descriptions of professional football players are as follows.

"I think it should be divided into two abroad and our football. [...] This provides a good future if you are talented abroad. You get a good salary, and you see the value. And you will improve yourself much better. I guess that it was never enough for us. You cannot have a football career without an extra job because, at the end of the day, you cannot even buy a loaf of bread at the grocery store. So, you can support neither yourself nor your family. It's a heart-breaking situation ... "(Interview 9)

Professional players supported this view.

"No. Football is not a safe career because it is not clear what will happen. If you cannot play football when you are injured, you cannot earn money... We did not have any insurance. So, football is definitely not a safe career." (Interview 2)

Another view is supported by professional players who compare abroad and North football players.

"As for our island (Northern side), the lack of facilities and the indifference of the clubs are not enough and safe as a career ... If we talk about abroad, football is safe as a career abroad." (Interview 3)

Mentioning that his football career was not safe after the injury, the professional football player made the following statements.

"Now I think a football career is safe if there is a professional football system. It may not be safe, and there may be points where we are injured and where we cannot continue. We saw the closest example in the matches in Europe. [...] We have seen that he will be injured and will not play again; it is not very reliable for our country. We do not have a professional football system ... One of the simplest examples is that we do not have a contract with the club, and how can a safe career be in such a situation." (Interview 8)

This was the opinion of some professional football players who said no. Based on the players' statements, professional football players accept the systematic and reliable nature of football abroad as a safe career. In addition, it is a fundamental problem to end his football career with problems such as

inability to return to sports after injury. In a study which is studied by Koukouris (2005), stated that quitting sport is not dependent on one factor and coaches founded responsible in the quitting the sport. In such cases, professional football players will suddenly become unemployed and unpaid. This was a significant factor in terms of trust. The explanations of experienced and national football players from professional football players are as follows.

"Compared to the past years, of course, we also have brothers, and there are football players who earn very good material and moral income from football. In the past, state officials supported football players more. For example, it was possible for football players to find jobs more easily by referencing their wives. Even when he married, his house was supported [...] Good salaries or houses are earned now because we are football players. We can't say a big difference, but with the help of football, for example, you can guess how difficult it is to build a house in this period... The football player can build this house more easily with the money he receives. And, of course, we shouldn't just look at it financially. Now the training quality and training intensity are more... It is mostly physical therapy or massage for the development of the physical structures of the footballers, and these make the football player strong."
(Interview 11)

Over the years, there has been development in soccer. This development was not sufficient to a large extent among the participants in the study, and there is more development expectation. These are insurance, post-injury warranty, and facility shortages. Compared to his football career abroad, there is a thought that a professional football player abroad is safer because of his opportunities.

"We need to set up. We need to make longer-term plans. Since we are not known, it is very difficult for us to open up to the outside. We participated in CONIFA; we experienced the excitement of the national team there, and even that feeling was different for us. Experiencing those national feelings in our own country's team has set us psychologically new goals, and it also shows that we need to improve ourselves even more. But apart from this, we cannot enter the qualifying rounds in FIFA, just like a country opened to the world. This takes us back."
(Interview 11)

From a pragmatist researcher's viewpoint, the table shows how local political and economic conditions impact the safety and stability of football careers. Players reporting financial issues, lack of contracts, and poor facilities likely reflect the negative effects of economic hardship and weak governance on sports infrastructure. It is supported by the researchers, athletes often come across with unequal conditions, discrimination, and lack of opportunities (Singer, 2005; Hextrum & Cameron, 2023). The players' experiences of financial instability, lack of contracts, and poor facilities reflect economic oppression, where a lack of funding and support hinders their careers. Vandermeerschen et al. (2017), stated that athletes from marginalised community often face obstacles in terms of financial support, coaching and training facilities. Additionally, the fact that some players consider moving abroad suggests political and economic oppression, as they feel forced to leave their home countries due to unfavourable conditions. This shows how oppressive economic and political environments can negatively impact athletes' career safety and decisions.

4.10 Dual Career

The vast majority of Northern Cyprus professional football players have responsibilities besides their professional football life, such as going to a job or being a student at school. The table 15 on the external responsibilities of football players shows that most of these athletes manage significant commitments alongside their sports careers. The majority (60.0%) were students, indicating that they balanced educational pursuits with their athletic responsibilities. This dual role presents challenges in terms of time management and personal discipline. Optimal dual career balance is defined as the combination of sport that helps students or athletes achieve their educational and athletic goals, live increased quality of personal lives, and support their health and well-being. Moreover, prepare athletes for the transition phase in their career (Stambulova et al., 2015)

Table 15*External Responsibilities*

| External Responsibility | Responses (n) | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Looking after my family | 5 | 33.3 |
| Work | 1 | 6.7 |
| Being a student | 9 | 60.0 |
| Total Responders | 15 | 100 |

About one-third (33.3%) of the players also had family responsibilities, which could involve financial support or caregiving (Table 15). This suggests that for many, football is not just a career, but also a means to support their families, adding additional pressure and motivation. Only a small number (6.7%) reported having other work commitments outside football, pointing to a focus primarily on sports and academics, with less engagement in other professional activities.

Professional football players articulate how he managed to balance school and football, and work in his life.

"Besides football, I am both a student and working ... Why am I working? I work out of necessity. Unfortunately, we do not have a contract with the club, and if we suddenly experience injury tomorrow, no one will look at us. [...] Moreover, the financial income from football is insufficient, so I have to work. What is more, I am a university student. I really struggle at certain times of the season. Because I have to go to school so that I don't have a problem with absenteeism, and I leave school and go to work then I go to training and the day ends very tiredly for me. [...] Sometimes I ask permission from my university teacher, whom I am good at if a very important subject will not be covered so that I can rest a little more. One of the most difficult periods in our camp period! It is very difficult to get time off from work for camping!! Of course, it is expected from a professional player to go to the camp and be ready for whatever match or training is on the target of that camp, but sometimes it happens that external factors affect us a lot. " (Interview 6)

According to the interview data and researcher's perspective, external factors or responsibilities outside of football significantly affect football players. For example, having a problem at work or being unemployed will increase athletes' future anxiety, as they do not trust the income they earn from football. When a student is a separate responsibility and is combined with work, the athlete's focus is even more distracted. The fact that the contract with the football player is not made creates more distrust in the player.

Explained by a professional football player.

"Football comes first for me. First, I learn my training time, do my annual planning, go to my university, and choose my courses according to course hours. Since our practice is usually in the afternoon, I take care to choose morning classes. [...] I also work, but my family supports me a lot. It may be easier because we support each other in our family, but I just wanted to focus on my football life. If so, I believe I will be much more successful... Because if you have problems at school, it will affect you psychologically, and you may go to the training session reluctantly that day. First, I put football in my life, but we are still human, and we can be affected. " (Interview 13)

Professional players supported this view.

"I'm studying sports at university. I have to take care of myself, and I am a student outside my football career. While it is helpful for me to read a section on sports, it is neither very difficult. Because when I go to class tired, my efficiency drops a lot. Since we have constant training and matches, we cannot wake up well-rested. Therefore, my learning efficiency is low during the season. "(Interview 2)

The explanation of one of the individuals who are responsible for his family is as follows:

"In our country, I wish I could say I only play football, but I can't. I work and have a beautiful family for their support. I mean, I have a lot of responsibilities outside of football. My life is hectic. I have football in my every step. [...] My other responsibilities fit into my life accordingly. I am very grateful to my family for this. I give the most of myself ... I am tired,

but I am a person who is aware of my responsibilities. I know these things, and I actually give from myself my own life for football. " (Interview 11)

In support of this statement, the following statement came from another football player.

"I'm working, and I want to say it's very difficult to combine work and football! The family provides us with convenience. I don't even want to think otherwise. We do not have time for our family and loved ones properly [...] We come from work, we go to practice when we come home, we are tired and want to rest. Or, for example, we can't make a plan with our family at the weekend because we have matches, and we can't find much time because we work on the day when there is no training on weekdays." (Interview 14)

From the researcher perspective, the results of the study show that professional football players are tired of double careers and are not satisfied. Professional footballers do not want to be busy with anything other than football because, as most say, the life of a football player is difficult. If professional football players do not rest fully during their intense training pace, it is difficult to achieve physiological development. Professional football players must be careful about what they eat, drink, and the quality of their rest. We can look at extra work on football players as a factor that limits their development. The focus of the football player should be entirely on his performance. Otherwise, the player will also be psychologically divided. The work he is responsible for in his workplace is also important to him. Because he earns money from his job, he considers work as a guarantee for his future. This perspective is supported by the literature., second career accepted as the beneficial issue in the transition phase of the athletes (Day-Garner, 2018). Due to the anxiety of the future in football, professional football players must have two careers. If we look at it from another perspective, we can say from the results of the study that most professional football players are currently studying and playing football. Education is undoubtedly as important for every individual as it is for football players. By good planning with university students at the beginning of the season, their efficiency in their lessons can be increased, and improvement in football performance can be achieved. As a result, as in the statements of a professional football player, when the football players go to university as tired, their efficiency in learning the lesson decreases. It may be possible to improve this, or the clubs may need to cooperate more with universities.

Considering the literature, university students athletes reported that burnout syndrome, psychological problems, and injury problems (Von Rosen et al., 2018; Sorkkila et al., 2017).

The external responsibilities of football players, such as managing education and family care, can highlight broader issues of political and economic oppression. According to Cartigny et al. (2021a), individuals must balance their life with their responsibilities and able to solve the problems. In areas where there is little financial support for sports, players often need to continue their education or support their families, because they cannot rely solely on income from their sports careers. This lack of support is often due to economic policies that do not prioritise sports or political instability, which prevent consistent support for athletes. These conditions show how deeply political and economic factors can affect athletes' lives, forcing them to take on multiple roles to secure their future and help their families.

4.11 Insurance

The interview data in Table 16 indicate that all football players interviewed (100.0%) believe that health insurance is essential. This agreed view emphasises their understanding of risks in football and the importance of health insurance for financial security and medical care, emphasising the necessity of protecting their careers and health.

Table 16

Health Insurance Requirements.

| Health Insurance requirements. | Responses(n) | % |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|----------|
| Yes | 15 | 100.0 |
| Total responders | 15 | 100.0 |

The words of a professional football player in this subject are as follows:

"Health insurance is needed for all professional sports people in the country. Health insurance is important for athletes. Everyone has a sports experience before; of course, people can

empathise even from there... If I explain, doing sports requires working within the limits of the body for the development of the body, even in its simplest form. We can describe this as pushing the limits of the body in its simplest form, for both slimming and performance. In other words, these things happen while doing sports, professional or not [...]. Also, when you are a professional, you are constantly pushing the limits to achieve this performance. As a result of this, injuries or injuries can occur because the body is forced; these are only those who have not entered the fight yet. Due to the nature of football, we fight one-on-one, stay in difficult situations and put things that cannot be done extra on the field with the ambition of winning at that moment, and sometimes if we are unlucky, we may experience injuries. No one cares for the injured football player due to the state of football in the country, and he is automatically kicked out of football. His football career is coming to an end." (Interview 11)

In support of this view, the view of another professional football player is as follows.

"Yes! Unfortunately, there is nothing to protect us from playing football in an unrecognised country. We have no assurance about our health after any injury we may experience. This worries us... The medical expenses are not paid for the injuries we have suffered. Worst of all, the club does not pay for the surgery if we have to have surgery to recover. If the family's situation is good, the football player is recovering; if not, the football player finds money from somewhere and forces the chance of surgery to recover... Of course, not all clubs are like this, but health insurance is a necessity for us." (Interview 12)

The opinion of a football player on this issue is as follows.

"Yes, of course, we need health insurance ... Who can object to that? Football clubs can also deduct from players' salaries when they are injured. This is not ethical behaviour! We cannot say that all clubs are like this. There are also clubs that stand by the athlete in all conditions... But there is also a situation that when you have an injury, there is a problem in the club, and no one looks at you." (Interview 14)

In line with the opinions of players, it can be said that the health of players is sometimes overlooked. And if the club does not stand by the athlete or the economic situation of the club is not good, that athlete's chance to recover can be exceedingly difficult. In the face of such a situation, athletes are faced with ending their football careers. None of the clubs want to recruit or transfer injured players. However, the contracts of professional football players contain clauses regarding the football player's illness and injuries (Cengiz et al., 2021). This issue also brings out the importance of the professional contracts. Moreover, Clubs naturally prefer healthy players who can enhance their team's performance in their squad. This situation is one of the factors that causes future (anticipatory) anxiety in football players. According to Ford et al., (2017) anticipatory anxiety increases the stress level and impact on the psychology of the athletes.

Many FIFA-supported physiotherapy and treatment centres exist worldwide. While high-level athletes can be treated quickly and return to the field early in FIFA approved centres, unfortunately there is no such opportunity in the Northern Cyprus (Al Attar et al., 2016).

Unfortunately, for football players in Northern Cyprus, there is no information available by FIFA to prevent injury or speed up injury and recovery around the world due to the isolations (Al Attar et al., 2016; Lekakis, 2015). Unfortunately, reaching innovations on these issues at a conference in Lyon, France in 2022, under the sponsorship of FIFA, in order to enable the players to return to the field faster and to reduce the risk of injury, unfortunately, cannot be enough to inform football players in Northern Cyprus. In addition, injured football players may have problems with the salary they will receive from the club, because they do not have a contract for the next year. It is very important for clubs and coaches to be informed of these issues.

4.12 Retirement

The retirement pension table for football players highlights that, while most (66.7%) have retirement plans, worries about their financial future are still common, as shown in Table 17. Specifically, 26.7% of players expressed anxiety about their financial stability after retirement, indicating concerns about

the sufficiency of their current plans. Additional issues include insecurity from not having injury insurance and a lack of contracts, which intensifies their uncertainties about the future. Some players are exploring other strategies, such as securing insurance from another career or focusing on effectively managing their finances while still playing.

Table 17

Retirement (Insurance) Pension

| Retirement Pension Status | Responses (n) | Percentage (%) |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Yes (Has Retirement Pension) | | |
| General agreement | 10 | 66.7 |
| Concerns & Challenges | | |
| Future anxiety | 4 | 26.7 |
| Insecure | 1 | 6.7 |
| Injury insurance needed | 1 | 6.7 |
| No contract currently | 1 | 6.7 |
| Importance of contract and health insurance | 1 | 6.7 |
| No (No Retirement Pension) | | |
| Total disagreement | 5 | 33.3 |
| Alternative Strategies | | |
| Dual career insurance coverage | 1 | 6.7 |
| Football not sustainable | 1 | 6.7 |
| Manage finances during career | 1 | 6.7 |
| Total Responders | 15 | 100 |

The realities of professional football players from Northern Cyprus are highlighted in the following extract from professional football players:

"Embargo ties our hands in everywhere ... we do not sign professional contracts with the club as we are not officially FIFA members. We sign a contract at the association, but it is a simple contract, and no specific condition is written in that document. Everything is left to words that emerge between the two lips. [...] For instance, if the club lied to the football player about the

salary, no one could prove how much the player should gain. Therefore, we do not feel as secure as professional football players. We need more specific contracts with the club."
(Interview 9)

Another manifestation of oppression at the international level concern codified rules (Prilleltensky and Gonick,1996). Learned powerlessness is an important manifestation of oppression. This pressure exerted by the world in a dominant way is the at the international level affects the whole Northern Cyprus, it is the country's inequality and discrimination at the international level. As the football player stated embargo's affect their ability to compete in the international arena, and the situation was accepted by them show that they are living trained incapacity syndrome.

A professional football player supported this view.

"I think this is the main problem [...] Football is a professional career, people gain money from football, and they can look after their families as well ... players need insurance in the future, when they quit football, they should see how they will survive. This is another reason for quitting playing. We need insurance when we quit football as well... so yes, it is necessary." (Interview 12)

On the other hand, 33.33% of the players thought that retirement insurance is not necessary for football for the following reasons: since they have a dual occupation, they can cover their insurance from their workplace other than football, football is not sustainable, players should evaluate the money they get while playing football they make this job extra and a contract, and health insurance protects the player. This view is supported for the following reasons.

"In the northern part of Cyprus, football is not professional; we are feeling and working like professionals, but unfortunately, we are not. Therefore, most football players have dual careers. They earn money outside of football, and their salary depends on their job. For that reason, I think that's why they don't worry. Maybe... very little amount, I don't know, maybe, 10% of the retirement would be enough." (Interview 3)

Health insurance is particularly important for the lives of professional players. Football players get injured very often, and their job is not as safe as an officer's life. Due to human physiology, football can only be played up to a certain age, and the risk of injury is extremely high. In terms of injury related anxiety, anticipatory anxiety has an impact on the psychology of the athletes (Ford et al., 2017).

"Instead of the retirement insurance, we need a professional contract and health insurance to increase the quality of the football." (Interview 11)

From a researcher's perspective, the challenges faced by football players in North Cyprus illustrate how political and economic issues can deeply affect athletes. The lack of recognition by FIFA limits professional opportunities and reflects larger political conflicts that impact the players economically (Lekakis, 2015). Researchers see this as systemic oppression, where athletes miss out on the professional standards and benefits like solid contracts, reliable salaries, and good insurance that players in recognized countries receive. According to Forde (2023), FIFA has programme to improve the opportunities around the world with the recognised communities to improve the football and number of football players. Many players in North Cyprus manage dual careers to cope with these restrictions, showing their resilience in adapting to a challenging environment. According to the researcher perspective, dual career may have a positive impact on the football players when they retired form football, they would easily pass the transition phase. This situation provides a unique case for studying how sports are intertwined with political and economic realities, and how these larger forces shape the careers and lives of individual athletes.

In study 1, the results were analyzed in line with the interview results. In line with these, conducting the case study with 15 participants from a single football team and examining whether the same situations are experienced among football players throughout the island will reveal the situation in Northern Cyprus more clearly. In the following chapter, the second study data will be discussed to analyses the Süper Lig teams and referees in the Northern Cyprus.

CHAPTER FIVE: STUDY TWO

Chapter 4 discussed the key themes discovered from the case study involving 15 professional football players from Yenicami Ağdelen S.K. who were interviewed to ascertain their perceptions of being a professional footballer within Northern Cyprus. This rich data illustrated the problems they encountered due to the structural inequalities within their football system. To further understand if these perceptions were consistent with the wider population of football players in Northern Cyprus a questionnaire was created for a broader analysis of Northern Cyprus Süper Lig. This chapter aims to explore the analysis of all super league teams as the themes emerge from the case study from a single team. And presents the results of 201 professional football players and 78 football referees. It arranges the following data under the structural inequity thematic headings which all relate to career paths and professional approach with subheadings as post career plans, and key factors influencing football players.

Structural Inequity, Theme 1

5.1 Football Career Paths

5.1.1. Post-career Plan of Football Players

The survey results show the post career planning of the 201 professional football players illustrated in the Table 18. The most popular post-career choice among football players surveyed was to become a coach, with 34.3% opting for this path, suggesting a desire to remain within the sports field. In contrast, 27.4% of football players were undecided about their future, indicating a significant level of uncertainty and potentially a lack of available career guidance. Of the football players, 25.9% believed that football does not offer a balanced career in their country, reflecting concerns over job security and financial sustainability.

Other career paths, such as becoming a police officer or working in a football academy, were less chosen, with 13.4% planning to work in academies and 8.5% considering policing. These choices may

reflect transferable skills acquired through sports. About 11.9% simply aimed to enter the general population.

Smaller percentages show interest in trading and military careers (3.5%), indicating a diverse range of interests and opportunities that athletes consider.

Table 18
Post-Career Planning for Football Players (Survey Results)

| Career Option | Responses (n) | Percentage (%) |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Undecided | 55 | 27.4 |
| Coach | 69 | 34.3 |
| Police Officer | 17 | 8.5 |
| Work in a Football Academy | 27 | 13.4 |
| Must go to work and earn money | 24 | 11.9 |
| Trading | 17 | 8.5 |
| Military | 7 | 3.5 |
| Football is not an adequate career in our country | 52 | 25.9 |
| Other | 7 | 3.5 |
| Total Responders | 201 | 100 |

Structural inequity affects career planning for football players because it influences the resources they can access, such as training and financial advice. Players from less-wealthy areas or smaller leagues often have fewer opportunities and support to build careers outside of playing. From a researcher’s perspective, uncertainty in a professional football player’s life makes it difficult for them to see football as a reliable long-term job. This correlates with the results within the case study discussed in chapter 4. According to Stambulova's (2010), stated that the development of the goal setting in the athletes’ position and to reach the desired future should be planned well. And this process career assistance programme is crucial. As it is demonstrated in the table. 34.3% of the players which is the highest percentage set the goal to be a coach after the football career.

However, the second highest choice from the professional football players was ‘undecided’ what to do after the football career. Therefore, Athletic career assistance programme is very important as the

athletes was feeling losing social connections and experiencing isolation if their transition phase is not successful (Wylleman et al., 2004).

5.1.2. Key factors influencing Football Players' Career

A survey of 201 professional football players emphasised significant influences on their career decisions (Table 19). In particular, the majority (53.7%) saw themselves as the primary decision-makers, underscoring a strong sense of personal action. Fathers emerged as the next most significant influence, affecting 24.4% of players, reflecting either traditional paternal roles or a cultural emphasis on fatherly guidance. Friends also played a key role in influencing 18.9% of professional football players. In contrast, teachers, and immediate family members, such as mothers and brothers, have less influence, suggesting that professional advice and non-paternal family input are less pivotal. This correlates with the results within the case study discussed in chapter 4. However, in the survey results athletes' responds to father is less than the data from the chapter 4. In the chapter 4, 53.3% of the participants' stated 'father' was their key influencer in their football career.

Table 19

Key Factors Influencing Career Choice Among Football Players (Survey Results)

| Influencer | Responses (n) | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Teacher | 20 | 10 |
| Mother | 11 | 5.5 |
| Father | 49 | 24.4 |
| Brother | 11 | 5.5 |
| Friends | 38 | 18.9 |
| Myself | 108 | 53.7 |
| Other | 8 | 4 |
| Total Responders | 201 | 100 |

Structural inequities affect professional football players' career choices. Many players rely on themselves or close relationships such as family and friends for advice because they do not have access to professional career guidance. This lack of access is often due to economic disparities, which means that players from poorer areas have fewer resources. According to the pragmatist research perspective,

fair opportunities may provide equal career advice to all players, regardless of their background and level. As it was discussed in the previous chapter, the opportunity around the children plays a crucial role as we can see it from the "Football for Hope" project by FIFA. This project aimed to promote football and social development in the recognised members (Gannett et al., 2014). By this project, children had the opportunity to play football more than other children.

5.2 Professional approach

A survey of 201 professional football players categorised the necessary qualifications into four groups: physical attributes, work ethics, mental attributes, and interpersonal skills, as shown in Table 20.

Table 20

Qualifications Required for a Professional Football Player (Survey Responses)

| Category | Qualification | Responses (n) | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Physical Attributes | Physically strong | 102 | 50.7 |
| | Pay attention to diet | 128 | 63.7 |
| Work Ethic | Hard worker | 150 | 74.6 |
| | Disciplined | 158 | 78.6 |
| | Committed to job | 84 | 41.8 |
| | Ambitious | 119 | 59.2 |
| Mental Attributes | Intelligent | 94 | 46.8 |
| | Confident | 110 | 54.7 |
| | Have faith in oneself | 111 | 55.2 |
| | Control oneself | 98 | 48.8 |
| | Manage psychology | 81 | 40.3 |
| | Patient | 98 | 48.8 |
| Interpersonal Skills | Professional | 102 | 50.7 |
| | Respectful | 102 | 50.7 |
| | Relax | 43 | 21.4 |
| Other | Other | 2 | 1 |
| Total Responders | Total | 201 | 100 |

Key findings showed that physical health, including a good diet (63.7%) and strength (50.7%), is essential. Work ethics are also crucial, with high importance placed on being disciplined (78.6%) and

hardworking (74.6%). Mental strength, highlighted by traits such as confidence (54.7%) and intelligence (46.8%), was important for professional football players. Moreover, being professional and respectful, both valued at 50.7%, is important for teamwork and sportsmanship.

According to the research perspective, these results may differ in different countries if they are recognised worldwide. This table shows correlation with the chapter 4 as it was discussed in the previous chapter. The percentage of working hard and discipline qualifications for the professional football player to be successful chosen by participants. Considering the literature, positive psychology has an impact on the athletes' condition not only mentally it affect athletes' performance (Frederick-Recascino and Schuster-Smith, 2003; Bailey et al. 2006). Therefore, mental attributes of the athletes are the crucial to perform better.

The following theme, loss of identity, categorizes information into subheadings that explore the lifestyle of professional football players alongside their human aspects.

Loss of Identity, Theme 2

5.4 Lifestyle - The Human Side of Professional Football

The survey of 201 football players showed separate self-identification grouped into categories: Family Roles, Professional Roles, Social Roles, and Personal Identity, as shown in Table 21. The majority of professional football players identified as footballers (63.7%), underlining their professional role as central to their self-concept. In terms of Social Roles, a significant number saw themselves as Good People (44.8%) and friends (21.4%). Family roles were less dominant, with 11.9% identifying as Fathers or Brothers, and a negligible 0.5% as mothers. The category of Personal Identity, represented by those identifying as individuals, covered 27.9% of the responses.

Table 21*Identities of Football Players (Survey Results)*

| Category | Identity | Responses (n) | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|
| Family Roles | Father | 24 | 11.9 |
| | Mother | 1 | 0.5 |
| | Brother | 24 | 11.9 |
| Professional Roles | Footballer | 128 | 63.7 |
| | Athlete | 15 | 7.5 |
| Social Roles | Friend | 43 | 21.4 |
| | Good People | 90 | 44.8 |
| Personal Identity | Individual | 56 | 27.9 |
| Other | Other | 1 | 0.5 |
| Total Responders | Total | 201 | 100 |

The fact that Northern Cyprus is not recognised by FIFA has a significant impact on the identities of local footballers. According to the researcher's perspective, this not only restricts their professional development but also weakens their national pride and sense of belonging. There are some differences when compare with the chapter 4 which are, friendship was the highest percentage in the chapter 4. However, footballer as a professional role has the highest percentage according to the survey results. Second highest percentage is the 'good people' in the survey results, but it is 13.3% in the chapter 4. In terms of the broader perspective to the footballer, according to the results they see themselves as a footballer. Which creates misunderstanding as the football in Northern Cyprus is not recognised from the global authority (Lekakis, 2015), the passion to the football is very strong. As a player while they come across with the inequality when compared to international arena, according to Fricker (2007), players play in fairness conditions, and they see themselves as a football player. However, FIFA members receive many opportunities.

The next theme, isolation/invisibility, is divided into subheadings: psychological support, pressure, and education.

Isolation/invisibility, Theme 3

5.5 Psychology

The survey data from Table 22 indicate that a significant majority of football players (69% or 138 out of 201 respondents) lack access to psychological support through their clubs. In contrast, only 30% (61 players) reported having such support, illustrating a notable gap in mental health resources within the sport. Additionally, a small fraction, 1% (2 players), falls under the 'Other' category, which might suggest inconsistent access to these services.

Table 22

Psychological Support for Football Players from their clubs

| Psychological Support | Responses (n) | Percentage (%) |
|------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Yes | 61 | 30.3 |
| No | 138 | 68.7 |
| Other | 2 | 1.0 |
| Total Responders | 201 | 100 |

The survey findings show that football players' lack of psychological support is likely to increase their feelings of isolation and invisibility. According to Bennett (2021), psychological well-being and self-esteem affected by negatively detrimental practices such as discriminatory treatments. Dotson (2012) stated that by silencing the players' voice in the international arena has an impact on the football players to turn them epistemically invisible by excluding them. Study 1 and study 2 has a correlation. According to the researcher's perspective, players who lack access to mental health resources may feel alone, facing psychological issues such as stress, anxiety, or depression on their own without institutional support. This isolation may worsen mental health problems and harm general well-being. This study applied a purely sociocultural lens to the findings. Furthermore, a lack of psychological assistance from clubs can make players feel invisible and disadvantaged, implying that their mental health is not prioritised by their organisations. This perceived invisibility has an influence not only on personal health but also on professional performance and longevity, emphasising the need for a more supportive and inclusive attitude within sports organisations.

5.6 Support

The survey data from 201 football players (Table 23) indicated that 91.0% received support from their clubs, highlighting a proactive approach by clubs in addressing player well-being. However, 7.5% reported not receiving such support, suggesting areas for improvement in club practice. An additional 1.5% provided responses categorised as 'Other', indicating diverse perspectives.

Table 23

Psychological Support by Club for Football Players

| Support by Club | Responses (n) | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Yes | 183 | 91.0 |
| No | 15 | 7.45 |
| Other | 3 | 1.5 |
| Total Responders | 201 | 100 |

The study results on the psychological support offered by football clubs may have an indirect link to thoughts of isolation and invisibility among players in the sports community. Players who do not receive assistance may feel excluded or neglected, leading to feelings of loneliness. Furthermore, access to psychological support may increase players' visibility and sense of belonging within their clubs, while a lack of psychological support can lead to feelings of invisibility or insignificance. This data results are in line with the study 1 which is discussed in the chapter 4. Professional players receive support from the club/national team. According to the Finch et al. (2002), it is crucial that to create an environment for football players in terms of the safety and supportive. Furthermore, silencing voice and exclude the players from international arena has an impact on the football players as epistemically invisible (Dotson, 2012).

5.7 Pressure

In a survey of 201 professional football players regarding pressure in their careers, 59.2% reported no pressure, indicating that most manage or do not perceive stress in their professional environment (Table 24). However, 37.8% of the participants felt pressured, suggesting that a substantial portion experienced significant stress. An additional 3.0% gave responses that did not align clearly with yes or no, indicating varied experiences of pressure.

Table 24

Pressure on Football Players Survey Responses

| Response | Responses (n) | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Yes | 76 | 37.8 |
| No | 119 | 59.2 |
| Other | 6 | 3.0 |
| Total Responders | 201 | 100 |

The survey data on pressure among football players suggest a potential link to feelings of isolation and invisibility within the sports community. Those experiencing pressure may feel socially disconnected, particularly if they cannot openly discuss their challenges. Conversely, players reporting no pressure may still face issues of visibility and acknowledgment within their teams. This data results are correlates with the study1 which was discussed in the chapter 4.

The players stated that they do not feel pressure as they do not have enough fans or the lack of media interest. However, it was stated by Heidari et al. (2019), media and fan create pressure on the football players. According to Nazarov (2020), pressure, abuse, discriminatory treatment, and bullying tactics has an impact on the athletes' performance. In terms of the discriminatory treatment, the media and fan are not interested in football as it is not recognised globally. Therefore, it may decrease the motivation level and expectations of the professional football players. Hackfort et al. (2019) stated that international politics over a long period of time affects the area, and it resulted as a cultivated incapability.

Although the footballers ‘authorized person’ in Northern Cyprus attempt to speak up, as a football player, it is wiser to remain silent since hopelessness has been learned, and the players' voices no longer provide hope. On the contrary, In the researcher’s perspective, the ones who feel pressure they have still aims to reach they did not face with the isolation. As the international politics in the Northern Cyprus creates negative environment for the football players, after a period of time they lose their aim, and football turns as a hobby.

5.8 Education

The data show that a considerable majority of professional football players had finished high school (37.81%) or college courses (43.28%) (Table 25). Furthermore, a lower proportion of participants had postgraduate degrees, with 3.48% holding postgraduate degrees and 0.50% holding PhDs. Furthermore, 6.47% of players fall into the "Other" category, demonstrating a wide range of educational backgrounds among the player community in Northern Cyprus Süper Lig.

Table 25

Education Level of Football Players

| Education Level | Responses (n) | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Primary School | 2 | 1.0 |
| Secondary School | 15 | 7.46 |
| High School | 76 | 37.81 |
| Undergraduate | 87 | 43.28 |
| Postgraduate | 7 | 3.48 |
| PhD | 1 | 0.5 |
| Other | 13 | 6.47 |
| Total Responders | 201 | 100 |

According to the researcher’s perspective, a player's international stature and absorption into the football community may be influenced by their educational degree. Players with a higher degree may have greater access to worldwide chances and recognition, minimising their sense of global isolation.

Conversely, players with lower education levels may find barriers to worldwide recognition, leaving them feeling isolated at the global stage.

As the results of the table show that, major part of the players chooses to get an education and it is in line with the study 1. The fact that football players cannot live on a football player's salary due to the lack of retirement planning is due to the structural inequality in the football structure because there is no career planning support for the future. In a developed countries which are recognised globally, they have career planning programs for the athletes (Devaney, 2019).

The reason why so many people receive education may be due to the easier transition after sports careers and also due to lack of confidence in football. Living in a country where returning to sports after any injury is very difficult can increase future anxiety. As it was stated by Stambulova et al. (2015), education and athletic career helps the athletes in the transition phase. Therefore, dual career helps athletes.

The next theme, political and economic oppression, categorizes the data into subheadings covering career, dual career, insurance, and retirement.

Political and Economic Oppression, Theme 4

5.11 Career Recommendations

The table 26 shows the recommendations for young football players based on the responses from 201 participants. Key suggestions included prioritising happiness by selecting clubs where players feel content (68.2%) and considering opportunities to play abroad (32.3%). The participants also stressed the importance of avoiding long contracts (34.8%) and flexibility in leaving the team (21.9%). Financially, players are advised not to prioritise money (22.9%) but to seek satisfactory wages (19.9%). Additionally, some emphasised the need for health insurance (19.9%). According to data received from football players, short-term contracts, migration to another country suggest that the structure is not sufficient, and players want the opportunity to play football at better standards and may allow this

abroad. In order to be a professional football player, the contract should be sign to protect the rights of the player and club (Mavromati, 2011; Magee, 2006).

Table 26
Recommendations for young players

| Recommendations for Young Players | Responses (n) | Percentage (%) |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Contract Considerations | | |
| Do not sign very long contracts | 70 | 34.8 |
| Put the condition of leaving the team whenever he wants | 44 | 21.9 |
| Make a contract | 59 | 29.4 |
| Club Selection | | |
| Go to a club where he will be happy | 137 | 68.2 |
| Go abroad and play football | 65 | 32.3 |
| Financial Considerations | | |
| Don't care about money | 46 | 22.9 |
| Satisfactory wage | 40 | 19.9 |
| Other | 1 | 0.5 |
| Total Responders | 201 | 100 |

The results from the study 1 shows correlations between the study 2. Going abroad is another solution to play football without the isolation and economic oppression. According to Freire (1985), political and psychological oppression have connection with each other. Therefore, the oppression of the political situations on Northern Cyprus, creates economical and psychological oppression on the football players. The football players receive limited opportunities in terms of economic, visibility, and safety.

According to the researcher's perspective, some recommendations from professional football players, such as prioritising satisfactory wages and health insurance, may indicate concern about economic stability and access to critical resources, indicating political and economic oppression. Furthermore, the

recommendation to avoid long contracts and seek flexibility may represent a desire for autonomy and control, which might be affected by larger sociopolitical situations.

5.12 Dual Career

In Table 27, which shows football players' replies to responsibilities, the most common external responsibility indicated was being a student, with 112 (55.7%). Working was the second most prevalent responsibility with 64 responses (31.8%). A lower percentage of respondents reported playing football only (5.0%), whereas a significant proportion claimed to be both a student and a worker (7.5%). Furthermore, several respondents stated duties, such as caring for their families (18.4%), whereas only a small percentage indicated that they did not work or study (1.0%).

Table 27

External Responsibilities - Football Players Survey Responses

| External Responsibilities | Responses (n) | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Working | 64 | 31.8 |
| Student | 112 | 55.7 |
| Play football only | 10 | 5.0 |
| Student and working | 15 | 7.5 |
| Looking after my family | 37 | 18.4 |
| Not working & not studying | 2 | 1.0 |
| Other | 1 | 0.5 |
| Total Responders | 201 | 100 |

According to Morris et al. (2021), most athletes combine their education and professional career, Moreover, this dual career helps the athletes in the retirement from sport by providing social, financial and developmental advantages and makes the transition phase easier for the athletes (de Subijana et al., 2020; Day-Garner, 2018). This study correlate with the study 1 which was discussed in the chapter 1. In the results, most of the professional football players were doing dual career and the highest percentages are in education as a second career in both studies. Football players in Northern Cyprus

deal with significant obstacles because the territory is not recognised by FIFA (Lekakis, 2015). According to pragmatist researchers, this condition forces many players to pursue second occupations because their football-related income is insufficient without access to international events and sponsorships. Furthermore, economic, and political isolation restrict their professional options and financial security, resulting in economic and political persecution. This lack of worldwide recognition has a significant influence on their ability to pursue and continue their professional athletic careers.

5.13 Health Insurance

As shown in Table 28, the majority of football players, comprising 85.6% of professional football players, indicated a requirement for health insurance. Only 12.9% reported not needing it, whereas a small proportion (1.5%) provided other responses.

Table 28

Health Insurance Requirements

| Health Insurance Requirement | Responses (n) | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Yes | 172 | 85.6 |
| No | 26 | 12.9 |
| Other | 3 | 1.5 |
| Total Responders | 201 | 100 |

Regarding contracts, lack of health insurance makes it unsafe for football players. Professional football player contracts include sections about player illness and injuries, highlighting their significance (Cengiz et al., 2021). The study 1 results correlate with the study 2 results. Most of the professional football players stated that they need health insurance. According to the researcher, professional football players' health insurance requirements may reflect the underlying sociopolitical situations in an area facing economic and political oppression. The required health insurance might be a government attempt to secure access to healthcare during uncertain times. Alternatively, it might be considered a forceful

policy that potentially exacerbates economic inequities by placing further financial obligations on the already disadvantaged.

5.14 Retirement (insurance) pension

The table 29 illustrates the responses of football players regarding their preference for retirement (insurance) pensions. Most professional football players (76.6%) indicated a desire for pension benefits. Conversely, 21.4% stated that they did not require a retirement pension, whereas a smaller fraction (2.0%) provided other responses.

Table 29

Retirement (Insurance) Pension

| Retirement (Insurance) Pension Requirement | Responses (n) | Percentage (%) |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Yes | 154 | 76.6 |
| No | 43 | 21.4 |
| Other | 4 | 2.0 |
| Total Responders | 201 | 100 |

According to the study, retirement pensions for football players may be affected by larger socioeconomic variables, such as financial stability and access to resources. In areas where political and economic oppression is common, people may prioritise securing retirement benefits as a sort of financial stability in difficult times. According to the literature retirement is a very stressful phase for an athlete (Erpič et al., 2004), retirement pension may help the football players to see their future as the retirement affect the players' psychology, abilities and quality of life. The results from the study 1 and study 2 correlates. There is a positive relationship between studies.

Results from study 1 and study 2 were correlated in the majority of studies. However, there are some differences compared to the 4th chapter; in this section, there was a difference between the two studies in terms of who the football players saw their own identities as. Except from the identity part, study 2

correlate with study 1 and therefore validates your small sample for the case study by using the larger sample.

This study aimed to explore how different group of stakeholders perceive the general situation in Northern Cyprus after conducting a thorough questionnaire of professional football players. The data is organized under the theme of structural inequity, specifically addressing key factors that affect referees.

Structural Inequity, Theme 1 (Referees)

5.15 Key factors influencing Referees' Career

Referees are managed by the Northern Cyprus Football Federation and everything that applies to CTFA also applies to referees. Referees do not have access to the resources of UEFA or FIFA. Everything that applies to CTFA also applies to referees. Looking at the referees' perspective can slightly differentiate the perspective and allow us to see the event from a more outside perspective. One of the duties of referees on the field is to ensure justice, and in this case, they were included in the research to learn what their perspective would be on this issue. Referees are under the same conditions as football players, but they are directly affiliated with the federation, not the club.

This survey of 78 referees revealed key influences on their career choices, as shown in Table 30. Friends had the most significant influence, affecting 41% of referees, suggesting that peer relationships are vital in decision-making. Self-guidance was also prominent, with 33.3% of participants making decisions independently. Family members, such as fathers and brothers, had a lesser impact, influencing 9% and 6.4%, respectively, while other influences affected 12.8%. Teachers and mothers are the least influential, showing that educational and maternal guidance play minimal roles in referees' career choices.

Table 30*Key Factors Influencing Career Choice Among Football Referees (Survey Results)*

| Influencer | Responses (n) | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Teacher | 2 | 2.6 |
| Mother | 1 | 1.3 |
| Father | 7 | 9.0 |
| Brother | 5 | 6.4 |
| Friends | 32 | 41.0 |
| Myself | 26 | 33.3 |
| Other | 10 | 12.8 |
| Total Responders | 78 | 100 |

Structural inequity could influence referees' career choices by limiting their access to resources and support networks. According to Fricker (2007), If you cannot access the education and resources that others can access, there is an epistemic injustice. Those from less-privileged backgrounds may rely more on peer relationships and personal judgment because they might not have easy access to professional guidance or educational opportunities. This reliance on informal networks instead of professional or family support highlights the need for more equitable access to resources that can help referees make informed career decisions regardless of their socioeconomic status. Therefore, epistemic injustice is an issue in this context, and it is not allowed to reach the resources of education.

The following theme of loss of identity includes data under the subheading referees' choice to referee abroad.

Loss of Identity, Theme 2 (Referees)

5.16 Referees and the Choice to Referee Abroad

According to Table 31, a large percentage of referees (91.0%) wanted to referee in other countries. Only a small percentage (9.0%) were uninterested, and none selected the 'Other' option.

Table 31*Referees and the Choice to Referee Abroad*

| Would you like to referee in a different country? | Respondents | Percentage (%) |
|--|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Yes | 71 | 91.0 |
| No | 7 | 9.0 |
| Other | 0 | 0 |
| Total respondents | 78 | 100 |

The high number of referees interested in working overseas may represent a larger story about identity and recognition in Northern Cyprus. From the standpoint of the researcher, professionals in a range of fields, including sports, may seek to demonstrate their identity and gain respect for their abilities on a global scale due to Northern Cyprus's inadequate international recognition. Referees see the opportunity to officiate in different countries as a chance to be a part of a larger community in which their professional identity and skills are recognised and respected, as opposed to the possible sense of invisibility they may have in their current role. Not being recognised by FIFA and unable to be part of the world, referees are trying to continue their careers in the North of Cyprus in isolation from the outside. Referees want the opportunity to be a referee at better standards in a different country. This urge to work overseas may be seen as a goal for both personal improvement and an interest for professional situations where their careers and identities are not constrained by the politics of recognition.

The theme of isolation/invisibility organizes data under the subheading psychological aspects of referees and education level.

Isolation/invisibility, Theme 3 (Referees)

5.17 Psychology

Table 32 demonstrates the referees' replies on whether they receive psychological help. Of the 78 respondents, 68 (87.2%) reported that they did not receive psychological help. In contrast, six referees

(7.7%) responded that they received psychological support. In addition, four referees, accounting for 5.1% of the total, indicated 'Other' responses not specified in the table.

Table 32

Psychological Support for Referees

| Psychological Support | Responses (n) | Percentage (%) |
|------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Yes | 6 | 7.7 |
| No | 68 | 87.2 |
| Other | 4 | 5.1 |
| Total Responders | 78 | 100 |

A study on psychological support in referees found a lack of psychological support for referees in Northern Cyprus, which may reflect a greater sense of isolation from the international world. According to Bailey et al. (2006) stated that positive psychology has a positive relationship with well-being and performance. This condition might be attributed to the political and sporting isolation faced by institutions and persons in regions that are not generally recognised by international organisations. This lack of official recognition, along with limited integration with global athletic networks, can lead to a sense of being neglected or marginalised, both in terms of professional support and broader career opportunities.

5.18 Education Levels of Referees

According to statistics, the majority of references (74.4%) had an undergraduate degree, making it the most frequent level of education among participants. A smaller percentage (15.4%) had finished high school, while 9.0% held postgraduate degrees. Only 1.3% have a PhD. There were no referees in the survey who only finished elementary or secondary school, and none chose the 'Other' option.

Table 33*Education Level of Referees*

| Education Level of Referees | Responses (n) | Percentage (%) |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Primary School | 0 | 0 |
| Secondary School | 0 | 0 |
| High School | 12 | 15.4 |
| Undergraduate | 58 | 74.4 |
| Postgraduate | 7 | 9 |
| PhD | 1 | 1.3 |
| Other | 0 | 0 |
| Total Respondents | 78 | 100 |

The significant percentage of undergraduates may be an indication of the value or necessity of postgraduate education in developing the skills and knowledge needed to referee at a competitive level. The presence of postgraduate and PhD holders indicates that some reviewers have significant academic achievements, apart from their professional training. This educational background may improve their decision-making skills and comprehension of the sports they perform, thereby increasing the efficacy and professionalism of their pitch. The dual career is also important in the referees' life. As the dual career gives the opportunity to as the second career considered as a beneficial in the football players (Day-Garner, 2018), the situation is the same with the referees.

According to the researcher's perspective, higher education levels among referees may also indicate a desire for personal and professional growth that goes beyond the constraints imposed by Northern Cyprus's lack of international recognition. By pursuing further education, these referees equip themselves with globally recognised credentials, which can help reduce feelings of professional isolation by matching their qualifications with worldwide norms. Furthermore, their educational attainment might help them achieve respect and credibility in the global sports world, lessening the sense of invisibility that may come with functioning in a less recognised national environment. To overcome obstacles and improve their professional profiles, both domestically and globally, they are actively pursuing higher education.

The following theme of political and economic oppression includes data categorized under the subheadings career and dual career in referees.

Political and Economic Oppression, Theme 4 (Referees)

5.19 Career

This study was a survey study, but there was an option for referees to comment on their careers and these were the referees' comments. The long-term career perspectives of football referees are examined, with particular attention paid to their answers to the question, "Where do you think you will be in football in 10 years?" The response suggests common unhappiness among referees about their future possibilities in the sport. This feeling sets up the context for a deeper analysis of the underlying causes of their anxieties as well as the possible consequences for their careers.

The referees' statements are as follows:

"Unfortunately, because our country is under embargo, I don't think football will progress much in the next ten years." (Referee 15)

The perspective of another referee supports this view.

"I don't think we can go very far; it seems very difficult with the lack of support given to this federation. " (Referee 15)

Another referee's perspective supporting this view.

"This depends on the recognition of our country. If the current situation does not change, we will have to continue in the same way. " (Referee 19)

Opinions of a referee who wants to work abroad regarding this issue,

"Since I am considering studying at my university in a European country, I think I will continue in the football league of the place I go to. " (Referee 33)

According to the literature, as the CTFA is not recognised by FIFA (Lekakis, 2015), the referees feel hopelessness as they stated in their comments. If nothing will be change in terms of the politics oppression, they are hopeless to improve football in the Northern Cyprus. As Hackfort et al. (2019), stated that learned hopelessness is another oppression that can have an impact on the individuals. From a researcher's perspective, referees' words emphasise the significant impact of organizational and political obstacles on the future of football in their countries. The discussion of embargoes and the lack of support for football associations draw attention to structural problems that impede development. Furthermore, the referees' resignation of the country's international recognition reflects a larger trend of restricted prospects for progress in regional football. One referee's viewpoint on studying overseas shows a possible talent drain, emphasising the importance of addressing these difficulties in keeping football growing locally.

5.20 Dual Career in Referees

Table 34 shows the external responsibilities of the referees. According to the data, 50% of people were employed, 23.08% were students, 16.67% worked and studied, 7.69% did not, and 2.56% fell into the other groups.

Table 34

External Responsibilities - Referees Survey Responses

| External Responsibilities | Responses (n) | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Not working & not studying | 6 | 7.69 |
| Student & working | 13 | 16.67 |
| Working | 39 | 50 |
| Student | 18 | 23.08 |
| Other | 2 | 2.56 |
| Total Responders | 78 | 100 |

Considering the literature, dual career has positive effects on the players' life (Day-Garner, 2018; Stambulova et al., 2015). It has similarities with the referees, as they are in a same political situation, they need to earn money to live, and they are responsible to take care of themselves. This data has correlations with the study 1 and study 2 football players. The results of the survey show that referees frequently balance a variety of responsibilities, such as employment and school, which may be a reflection of the financial requirements in the sociopolitical environment of Northern Cyprus. From the standpoint of the researcher, this requirement most likely results from inconsistent pay in refereeing, which is exacerbated by the region's inadequate worldwide recognition and lack of economic integration. This circumstance reflects larger economic issues and restricted career possibilities that may drive people to seek stability through extra jobs or more education.

In this section, it has been revealed that professional football players are in search of ways to protect and secure themselves due to political reasons, inequality, and oppression. From the perspective of professional football players, this is a difficult job compared to a normal football player abroad. Football players have to shape their lives according to political pressure that is beyond their control. From the perspective of referees and football players, the fact that both groups of people see abroad as an option is a desire to access opportunities abroad, as the problem is not related to them but is entirely due to the inequality developing outside them. Football players and referees, that is, people within the CTFA, have chosen the path of dual careers in order to secure themselves due to the inequality applied.

Recommendations based on the study's results are presented in the next chapter. These recommendations, which are based on scientific studies, will provide helpful directions for enhancing football in Northern Cyprus. By utilising a well-balanced combination of academic understanding and empirical data, the suggestions will act as a guide for all parties involved in navigating the challenges of officiating, ultimately leading to beneficial transformations in the football scene of the area.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

This chapter explores the themes of this thesis. It includes a theoretical synthesis and attempts to consolidate and critically reflect on the findings of the literature review and two data sets. The discussion starts by addressing each specific research aim. Methodological developments and reflections on the research journey are debated and a synthesis of the studies is completed in this section. The comments emerging from the data develop a series of applied perspectives and propose several implications for academic communities, in the areas of structural inequality, identity, invisibility political and social oppression, highlighting the difficulties players are experiencing playing football in Northern Cyprus. In this study a sociocultural lens is applied to findings.

6.1 Clarification of Aims

The general aims of this study are as follows:

This research aims to define the extent to which the embargo-driven structural inequity experienced by football players from Northern Cyprus impacts players' careers.

This research focuses primarily on the historical background of Northern Cyprus and its inequalities within football. No situation shows the impact of sports, politics, economy, and geopolitical tensions more clearly than football in Northern Cyprus. Not recognised by major international sporting bodies such as FIFA, players in this region face unique challenges arising directly from the broader political and economic sanctions imposed on their region. To achieve the aim of this study three objectives were identified.

1. Objective 1 Examine the existing knowledge on structural inequalities in football.

This was achieved by the literature review exploring football in Northern Cyprus and the isolation of globally authorised organisations on football players. McGillivray et al. (2005) presented a framework

for understanding differences in access to resources, such as career duration, financial guidance, and training in football players. As stated by Lekakis (2015), Northern Cyprus is not recognised by the FIFA; therefore, resources, opportunities, and educational programs are not given to football players in this unrecognised area. The programmes for the improvement of football and awareness of children's opportunities cannot be implemented in Northern Cyprus, as there is structural inequity when compared to other recognised countries (Gannett et al., 2014). By this project, children had the opportunity to play football.

2. Objective 2 Investigate the cultural context in Northern Cyprus.

This was achieved through the chapter 1 and chapter 3, there is a unique socio-political and economic situation in Northern Cyprus. The complex history of Cyprus has deeply affected Northern Cyprus, particularly after the island was divided, and Northern Cyprus was not internationally recognised. According to Kartakoullis and Loizou (2009), sports such as football have traditionally helped bridge divisions. Despite this, after the division, it isolated Northern Cyprus and ended its bicomunal sports events. The impact of the unrecognised state has an impact on sports including football. Attempts by the CTFA to overcome these political challenges have not been successful, facing resistance from recognised authorities. This absence from international sports competitions makes the situation even more difficult (Lekakis, 2015).

3. Objective 3 Explore footballers' experiences and perceptions of structural inequalities and their impact on careers.

This was achieved through study 1 (chapter 4) and 2, (chapter 5) in Northern Cyprus football players sometimes pursue dual occupations, which is necessary given the country's unstable economy and limited options available in its underappreciated sporting environment. This is consistent with research on women's football in England, where players are required to pursue more education and different job pathways because of the precarious nature of their athletic careers (Culvin, 2023). These various job

routes emphasise the impact of structural injustices on athletes' lives, compelling them to go outside of sports for financial and career stability. The lack of FIFA recognition is regarded as a type of systemic oppression (Lekakis, 2015), limiting the professional standards of Northern Cyprus athletes, such as stable contracts, steady wages, and complete insurance that players in recognised nations receive.

The concept of epistemic injustice (Fricker, 2007) relates to the injustice experienced by Northern Cypriot players in accessing similar educational and professional resources as players in recognised states. This inequality affects their ability to develop careers within and outside football and highlights the wider socioeconomic and political challenges that shape their professional environments. The lack of worldwide recognition, as well as isolation from the global football community, can cause players to lose their sense of identity. As Day-Garner (2018) stated that second identity for the football players is beneficial and according to Kersting (2009), values significantly influence identities. Therefore, this isolation affects their professional identity as athletes, as well as their national and cultural identities. Based on the experiences of players in Northern Cyprus with players from FIFA recognized regions, this research highlights the unique challenges faced by players operating in unrecognised conditions. The lack of international representation and external support not only isolates these players, but also limits their opportunities for professional and personal growth.

4. Objective 4 Provide recommendations for addressing these issues in the future.

This study presents four recommendations for assisting football players in Northern Cyprus. First, establish structures of support inside football associations that provide medical, psychological, and career assistance to players. Second, express these players' difficulties with the CTFA to encourage understanding and assistance. Third, publish the findings in English to inform people worldwide about these challenges and give players a voice internationally. Fourth, the CTFA should be encouraged to pursue partial recognition or participation in larger international sporting organisations. This could increase players' chances to compete internationally and improve their careers.

6.2 Synthesizing the Studies

In international sports, political and economic factors often play a critical role in shaping athletes' careers. This is particularly evident in regions such as North Cyprus, where non-recognition by global sports authorities, such as FIFA, significantly influencing the professional landscape of football players. This synthesis examined the interplay between these external pressures and their effects on athletes' professional opportunities and personal identities. Drawing on insights from two key studies, the researcher explored how a lack of formal recognition impacts these players, forcing them to adopt dual careers and seek opportunities beyond their limits. The data demonstrate how structural inequities in football systems affect players. This analysis shows athletes' resilience and adaptability, and it enlightens the socio-economic and political challenges they face, providing a broad view of their struggles and strategies in this unique sports environment.

The thesis has discussed the process of joining FIFA, the global governing body of association football, is complex and requires thorough planning and careful consideration. FIFA membership would theoretically allow Northern Cyprus to participate in international competitions. Recognition by FIFA could act as a form of "soft diplomacy," granting Northern Cyprus symbolic legitimacy on the global stage without requiring formal statehood. Membership would challenge the exclusionary practices of global organizations that perpetuate inequalities between recognised and unrecognised entities (Cazotto et al., 2022).

Rather than pursuing immediate entry, a gradual approach to FIFA membership may provide greater benefits, and would provide Northern Cyprus access to funding, training programs, and infrastructure development initiatives, addressing disparities in resources compared to other nations.

The gradual approach allows for better preparation, adaptation to FIFA standards, and more sustainable integration into the global football ecosystem. (FIFA, 2003; Figueiredo et al., 2014). This gradual approach would allow for better preparation and adaptation of FIFA standards (Cazotto et al., 2022).

Becoming a FIFA member is a complex and multifaceted process that requires navigating a comprehensive set of institutional and regulatory requirements. The path to FIFA membership is not a

simple or straightforward effort, as it involves following a diverse array of organizational standards, compliance measures, and bureaucratic procedures (Cazotto et al., 2022). National football federations must address these complex challenges carefully and precisely to gain acceptance and recognition within the global football governing body (Düerkop & Ganohariti, 2021). Rushing into immediate FIFA membership without proper preparation and adaptation can lead to significant challenges and potential setbacks for the national federation.

The gradual approach to FIFA membership offers several advantages for aspiring to national football federations. First, it allows for a more comprehensive and deliberate preparation process, enabling the federation to fully understand and align itself with the FIFA's extensive regulations, including requirements related to player transfers, registration periods, and financial transparency (Burnett, 2019).

From a pragmatist researcher's perspective, the process of joining FIFA should be approached gradually to allow national football associations to adapt sustainably to the FIFA's complex standards and requirements. Pragmatism emphasises practical solutions and measures progress over immediate results, making step-by-step integration more realistic and manageable. While FIFA membership would not solve all the challenges of football in Northern Cyprus, it offers significant benefits, including access to standards, infrastructure, and sponsorships, which can foster development and financial stability. Competing internationally would also enhance the growth and experience of football players.

Institutional sustainability, defined as long-term changes in policy, practice, and socio-economic conditions in sports development, has attracted the attention of major organisations such as the IOC, FIFA, and EU actively promoting sustainability policies (Konstantopoulos & Manoli, 2024). Therefore, the national federation needs to make a good plan in terms of sustainability in long-term Northern Cyprus football.

Football players in North Cyprus face considerable professional limitations stemming from the absence of FIFA recognition, a situation which reflects broader geopolitical conflicts affecting the region (Lekakis, 2015). The professionalization of football in Northern Cyprus would involve transforming the sport from an amateur or semi-professional system into a structured, full-time industry. This shift

could bring significant benefits, but it also poses challenges within Northern Cyprus's unique socio-political and economic context. The benefits involve economic development as professionalisation would generate employment opportunities for players, coaches, referees, and support staff such as physiotherapists and marketing professionals. A professional football league could attract local sponsors, and investors, and increase ticket sales, boosting the economy and leading to infrastructure investment as professionalisation often requires better stadiums, training facilities, and youth academies, which could improve sports infrastructure across the region. Full-time training and improved facilities would enhance the skills of players, enabling them to compete at higher levels. Professional leagues would likely attract better-qualified coaches and staff, improving the quality of football in Northern Cyprus (Düerkop & Ganohariti, 2021). A professional structure could make teams more competitive in regional or international platforms like CONIFA tournaments. Successful professional football could promote Northern Cyprus internationally, countering its political isolation, which could lead to facilitating collaborations with international clubs, even without FIFA membership. However, the researcher recognises that professionalisation does create challenges.

As a small population and restricted international recognition of Northern Cyprus may limit sponsorship, broadcast revenue, and external investments and professionalisation requires significant financial outlay for player salaries, infrastructure, and league management, which may strain local resources. Without stable income sources like TV rights or international competitions, professional leagues could face financial instability (Curran, 2021). The political isolation of Northern Cyprus restricts participation in international competitions under FIFA, limiting opportunities for exposure and revenue. This may create a chicken-and-egg scenario, therefore is FIFA membership going to solve these issues or help by leveraging relationships with Cyprus Turkish football and organizations like CONIFA this will access resources, expertise, and competition opportunities. Recent research addresses how professionalisation could impose unrealistic expectations on players, leading to burnout or mental health challenges (Yildiz, 2015; Sarmiento et al., 2021).

The concept of professionalism in football is complex, involving not only the technical and tactical aspects of the game, but also the broader social, cultural, and organizational contexts surrounding the

sport (Reis Monteiro and Monteiro, 2015). Professionalism in football goes beyond simply receiving payment for playing; it includes a strong commitment to excellence, ethical conduct, and advancing organizational goals (Bourke, 2003). It is not only about earning a livelihood but also encompasses a complete approach that integrates technical skills, ethical responsibility, and dedication to the improvement of the sport and its governing institutions.

The widespread presence of semi-professional football in various European nations serves as an example of the diverse social, economic, and cultural contexts shaping sports throughout the continent (Szerovay, 2018). While some clubs and leagues have adopted a more professional structure with formal player contracts, rigorous training programs, and performance-based compensation, a substantial number of football players still operate within a semi-professional framework (Castillo-Rodríguez et al., 2020). In such settings, players and coaches often balance their commitment to football with other employment or educational pursuits, highlighting the dual nature of professionalism and semi-professionalism in sports.

This dual structure of professionalism and semi-professionalism in football presents opportunities and challenges (Horgby and Ericsson, 2023). The European football landscape reflects this complex balance, with different regions and clubs finding various ways to navigate the divide to support the growth of the game (Curran, 2021). In many countries, football scenes include both professional and semi-professional clubs, each with distinct organizational structures, compensation models, and player development pathways (Caughron, 2012). Some football players choose to remain semi-professional, balancing football with other jobs or educational pursuits (Bourke, 2003).

The semi-professional approach has both advantages and disadvantages. On the positive side, it allows players to pursue interests and careers outside football, giving them a balanced lifestyle and opportunities to develop a broader range of skills (Pink et al., 2018). This flexibility appeals to those who do not view a professional football career as their only long-term goal. It also enables more individuals to participate in football at a higher level without needing to commit exclusively to the sport.

However, the semi-professional model presents several challenges. Limited resources in semi-professional clubs can restrict investments in player development, coaching, and other critical elements of high-performance football programmes (Relvas, 2010). This can impact the competitiveness of teams, both domestically and internationally. Additionally, the lack of financial security associated with semi-professionalism may prevent talented players from pursuing sports at their highest levels, as they may be drawn to more stable and well-paid career options in other fields. This employment between the flexibility of semi-professionalism and the financial stability of professional sports creates challenges for players and clubs as they seek to balance their passion for the game with long-term financial and professional security.

In Northern Cyprus, football combines elements of both professional and semi-professional levels, shaped by the region's unique political and economic conditions. Exclusion from FIFA and UEFA means that local clubs in Northern Cyprus lack the funding, sponsorship, and international opportunities necessary to support their professional careers. As a result, becoming full-time professional football is generally unfeasible, and football players frequently need to pursue dual careers. Therefore, many players must balance football with other employees to maintain their financial stability (Ramos et al., 2022). This dual-career requirement limits players' ability to focus only on their athletic development, which in turn limits their performance and career progression compared with players in more established football systems (Stambulova et al., 2015).

In the case of England, although women's football has been professionalised, female footballers are not offered the same financial condition as male professional footballers in terms of contractual security, employment conditions, and economic salary. However, due to the sustainability and legislation of the countries in football, professional women football players are not at the same level as male professional football players (Culvin & Bowes, 2021). According to the researcher's perspective, this may be an example of how the understanding of professionalism differs depending on the conditions of the country.

From a pragmatist researcher's perspective, football players in Northern Cyprus often view themselves as professionals and adopt a professional approach to the sport despite remaining officially semi-

professional. Due to cultural and regional circumstances, players maintain a strong commitment to training, discipline, and performance standards typically associated with professional athletes. However, because of financial limitations and the lack of international recognition, they must balance their football careers with other employment. This unique situation leads players to identify themselves as professionals in their mindset and actions, while the socio-economic realities of Northern Cyprus keep them within a semi-professional structure. This self-identification as a professional highlights both their dedication to the sport and the challenges they face in achieving full professional status. The professionalisation of football in Northern Cyprus holds great promise for economic development, social cohesion, and sporting excellence. However, its success depends on addressing challenges such as financial sustainability, political constraints, and the potential for inequality. A carefully planned, inclusive, and gradual approach could maximise the advantages while mitigating the risks, ensuring that professionalisation benefits the entire Northern Cypriot football ecosystem.

According to Study 1, not being professional footballers is a form of systematic oppression that eliminates athletes of secure contracts, consistent incomes, and full insurance coverage, while also refusing them the advantages that players in recognised countries receive. Forde (2023) emphasises ongoing FIFA efforts to improve recognised communities, further emphasising the inequalities faced by North Cyprus athletes. Many football players demonstrate resilience by balancing dual careers and offer a route to ease post-athletic career transitions. The reason they do this is simply because they cannot make a living from football, and they feel insecure. It is similar to the league structure in England for Women's football, as stated by Culvin (2023), for all female football players in the WSL and Championship in England, education is essential as the football career of women is not safe and does not offer suitable occupational pension.

Study 2 confirms the findings of Study 1 using a larger sample, except for the differences in self-identity perceptions noted in Chapter Four. Both players and referees adapt to political and economic instability by pursuing dual careers and seeing opportunities abroad as essential for avoiding international restrictions. Fricker (2007) stated that a lack of access to education and resources available to others results in epistemic injustice. Therefore, structural inequality exists in terms of the unfair conditions of

football players. Players from poorer regions or smaller leagues are unable to plan their careers because of limited resources, such as training and financial assistance, leaving them with fewer opportunities outside of playing. This uncertainty makes football a less reliable long-term career option from the researcher's point of view.

These studies clearly illustrate how structural inequity and political and economic challenges shape the professional realities of football players in unrecognised regions such as Northern Cyprus. Evidence demonstrates that external forces have an important impact on athletes' careers and lives, emphasising their resilience and strategic foresight. This approach helps us to understand better the relationship between sports, politics, and economic inequities in Northern Cyprus.

6.3 Reflection

As a researcher who experienced problems in Northern Cyprus as an athlete and is interested in football, my professional experiences and personal interests inevitably shaped my approach to this study. My experiences investigating similar geopolitical contexts, though directly with Northern Cyprus, have made me particularly sensitive to the challenges and inequalities faced by individuals in unrecognised territories. This sensitivity affected the design of the study, and at the same time, speaking the same language with the participants and being in this football community I believe this allowed the participants to share their thoughts with me easily. Reflecting on the study, I realised that the nature of my relationship with stakeholders and players during the interviews significantly influenced the quality of the data collected.

The choice to use a semi-ethnographic and pragmatic approach in this study arises from the desire to gain an in-depth understanding of the daily realities and wider social conditions affecting football players in Northern Cyprus. This methodological choice allows for a detailed exploration of personal experiences within a socio-political context.

This study takes a pragmatic approach to ethnographic research, offering a practical perspective on how football players in regions such as Northern Cyprus manage their careers amid geopolitical challenges and scarce resources. This method not only highlights athletes' adaptability and resilience but also examines the real-world effects of a lack of international recognition on their professional and personal lives. As stated by Rahi (2017), pragmatic ideology focuses on practical solutions that address real-world situations and individual needs instead of strictly following theoretical ideas.

The studies used thematic analysis, as a methodological approach to deeply explore and understand patterns and themes within qualitative data collected from interviews and surveys (Vaismoradi & Snelgrove, 2019). This approach allowed for a detailed examination of footballers' personal experiences and perspectives, revealing inequality and underlying structures in their professional environments.

This section aims to contextualise the methodological framework used within the studies and critically reflect on the methodological developments within this thesis. In doing so, it reflects on the synthesis (and development) of data from Study One, to Study Two. Discussions turn to ideas of trying to develop trust and respect in the research processes and its potential relationship with data. Through the methodological journey, the studies display a relationship with threads intertwined in both studies. The thematic analysis identifies key themes and sub-themes that develop from study one to study two. Thematic analysis identifies major themes that develop from Study One to Study Two; here the narrative further deepens these findings.

In this study, pragmatism supports the research approach that addresses real-world problems through mixed methods design (Almeder, 2007). The resulting conceptual framework addresses structural inequality, loss of identity, and political oppression and provides a lens for exploring the complex interplay of these factors in the context of the study. This study draws on a variety of data sources to provide a comprehensive analysis of the issues faced by football stakeholders in Northern Cyprus. Primary documents of the Turkish Cypriot Football Federation (CTFA) and data obtained from two major studies form the basis of this research. Study 1, in particular, includes interviews with players and provides qualitative information about their experiences. Study 2 includes surveys of Süper Lig players and surveys completed by referees, providing quantitative data about the wider professional

environment. Together, these resources allow for a nuanced understanding of the football community from a variety of perspectives, ensuring that all relevant voices are heard and considered.

Through the use of reflexivity to the thematic analysis, this study recognises its own subjectivities and possible biases, as described by Vaismoradi et al. (2016). Despite the lack of standardised techniques and the time-consuming nature of the analytic process, Thomas and Harden (2008) found that careful and frequent examination of the data reduced these weaknesses.

In the First Study, tabular representations emerged, and themes were brought together. Then, the results from the study 2 from professional football players and referees analysed. Similarly, the data obtained from the Study 1 and the Study 2 were also synthesized. I felt that this configuration would allow the data throughout the thesis to reflect reality more accurately from a broad perspective. This unique configuration and synthesis of data can also be adopted in future research projects when trying to fully understand, highlight and discuss the nature of a study. The thematic analysis focused specifically on conveying participants' perspectives and thus giving voice to their lived experiences (Vaismoradi & Snelgrove, 2019). Reflexively accepting my role as a researcher, I ensured that these perspectives were accurately represented by using extensive quotes from interviews conducted throughout the thesis to provide a deeper understanding of these narratives.

My perspectives as a researcher influence how I interpret data, particularly when examining the challenges faced by footballers in Northern Cyprus. I aimed to maintain transparency about my perspectives to ensure that the research was credible and accountable. This transparency helps the viewer understand how the research findings may have been influenced by my assumptions. Additionally, acknowledging my position helped manage power dynamics between participants and ensured that the research was conducted ethically and respectfully. The participants expressed themselves openly and freely with me because I came from the same socio-cultural background and could speak the same language. In fact, during the interview, professional football players said that they were incredibly happy because they felt valued because I interviewed them.

Being aware of my own biases also improved the research process (Dunne et al., 2005), It pushed me to critically examine my assumptions and led to deeper insights and more thoughtful interpretations of the data. This reflection not only added depth to the current study but also opened possibilities for future research directions. In terms of the personal reflexivity, my significant engagement in sports, notably at the international level representing North Cyprus, has heavily informed my approach to this research. While I have no direct experience as a football player, my duties as a manager and coach have given me a unique view on the sport. This experience has provided me with a deep awareness of the obstacles that athletes come across, particularly during training and psychological preparation. This personal connection to sports, along with my specialised psychology training, has given me the ability to empathise with athletes and understand the broader impacts of their situations. This empathic perspective helps to guarantee that the study is carried out with care and respect for the participants' rights and dignity.

Furthermore, in terms of the epistemological reflexivity, my approach as a pragmatic researcher focuses on real-world applications and practical solutions. This viewpoint is critical for determining how theoretical principles are applied to the daily realities of football players in Northern Cyprus. My pragmatic philosophy directed the choice of methodology and data interpretation, placing an emphasis on efficacy and practicality over abstract theorising. This method assisted in recognising and addressing the actual difficulties experienced by athletes, resulting in research that is both academically and socially significant.

I used extensive and carefully edited quotes to highlight the direct experiences and opinions of players and stakeholders (Biddle et al., 2001). This approach ensured that the text reflected their views rather than my own interpretations or comments specifically related to a theoretical topic. This method emphasised the truth of their perspectives and minimises their influence as researchers. Researchers should be transparent and reliable because of bias (Morris MacLean et al., 2019). I have attempted to gain people's trust and respect throughout the study. As a qualitative PhD researcher, I assured them that their responses would remain confidential.

6.4 Contribution to Knowledge and Originality

This study significantly increases the understanding of the socio-political and economic challenges faced by football players in Northern Cyprus due to lack of FIFA recognition. By applying the theories of Miranda Fricker, Paola Freire, and Stuart Hall to sports, it makes significant contributions to the sociology of sports and political science by providing groundbreaking information about how isolations affect the careers and identities of athletes. This approach not only fills an important gap in the existing literature, but also provides the basis for future research in sport and international politics. Researchers interested in sports sociology will find the study valuable for its application of social theories to sports contexts. This study opens a new avenue for further researchers in this field in different contexts. Furthermore, sports governance could use the findings to improve conditions in Northern Cyprus. This study raises awareness of the challenges faced by football players due to the political situation in Northern Cyprus and it is hoped that the IOC/FIFA will value the players' voices as well.

6.5 Recommendations

This study includes the problems that affect certain issues in a football player's professional life in unrecognised or partially recognised regions such as Northern Cyprus. The interview and survey data collected, as presented in the previous sections, provide valuable information regarding the perceptions and experiences of these athletes at various stages of their careers. With participants of 216 football players and 78 referees offering a variety of perspectives, this data reveals not only the personal aspirations and trials of these players, but also the systemic barriers they face due to a lack of international recognition and support. Four recommendations were drawn from this study. Recommendation **one** is the suggestion of creating comprehensive support systems within the association that include medical, psychological, and career transition services. Given the prevalence of career-impacting injuries and the uncertainties associated with their unrecognised status, such systems are vital to athletes' well-being. Recommendation **two** of the problems and findings experienced by football players because of isolation will be presented to the CTFA. This study adds value to the

literature in terms of its contribution. The fact that there are no articles written in the literature on the problems experienced by football players in Northern Cyprus to date shows that the world does not have any information about what is happening here. Therefore, recommendation **three** is to publish this article in English. This allows football players to have a voice in the international arena. Recommendation **four** will be the diplomacy and advocacy activities of the CTFA using this thesis to show the situation in which football players live. There is a need to facilitate the partial recognition or membership of Northern Cyprus football leagues with larger international organisations. This could potentially open opportunities for players to participate in international competitions, increasing their visibility and career prospects.

6.6 Conclusion

This concluding chapter summarises the findings of the study regarding the socio-political and economic challenges faced by football players in Northern Cyprus, particularly the impact of non-recognition by FIFA (Lekakis, 2015). It explores how these obstacles affect professional football players' careers and identities, within the framework of structural inequity and epistemic injustice. This chapter brings together insights from the research, recommends interventions to address these inequalities, and outlines directions for future policy and academic research.

This chapter brings together the data of Studies 1 and 2 to evaluate the impact of FIFA's non-recognition on football players in Northern Cyprus. Study 1 showed the structural inequities that players experience as a result of non-recognition, such as a lack of permanent contracts and adequate salaries, which are similar to the issues observed in female football in England (Culvin, 2023). Study 2, which used a larger sample size, validated these findings, and investigated inequalities in demonstrating how both players and referees adjust by pursuing employment overseas and other dual career routes to overcome these limitations. These studies mutually demonstrate the significant inequality that exists in the international sports arena, while also highlighting athletes' resilience and flexibility in marginalised areas. From the perspective of professional football, this raises a fundamental problem of structuring in clubs and

concerns about the future. It has been determined that professional football players come from educated families. It has been revealed that education is important for professional football players. Education is essential for professional football players in Northern Cyprus, similar to England's women football players (Culvin, 2023). Dual careers are beneficial for football players, as they have limited opportunities and access (Day-Garner, 2018). It has been analysed that most professional football players have a sports-related undergraduate education. The biggest reason Professional football players who cannot participate in international competitions do not break away from football can be defined as the great love they have for football.

This study shows how political and economic oppression affects football players in places such as Northern Cyprus, where a lack of recognition from international organisations such as FIFA limits career opportunities. The findings indicate that football players in Northern Cyprus, unlike their counterparts in FIFA-recognised countries, lack stable contracts, consistent income, and comprehensive insurance benefits. This forces them to have dual careers and explore opportunities to live a liveable life in their home countries.

Therefore, the impact of football on society is indisputable. The main purpose of this research is to address the problems caused by the powerlessness of individuals who were born and raised in the North of Cyprus, play football to show themselves in the international arena, and reveal how the policy of structural inequity and belonging affects the highest league of CTFA. Until now, studies on this subject have not been conducted in the literature, and this study fills the gap in the literature.

The study was first conducted to analyse how football players experienced the effects of structural inequity, loss of identity, isolations/invisibility, and political and economic oppression on how they affected their football careers before they could take part in international competitions in Northern Cyprus. However, players' inability to play football in the international arena affects their titles. The evidence presented in this research clearly shows that many of the players in this sample are treated as legitimate professionals due to learned helplessness and future anxieties because they cannot imagine themselves playing football in the international arena.

The survey results discussed in Chapter 5 show a difference in the way players in Northern Cyprus view themselves. 'Professional footballer' is the most common descriptor surveyed, reflecting a deep commitment to the sport despite its lack of global recognition. Players feel that their conditions are unfair and identify themselves primarily as footballers, despite the wider opportunities offered to FIFA-recognised athletes.

Along with this great love, professional football players continue their careers by minimising their expectations and sacrificing themselves. In this, some football players go to training or matches by sacrificing their families, while others continue to play football without receiving a sufficient financial salary. Professional football players go out in the field, even considering the inability to play football after injury situations that may occur in football increase their anxiety levels and break from football.

As a result of keeping professional football players away from the international arena, a serious distinction appears between individuals playing football in Northern Cyprus and others economically. Consequently, those who play football in Northern Cyprus do not feel safe in their football careers because they cannot make a living from football alone and they feel the need to work in another job. The results show that professional football players require a serious salary and income. Every football player wants to see himself in a better place; there may be psychological effects when they compare themselves with athletes abroad.

Most professional football players have learned to play football by starting their football training at the academy level. This means that learning to play football lessons at an early age can enable individuals to develop more and have a long football career. With the results, it has been confirmed that participant professional football players love football and describe themselves as talented. Despite concerns about the future, professional football players who have devoted their lives to football have said that it is especially important to work hard on the way to success.

It is obvious that FIFA membership has a socioeconomic impact on the nations in which it occurs since it is so valuable and advantageous (Forde, 2023). The future concerns of footballers increase day by day in the deficiency of development, and they see themselves in a stalemate, psychologically due to

playing in the same league with the same team and football players every year. The fact that there is no right to speak in the world in terms of politics causes the players to not be able to announce their rights in the world. Not being under the roof of FIFA has a serious negative effect on the players.

"..the measure of it by looking first to basic kinds of epistemic injustice, whose negative imprint reveals the form of the positive value. As a general point of philosophical method, I believe that taking failure as one's starting point is a good strategy. If one wants to discover the conditions of a given positive social value (justice, freedom, independence, equality...), it tends to be instructive to look first at the various ways in which it is likely to fail. This method as applied to any kind of justice simply reflects the fact that just social systems, even in their most historically stable forms, are sustained under pressures towards collapse into injustice. We might express this by saying that justice incorporates inherent risks of failure. Given this proneness to failure, our positive philosophical conception of justice would do well to be explicitly informed by the need to stave off those risks." (Fricker, 2013, p.1318)

Regardless of the circumstances, individuals have the freedom to express themselves, the freedom to share their thoughts with respect and the freedom to live. As can be seen from Fricker's work, injustice is a serious problem, and everything depends on justice. There is a need for a platform where athletes can defend their rights, make their own voices, and most importantly be noticed.

Football in Northern Cyprus does not act as a vehicle for national, or even local identity. Playing football in the national team of the Northern Cyprus is a source of great pride for every CTFA football player. Football players, who cannot see a future within the CTFA, quit football and plan a different career.

According to the data, they experience identity and belonging problems. Apart from their football careers, they also face the problem of isolation and invisibility in their lives. With the results of this study, it is revealed that the football players and football communities in the Northern Cyprus need support. With this study, the situation of the football players in the Northern Cyprus will be shown in the literature, and perhaps the country will be able to use this study in terms of political reality which affect the sports. Since there has not been such a comprehensive study before, perhaps the problems

and obstacles of football players in Northern Cyprus may not have been known around the world. It is expected that awareness will increase with the study, which will enter the literature after this study is published.

As a result, the CTFA's attitude from the very beginning is only the right of footballers to play football under the umbrella of FIFA. It is all about football, which gathers millions of people around the world with the same enthusiasm, regardless of ethnicity, gender, or language, and there should be a way to include Northern Cyprus' football players in this huge family.

6.7 Research Limitations

A doctoral thesis is a challenging process that combines theoretical knowledge, practice, communication, organisation, and motivation. Some limitations may have been encountered during this study. In this study, limited resources were the major limitation. The absence of any research in terms of the socio-cultural context in the literature on the unrecognised field of professional football players in Northern Cyprus is not sufficient to make a comparison in this field. Identity, sociocultural influences, and many other things of professional football players in Northern Cyprus have not been included in any quality research before.

One of the limitations of this study was related to the data collection timeline phase. In this study, the data were collected at three separate times. In the first stage, since the players were in the Covid-19 pandemic period, the interviews started as a face-to-face semi-structured interview method, and the research was conducted online at the time that suited the players. According to the literature, some researchers find it easy and comfortable to carry out an online interview; others' perspective was contrary to contact, as the researcher could not visually assess participants (de Villiers et al., 2022). Organising the timing that fits only football players and contacting them is one of the first limitations of the data collection process. In the second phase, accessing the Referee Board of CTFA and contacting the referees was 2nd limitations in data collection. Due to the busy schedule of referees, it was difficult for them to participate in the online survey. As the third limitation of the data collection, accessing 201

football players playing at the CTFA Super Lig was difficult to access them. An in-depth understanding of life experiences is crucial in this study. The researcher experienced similar difficulties as the participants, and it was challenging to not comment during the interviews.

6.8 Future Research

The study examined the sociological and structural exclusion of professional football players in Northern Cyprus. Since there has been no previous study on this subject, the analysis of professional football players in Northern Cyprus will be included in the literature within this study. An element of this study was presented at the Isokinetic FIFA Conference: *Football Medicine - Players' Voice* Conference in Lyon, France, (2022), where it was received with acclaim and interest. This study will be a tool to make the voices of football players in Northern Cyprus heard around the world.

This study revealed the shortcomings and positive aspects of football players who continue their football careers in Northern Cyprus. There are many negative aspects of not being accepted under the umbrella of the FIFA addressed in this study. This study is real life itself; people experience these situations in their lives every day, and unfortunately transfer this mind set to future generations. With the results of this study, it is hoped that the difficulties experienced by football players will be recognised and better understood and finding solutions will quickly become easier. Although only professional football players were discussed in this study, the conditions are the same for other sports in Northern Cyprus.

This study, which will help to better understand the individuals living in Northern Cyprus, will reveal the thoughts, feelings, and situations of the football players. The most important feature of this project is that it touches the lives of real individuals and raises awareness in the socio-economic, physical, academic and health areas of football players playing football in the Northern Cyprus. The biggest reason why football is not accepted as a business status in the country is the country's lack of recognition. With this project, dialogues were held between UCLAN and CTFA. New advantages for talented football players have been discussed and initiatives have been started to make improvements in terms of training for the development of football players. It is hoped that there will be training that

will protect players and accelerate their progress. The results of this thesis will shed light on the future, I will carry out studies on this subject and implement suggestions that will support development in this regard.

There is a need for more studies in this field since it is the only study that studies football players in the Northern Cyprus in such detail. A study of Northern Cyprus highlighted the differences and problems faced in this unique political situation. With this thesis, the gap in the literature will raise awareness for researchers and further research will be required in this field. Based on the results of this study, it should not be forgotten that a country that is not a member of the FIFA or UEFA should find solutions in terms of performance, health, and education; football players living in the north of Cyprus have the right to play football, and that football is the unifying feature of the continents.

REFERENCES

- Adams, T. E. (2017). Critical autoethnography, education, and a call for forgiveness. *International Journal of Multicultural Education*, 19(1), 79-88.
- Aguinis, H., & Solarino, A. M. (2019). Transparency and replicability in qualitative research: The case of interviews with elite informants. *Strategic Management Journal*, 40(8), 1291-1315.
- Akşar, T. (2009). Kıbrıs'ta futbol ne durumda? Dünya. Retrieved from <https://www.dunya.com/kose-yazisi/kibris039ta-futbol-ne-durumda/5772>
- Al Attar, W. S. A., Soomro, N., Pappas, E., Sinclair, P. J., & Sanders, R. H. (2016). How effective are F-MARC injury prevention programs for soccer players? A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Sports Medicine*, 46, 205-217.
- Al-Masry, A. R. (2022). Suicidal tendencies as a mediating variable in the relationship between future anxiety and learned helplessness among university students. *Journal of Positive School Psychology*, 6(8), 3694-3710.
- Alexander, C. (2009). Stuart hall and 'race'. *Cultural Studies*, 23(4), 457-482.
- Alexopoulos, A. (2007). Sport in the European Union from a Cypriot perspective. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing. Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/304701596>
- Alfermann, D., Stambulova, N., & Zemaityte, A. (2004). Reactions to sport career termination: A cross-national comparison of German, Lithuanian, and Russian athletes. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 5(1), 61-75.
- Agunloye, O. O. (2019). Ethics in Academic Research and Scholarship: An Elucidation of the Principles and Applications. *Journal of global education and research*, 3(2), 168-180.
- Allen, D. (2013). 'National heroes': Sport and the creation of icons. *Sport in History*, 33(4), 584-594.
- Allender, S., Cowburn, G., & Foster, C. (2006). Understanding participation in sport and physical activity among children and adults: A review of qualitative studies. *Health Education Research*, 21(6), 826-835.
- Almeder, R. (2007). Pragmatism and philosophy of science: A critical survey. *International Studies in the Philosophy of Science*, 21(2), 171-195.
- Amman, M. T., İközler, H. C., & Karagözoğlu, C. (2000). Sporda sosyal bilimler. İstanbul: Alfa Yayınevi.
- An, A. D. (2008). The first Turkish Cypriot football clubs, intercommunal football matches, multi-ethnic football teams and Chetinkaya (1902-1955). *The First Turkish Cypriot Football Clubs, Intercommunal Football Matches, Multi-Ethnic Football Teams and Chetinkaya (1902-1955)*.
- Andrew, M. B., & Le Rossignol, R. (2017). Autoethnographic writing inside and outside the academy and ethics. *Writing & Pedagogy*, 9(2), 225-249.
- Aquilina, D. (2016). A study of the relationship between elite athletes' educational development and sporting performance. In *Delivering Olympic and Elite Sport in a Cross Cultural Context* (pp. 37-55). Routledge.

- Aquilina, D. (2013). A study of the relationship between elite athletes' educational development and sporting performance. *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 30(4), 374-392.
- Araújo, B. C. D., & Davel, E. P. B. (2024). Navigating the subjective terrain: Overcoming challenges in autoethnography for management research. *RAM. Revista de Administração Mackenzie*, 25, eRAMG240191.
- Arliani, G. G., Astur, D. C., Yamada, R. K. F., Yamada, A. F., da Rocha Corrêa Fernandes, A., Ejnisman, B., & Cohen, M. (2016). Professional football can be considered a healthy sport? *Knee Surgery, Sports Traumatology, Arthroscopy*, 24(12), 3907-3911.
- Atay, A. (2010). 1974 Sonrası Türkiyeden Kıbrıs'a Göç Edenlerin Ekonomik ve Sosyal Durumlarının Kuzey Kıbrıs Açısından Değerlendirilmesi.
- Atun, S., & Fevzioglu, B. (2003). Kıbrıs Türk Halk Edebiyatında Destanlar ve Ağıtlar Üzerine Bilgiler-Belgeler-Araştırmalar.
- Avornyo, P. Y. (2019). Epistemic injustice and the legitimization of feminist epistemology (Doctoral dissertation, University of Cape Coast).
- Axinn, W. G., & Pearce, L. D. (2006). *Mixed method data collection strategies*. Cambridge University Press.
- Azzarito, L., & Solomon, M. A. (2005). A reconceptualization of physical education: The intersection of gender/race/social class. *Sport, Education and Society*, 10(1), 25-47.
- Bailey, C. M., Echemendia, R. J., & Arnett, P. A. (2006). The impact of motivation on neuropsychological performance in sports-related mild traumatic brain injury. *Journal of the International Neuropsychological Society*, 12(4), 475-484.
- Baillie, P. H., & Danish, S. J. (1992). Understanding the career transition of athletes. *The Sport Psychologist*, 6(1), 77-98.
- Barrera Jr, M., & Ainlay, S. L. (1983). The structure of social support: A conceptual and empirical analysis. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 11(2), 133-143.
- Behjati, Z., Saeedi, Z., Noorbala, F., Enjedani, E., & Meybodi, F. A. (2011). Integrative self-knowledge and mental health. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 30, 705-708.
- Bell, E., & Bryman, A. (2007). The ethics of management research: An exploratory content analysis. *British Journal of Management*, 18(1), 63-77.
- Belge, N. (2014). Akdeniz-nurçelik süper lig'e koşuyor. Yenidüzen. Retrieved from <https://www.yeniduzen.com/akdeniz-nurcelik-super-lige-kosuyor-81148h.htm>
- Bennett, M. (2021). Behind the mask: Demedicalising race and mental health in professional football. *The Lancet Psychiatry*, 8(4), 264-266.
- Berberoglu, E. O., Güder, Y., Sezer, B., & Özdilek, Ş. Y. (2013). Sınıf Dışı Hidrobiyoloji Etkinliğinin Öğrencilerin Duyuşsal Bakış Açılımları Üzerine Etkisi, Örnek Olay İncelemesi: Çanakkale, Bilim Kampi. *Kastamonu Education Journal*, 21(3), 1177-1198.
- Berger, R. (2015). Now I see it, now I don't: Researcher's position and reflexivity in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research*, 15(2), 219-234.

- Betz, M. (2023). Says Who? Epistemic Injustice. In *Modes of Protest And Resistance: Strange Change in Morals Political* (pp. 113-158). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Bi, Y. (2015). Integration or resistance: The influx of foreign capital in British football in the transnational age. *Soccer & Society*, 16(1), 17-41.
- Biddle, S. J., Markland, D., Gilbourne, D., Chatzisarantis, N. L., & Sparkes, A. C. (2001). Research methods in sport and exercise psychology: Quantitative and qualitative issues. *Journal of Sports Sciences*, 19(10), 777-809.
- Bishop, A. (2023). *Becoming an ally: Breaking the cycle of oppression*. Routledge.
- Bishop, M. L., & Cooper, A. F. (2018). The FIFA scandal and the distorted influence of small states. *Global Governance*, 24(1), 21-40.
- Birol, C., Çağlar, M., & Kuntay, H. (2016). Similarities, Differences and Common Future between Cultures in North Cyprus. *The Anthropologist*, 23(1-2), 115-119.
- Bhattacharya, A. (2011). Paulo Freire: Relevant biography. In *Paulo Freire* (pp. 95-172). Brill.
- Bolat, B. (2020). İngiliz İdaresinden Kıbrıs Cumhuriyeti'ne Kıbrıs'ta Eğitim Politikaları Ve Türkiye'nin Katkıları. *Dün, Bugün, Yarın*, 57.
- Bordas, J. (2023). *The Power of Latino Leadership, Revised and Updated: Culture, Inclusion, and Contribution*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Bostancı, M. (2015). Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyeti'nin ilanı ve buna yönelik tepkilerin Türk kamuoyundaki yankıları. *Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 34(57), 317-356.
- Bourke, A. (2003). The dream of being a professional soccer player: Insights on career development options of young Irish players. *Journal of sport and social issues*, 27(4), 399-419.
- Bozkurt, İ. (2013). *KKTC'nin Siyasal Yapısı, Çıkmazları Ve Çözüm Önerileri*. Kuzey Kıbrıs.
- Bradbury, S. (2017). Institutional racism, whiteness and the under-representation of minorities in leadership positions in football in Europe. In *Ethnicity and Race in Association Football* (pp. 6-24). Routledge.
- Brass, N., Macedo, D. P., & Freire, P. (1985). Toward A Pedagogy of The Question: Conversations with Paulo Freire. *The Journal of Education*, 167(2), 7-21.
- Brewer, E. W., Torrisi-Steele, G., & Wang, V. (2015). Survey research: Methods, issues and the future. *International Journal of Adult Vocational Education and Technology (IJAVET)*, 6(4), 46-64.
- Brough, C. (2021). Education in its broadest sense: What do the stories told by young men from one foster home, tell us about their upbringing (Erziehung), with a single male foster carer?
- Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods*. Oxford University Press.
- Burgul, N. S. G. Ö. (1995). Spor Siyaset Bağlamında KKTC'nin Karşılaştığı Uluslararası Engeller ve Spor Ambargosunu Kırma Girişimleri. *Türkiye Spor Hekimleri Derneği*.
- Burnett, C. (2019). Value of sport in post-apartheid South Africa. *South African Journal for Research in Sport, Physical Education and Recreation*, 41(2), 11-27.

- Cakir, A., & Inman, R. R. (1993). Modified goal chasing for products with non-zero/one bills of material. *The International Journal Of Production Research*, 31(1), 107-115.
- Calleja, P., Muscat, A., & Decelis, A. (2022). The effects of audience behaviour on football players' performance.
- Caplan, G. (1974). Support systems and community mental health: Lectures on concept development. Behavioral Publications.
- Cartigny, E., Fletcher, D., Coupland, C., & Taylor, G. (2021a). Mind the gap: A grounded theory of dual career pathways in sport. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 33(3), 280-301.
- Cartigny, E., Fletcher, D., Coupland, C., & Bandelow, S. (2021b). Typologies of dual career in sport: A cluster analysis of identity and self-efficacy. *Journal of Sports Sciences*, 39(5), 583-590.
- Casciola, D. (2023). Plurality and Epistemic Injustice: A Neo-Arendtian Reading of Miranda Fricker's Epistemic Injustice.
- Castillo-Rodríguez, A., Cano-Cáceres, F. J., Figueiredo, A., & Fernández-García, J. C. (2020). Train like you compete? Physical and physiological responses on semi-professional soccer players. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 17(3), 756.
- Caughron, R. L. (2012). The Organization and Governance of Top Football Across Europe. In *Sport Management Review* (Vol. 15, Issue 4, p. 540). Taylor & Francis.
- Cayir, E., Felder, T. M., Nkwonta, C. A., Jackson, J. R., & Dawson, R. (2022). Discovering new connections: Insights from individual and collective reflexivity in a mixed methods study. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 21, 16094069221105707.
- Cazotto, G. N., Fronzaglia, M., & Racy, J. (2022). Institutional aspects of FIFA governance and its impact on international relations. *American Journal of Industrial and Business Management*, 12(5), 824-839.
- Cengiz, R., Utku, I. Ş. I. K., & Yikmiş, G. (2021). Türkiye'de Profesyonel Futbolcuların Sendikalaşma Algıları. *Gazi Beden Eğitimi ve Spor Bilimleri Dergisi*, 26(3), 419-438.
- Chang, C. J., Putukian, M., Aerni, G., Diamond, A. B., Hong, E. S., Ingram, Y. M., Reardon, C. L., & Wolanin, A. T. (2020). Mental health issues and psychological factors in athletes: Detection, management, effect on performance, and prevention: American medical society for sports medicine position statement. *Clinical Journal of Sport Medicine*, 30(2), e61-e87.
- Charalambous-Papamiltiades, M. (2013). Cyprus. In *Sport Governance: International Case Studies* (pp. 212).
- Chen, C., Tsai, L. T., Lin, C. F., Huang, C. C., Chang, Y. T., Chen, R. Y., & Lyu, S. Y. (2017). Factors influencing interest in recreational sports participation and its rural-urban disparity. *PLoS ONE*, 12(5), e0178052.
- Child, S. T., Kaczynski, A. T., Fair, M. L., Stowe, E. W., Hughey, S. M., Boeckermann, L., Wills, S., & Reeder, Y. (2019). 'We need a safe, walkable way to connect our sisters and brothers': A qualitative study of opportunities and challenges for neighborhood-based physical activity among residents of low-income African-American communities. *Ethnicity & Health*, 24(4), 353-364.

- Chiu, C. Y., Gelfand, M. J., Yamagishi, T., Shteynberg, G., & Wan, C. (2010). Intersubjective culture: The role of intersubjective perceptions in cross-cultural research. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 5(4), 482-493.
- Christensen, M. K., & Sørensen, J. K. (2009). Sport or school? Dreams and dilemmas for talented young Danish football players. *European Physical Education Review*, 15(1), 115-133.
- Christodoulides, E., Tsivitanidou, O., & Hadjimatheou, A. (2022). Physical Education in Cyprus. In *Sports Didactics in Europe: History, Current Trends and Future Developments* (pp. 333).
- Clarke, R., & Davison, R. M. (2020). Research perspectives: Through whose eyes? the critical concept of researcher perspective. *Journal of the Association for Information Systems*, 21(2), 1.
- Coates, P. (2014). Borderland, no-man's land, nature's wonderland: Troubled humanity and untroubled earth. *Environment and History*, 20(4), 499-516.
- Comeaux, E., & Harrison, C. K. (2011). A conceptual model of academic success for student-athletes. *Educational Researcher*, 40(5), 235-245.
- Condello, G., Capranica, L., Doupona, M., Varga, K., & Burk, V. (2019). Dual-career through the elite university student-athletes' lenses: The international FISU-EAS survey. *PloS One*, 14(10), e0223278.
- Constantinou, C. M., & Papadakis, Y. (2001). The Cypriot state(s) in situ: Cross-ethnic contact and the discourse of recognition. *Global Society*, 15(2), 125-148.
- Conzelmann, A., & Nagel, S. (2003). Professional Careers of the German Olympic Athletes. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 38(3), 259-280. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10126902030383001>
- Cooper, J. N., Newton, A. C., Klein, M., & Jolly, S. (2020). A call for culturally responsive transformational leadership in college sport: An anti-ism approach for achieving equity and inclusion. *Frontiers in Sociology*, 5, 65.
- Corti, L., Day, A., & Backhouse, G. (2000). Confidentiality and informed consent: Issues for consideration in the preservation of and provision of access to qualitative data archives. Paper presented at the Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 1(3)
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage publications.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: choosing among five approaches* (Fourth edition.). SAGE.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2016). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage publications.
- CTFA. (2014). CFA-CTFA: Next steps.
- CTFA. (2020). CTFA letter to FIFA.
- CTFA. (2024). CTFA - CFA negotiations.
- Culvin, A. (2023). Football as work: the lived realities of professional women footballers in England. *Managing Sport and Leisure*, 28(6), 684-697.

- Culvin, A., & Bowes, A. (2021). The incompatibility of motherhood and professional women's football in England. *Frontiers in sports and active living*, 3, 730151.
- Cunningham, G. B., Wicker, P., & Walker, N. A. (2021). Gender and racial bias in sport organizations. *Frontiers in Sociology*, 6, 684066.
- Curran, C. (2021). The playing and working conditions of League of Ireland footballers in a part-time-professional football Euro 2021 host nation: the Republic of Ireland's League of Ireland. *Soccer & Society*, 22(4), 343-354.
- da Silva Borin, L. C. M., Nunes, F. R., & de Oliveira Guirro, E. C. (2013). Assessment of pelvic floor muscle pressure in female athletes. *Pm&r*, 5(3), 189-193.
- Dabscheck, B. (2006). The globe at their feet: FIFA's new employment rules–II. *Sport in Society*, 9(1), 1-18.
- Dally, J. M. (2006). Contact or no contact after adoption: what it means and how it affects family life, attachment and identity (Doctoral dissertation, University of York).
- Day-Garner, J. (2018). Critical transition phases within top-level female football players in Europe. Liverpool John Moores University (United Kingdom).
- Dashper, K., & Fletcher, T. (2013). Introduction: Diversity, equity and inclusion in sport and leisure. *Sport in Society*, 16(10), 1227-1232.
- Darby, P. (2000). Football, colonial doctrine and indigenous resistance: mapping the political persona of FIFA's African constituency. *Culture, Sport Society*, 3(1), 61-87.
- de Freitas Ermel, T., & Hernández Huerta, J. L. (2022). Brazilian influences on popular education in Spain. the hallmarks of paulo freire in Enrique de Castro's work. *Journal of New Approaches in Educational Research*, 11(2), 246-258.
- de Subijana, C. L., Galatti, L., Moreno, R., & Chamorro, J. L. (2020). Analysis of the athletic career and retirement depending on the type of sport: A comparison between individual and team sports. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(24), 9265.
- de Villiers, C., Farooq, M. B., & Molinari, M. (2022). Qualitative research interviews using online video technology–challenges and opportunities. *Meditari Accountancy Research*, 30(6), 1764-1782.
- Dehghansai, N., Pinder, R., Baker, J., & Renshaw, I. (2021). Challenges and stresses experienced by athletes and coaches leading up to the Paralympic Games. *Plos One*, 16(5), e0251171.
- Deniz, S. (2000). Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyeti'nde Spor Yönetiminin Yapısal Analizi Yayınlanmamış (Doctoral dissertation, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Gazi Üniversitesi Sağlık Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Beden Eğitimi ve Spor Anabilim Dalı, Ankara).
- Deniz, S. (2012). The Structural Analysis of Physical Education And Sports System İn The Turkish Republic Of Northern Cyprus (Publication Number Dissertation/Thesis) Gazi Üniversitesi.
- Deniz, S., & Yenel, F. (2013). The structural analysis of physical education and sports system in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 89, 772-780.
- Despard, E. (2002). Career-ending injury in sport: individual achievement and social suffering. *Graduate Studies*.

- Devaney, D. J., Nesti, M. S., Ronkainen, N. J., Littlewood, M. A., & Richardson, D. (2021). The philosophical underpinning of athlete lifestyle support: An existential-humanistic perspective. *The Sport Psychologist*, 36(1), 29-39.
- Devaney, D. J. (2019). An examination of athlete lifestyle support for elite youth cricketers on a national development programme. Liverpool John Moores University (United Kingdom).
- Dhuli, K., Naureen, Z., Medori, M. C., Fioretti, F., Caruso, P., Perrone, M. A., Nodari, S., Manganotti, P., Xhufi, S., & Bushati, M. (2022). Physical activity for health. *Journal of Preventive Medicine and Hygiene*, 63(2 Suppl 3), E150.
- Diderichsen, F., Andersen, I., Manuel, C., Working Group of the Danish Review on Social Determinants of Health, Andersen, A. N., Bach, E., Baadsgaard, M., Brønnum-Hansen, H., Hansen, F. K., & Jeune, B. (2012). Health inequality-determinants and policies. *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health*, 40(8_suppl), 12-105.
- Dillman, D. A., Smyth, J. D., & Christian, L. M. (2014). Internet, phone, mail, and mixed-mode surveys: The tailored design method. John Wiley & Sons.
- Dodd, C., & Dodd, C. (2010). Turkish intervention and the Geneva conferences 1974. In *The History and Politics of the Cyprus Conflict* (pp. 110-130).
- Donnan, H., & Wilson, T. M. (2021). *Borders: Frontiers of identity, nation and state*. Routledge.
- Donnelly, P., & Petherick, L. (2004). Workers' playtime? Child labour at the extremes of the sporting spectrum. *Sport in Society*, 7(3), 301-321.
- Donnor, J. K. (2005). Programmed for failure: Towards an understanding of the educational experiences of African American football student-athletes. The University of Wisconsin-Madison.
- Doğan, İ. F. (2019). Algılanan sosyal destek ile yaşam tatmini ve özgüven ilişkisi: Göçmenler üzerinde bir araştırma. *OPUS International Journal of Society Researches*, 12, 586-606.
- Dotson, K. (2012). A cautionary tale: On limiting epistemic oppression. *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, 33(1), 24-47.
- Drath, V. (2004). The Cyprus referendum: An island divided by mutual distrust. *American Foreign Policy Interests*, 26(4), 341-352.
- Dworkin, S. L., & Messner, M. A. (2002). Introduction: Gender relations and sport. *Sociological Perspectives*, 45(4), 347-352.
- Dunne, M., Pryor, J., & Yates, P. (2005). EBOOK: *Becoming a Researcher: A Research Companion for the Social Sciences*. McGraw-Hill Education (UK).
- Duran, H. (2008). BM ve AB çerçevesinde Kıbrıs sorununa güncel bir bakış.
- Duval, A. (2022). Taking feminism beyond the state: FIFA as a transnational battleground for feminist legal critique. *International Journal of Constitutional Law*, 20(1), 277-298.
- Düerkop, S., & Ganohariti, R. (2021). Sovereignty in sports: non-sovereign territories in international football. *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 13(4), 679-697.
- Ellis, C., & Adams, T. E. (2014). The purposes, practices, and principles of autoethnographic research. *The Oxford handbook of qualitative research*, 254-276.

- Eralp, F. (2001). K.K.T.C.'ndeki spor politikaları ve sporun yaygınlaştırılması üzerine spor kamuoyunun görüşleri. KKTC Gençlik Ve Spor Bakanlığı.
- Ericson, E. H. (1950). *Childhood and Society*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Ericson, E. (1968). *Identity: Youth and Crisis*. Norton.
- Erpič, S. C., Wylleman, P., & Zupančič, M. (2004). The effect of athletic and non-athletic factors on the sports career termination process. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 5(1), 45-59.
- Eurobarometer. (2004). *Public Opinion In the European Union*.
- Evans, J. R., & Mathur, A. (2005). The value of online surveys. *Internet Research*, 15(2), 195-219.
- Eyaziyor. (2024). KTFF'yle imzaladığımız anlaşma dışında bir şeyin kabulü söz konusu olamaz. Retrieved from <https://www.eyaziyor.com/2024/02/06/ktffyle-imzaladigimiz-anlasma-disinda-bir-seyin-kabulu-soz-konusu-olamaz-tribun-kibris/>
- Field, S. M., & Derksen, M. (2021). Experimenter as automaton; experimenter as human: exploring the position of the researcher in scientific research. *European Journal for Philosophy of Science*, 11(1), 11.
- FIFA. (2003). FIFA regulations for transfers. Retrieved from <https://www.icsspe.org/system/files/FIFA%20-%20Regulations%20on%20the%20Status%20and%20Transfer%20of%20Players.pdf>
- Figueiredo, A. J., Gonçalves, C. E., & Tessitore, A. (2014). Bridging the gap between empirical results, actual strategies, and developmental programs in soccer. *International Journal of Sports Physiology and Performance*, 9(3), 540-543.
- Finch, C. (2006). A new framework for research leading to sports injury prevention. *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport*, 9(1-2), 3-9.
- Finch, C., Donohue, S., & Garnham, A. (2002). Safety attitudes and beliefs of junior Australian football players. *Injury Prevention*, 8(2), 151-154.
- Ford, J. L., Ildefonso, K., Jones, M. L., & Arvinen-Barrow, M. (2017). Sport-related anxiety: Current insights. *Journal of Sports Medicine*. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.2147/OAJSM.S125845>
- Forde, S. D. (2023). FIFA's utopia: An analysis of FIFA's football for hope movement. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 58(2), 411-427.
- Fox, K. R., & Magnus, L. (2014). Self-esteem and self-perceptions in sport and exercise. In *Routledge Companion to Sport and Exercise Psychology* (pp. 34-48). Routledge.
- Frederick-Recascino, C. M., & Schuster-Smith, H. (2003). Competition and intrinsic motivation in physical activity: A comparison of two groups. *Journal of Sport Behaviour*, 26(3), 240-254.
- Freire, P. (2005). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (translated by Myra Bergman Ramos; introduction by Donaldo Macedo. 30th anniversary ed). The Continuum International Publishing Group Inc.
- Freire, P. (1985). *The Politics of Education: Culture, Power, and Liberation*. Macmillan.
- Francis, J. J., Johnston, M., Robertson, C., Glidewell, L., Entwistle, V., Eccles, M. P., & Grimshaw, J. M. (2010). What is an adequate sample size? Operationalising data saturation for theory-based interview studies. *Psychology and Health*, 25(10), 1229-1245.

- Frey, J. H., & Eitzen, D. S. (1991). Sport and society. *Annual review of sociology*, 17(1), 503-522.
- Fricker, M. (2017). Evolving Concepts of Epistemic Injustice. In *The Routledge Handbook of Epistemic Injustice* (pp. 53-60). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315212043-5>
- Fricker, M. (2013). Epistemic Justice as a Condition of Political Freedom?. *Synthese*, 190, 1317-1332.
- Fricker, M. (2007). *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*. OUP Oxford.
- Fukuyama, F. (2000). *Social Capital and Civil Society*.
- Fuller, C. W., Junge, A., Dorasami, C., DeCelles, J., & Dvorak, J. (2011). '11 for Health', a football-based health education programme for children: a two-cohort study in Mauritius and Zimbabwe. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 45(8), 612-618.
- Gannett, K. R., Kaufman, Z. A., Clark, M. A., & McGarvey, S. T. (2014). Football with three 'halves': A qualitative exploratory study of the football3 model at the Football for Hope Festival 2010. *Journal of Sport for Development*, 2(3), 47.
- Gardner, F., & Moore, Z. (2006). *Clinical Sport Psychology*. Human Kinetics.
- Gazioğlu, A. C. (2001). Security Council Resolution 186 and United Nations Force in Cyprus UNFICYP. *Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs*, 6(1).
- Gelen, N. K. (2021). The Reasons for National Athletes with Undergraduate Education to Leave Sports. *Pakistan Journal of Medical and Health Sciences*, 15(5), 1683-1687.
- Georgakis, S. (2003). Sporting links: The Greek diaspora and the modern Olympic Games. *Modern Greek Studies (Australia and New Zealand)*, 11.
- Gerhardt, H. P. (2022). A contribution to Paulo Freire's theory and practice: The 'Cultural Extension Service/University of Recife' (1962-64). *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 54(13), 2256-2274.
- Gibson, R. (1999). Paulo Freire and pedagogy for social justice. *Theory & Research in Social Education*, 27(2), 129-159.
- Goldman, M. (2016). Turkey, Cyprus, and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.
- Goldkuhl, G. (2012). Pragmatism vs interpretivism in qualitative information systems research. *European Journal of Information Systems*, 21, 135-146.
- Gomtsian, S., Balvert, A., Hock, B., & Kirman, O. (2018). Between the green pitch and the red tape: The private legal order of FIFA. *Yale J.Int'L L.*, 43, 85.
- Gordon, H. (2003). *The Time of Our Lives: Inside the Sydney Olympics: Australia and the Olympic Games 1994-2002*. Univ. of Queensland Press.
- Göktepe, C. (2005). The Cyprus crisis of 1967 and its effects on Turkey's foreign relations. *Middle Eastern Studies*, 41(3), 431-444.
- Göktürk, T. B. (2007). Politik, Ekonomik ve Stratejik Konular Perspektifinde Merkezi Asya ve Kuzey Kıbrıs Uluslararası Konferansı. *Çağdaş Türkiye Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 6(15), 391-400.

- Graczyk, M., Wylleman, P. I., Nawrocka, A., Atroszko, P. A., Moska, W., Tomiak, T., & Krzysztofiak, H. (2017). The importance of the type of sport and life experience in the dual career in elite sport based on the analysis of Poland. *Baltic Journal of Health and Physical Activity*, 9(4), 11.
- Greenfield, S., & Osborn, G. (2001). *Regulating football: commodification, consumption and the law*. Pluto Press.
- Grey-Thompson, T. (2017). *Duty of care in sport review*. Independent report. UK Government. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/duty-of-care-in-sport-review>.
- Grossberg, L. (2015). Learning from Stuart Hall, following the path with heart. *Cultural Studies*, 29(1), 3-11.
- Guerrero, M. D., Hoffmann, M. D., & J. Munroe-Chandler, K. (2016). Children's active play imagery and its association with personal and social skills and self-confidence. *Journal of Imagery Research in Sport and Physical Activity*, 11(1), 47-57.
- Gümüş, M. (2002). *Profesyonel Futbol Takımlarında Puan Sıralamasına Göre Durumluk Kaygı Düzeylerinin İncelenmesi (Publication Number Dissertation/Thesis) Sakarya Üniversitesi*].
- Gürbüz, S., & Şahin, F. (2014). *Sosyal bilimlerde araştırma yöntemleri*. Ankara: Seçkin Yayıncılık, 271.
- Hackfort, D., Schinke, R. J., & Strauss, B. (Eds.). (2019). *Dictionary of Sport Psychology: Sport, Exercise, and Performing Arts*. Academic Press.
- Hall, S. (1996). "Who Needs Identity?", in S. Hall and P. du Gay (eds) *Questions of Cultural Identity*. London: Sage.
- Hall, S. (1993). Culture, community, nation. *Cultural Studies*, 7(3), 349-363.
- Hallal, P. C., Andersen, L. B., Bull, F. C., Guthold, R., Haskell, W., Ekelund, U., & Lancet Physical Activity Series Working, G. (2012). Global physical activity levels: surveillance progress, pitfalls, and prospects. *The Lancet*, 380(9838), 247-257.
- Hankivsky, O., & Christoffersen, A. (2008). Intersectionality and the determinants of health: a Canadian perspective. *Critical Public Health*, 18(3), 271-283.
- Harrell, M. C., & Bradley, M. (2009). *Data collection methods: Semi-structured interviews and focus groups*.
- Harrison, H., Birks, M., Franklin, R., & Mills, J. (2017). *Case study research: Foundations and methodological orientations*. Paper presented at the Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 18(1)
- Hatzivassiliou, E. (2005). Cyprus at the Crossroads, 1959–63. *European History Quarterly*, 35(4), 523-540.
- Haugen, E. (2022). Athlete mental health & psychological impact of sport injury. *Operative Techniques in Sports Medicine*, 30(1), 150898.
- Heidari, J., Pelka, M., Beckmann, J., & Kellmann, M. (2019). A practitioner's perspective on psychological issues in football. *Science and Medicine in Football*, 3(2), 169-175.

- Heraclides, A., & Çakmak, G. A. (2019). *Greece and Turkey in Conflict and Cooperation. From Europeanization to De-Europeanization*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Herman, C. R. (2002). *Transitional loss and athletic identity: An ethical obligation to assist NCAA athletes through the retirement process*. University of Idaho.
- Hesse-Biber, S. N., & Leavy, P. (Eds.). (2006). *Emergent methods in social research*. Sage.
- Hextrum, K., & Cameron, Z. (2023). (In) equity in athletics: US antidiscrimination law and the white, middle-class advantage. *Journal for the Study of Sports and Athletes in Education*, 17(2), 136-160.
- Hoerber, L. (2007). Exploring the gaps between meanings and practices of gender equity in a sport organization. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 14(3), 259-280.
- Hoffmeister, F. (2006). *Legal aspects of the Cyprus problem: Annan plan and EU accession*. Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.
- Holt, R. (2003). The historical meaning of amateurism: An outline. *Sport: Critical Concepts in Sociology*. London: Routledge, 270-285.
- Hogg, M. A., & Williams, K. D. (2000). From I to we: Social identity and the collective self. *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice*, 4(1), 81.
- Holmes, M. (1994). Symbols of national identity and sport: The case of the Irish football team. *Irish Political Studies*, 9(1), 81-98.
- Horgby, B., & Ericsson, C. (2023). Professionalisation and Changing Practices. In *Football in the Nordic Countries* (pp. 79-131). Routledge.
- Horn, T. S., & Horn, J. L. (2007). Family influences on children's sport and physical activity participation, behavior, and psychosocial responses. *Handbook of Sport Psychology*, 685-711.
- Houston, J. (2007). Indigenous autoethnography: Formulating our knowledge, our way. *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*, 36(S1), 45-50.
- Houlihan, B. (1997). Sport, national identity and public policy. *Nations and Nationalism*, 3(1), 113-137.
- Huddy, L. (2001). From social to political identity: A critical examination of social identity theory. *Political Psychology*, 22(1), 127-156.
- Hull, D. L. (2005). Deconstructing Darwin: Evolutionary theory in context. *Journal of the History of Biology*, 38, 137-152.
- İlter, T., & Alankuş, S. (2010). The changing configurations of self-(m) other dialogue in North Cyprus. *Social Identities*, 16(2), 261-284.
- Ioannou, G., & Ioannou, G. (2020). From nationalism to partition 1950–1975. The Normalisation of Cyprus' Partition among Greek Cypriots: Political Economy and Political Culture in a Divided Society.
- Inglehart, R., & Baker, W. E. (2000). Modernization, cultural change, and the persistence of traditional values. *American Sociological Review*, 65(1), 19-51.

- Iqbal, M., & Nijalingappa, H. (2021). Socioeconomic status and participation in sports: A review of literature. *International Journal of Physical Education, Sports and Health* 2021;8(3):243-246. <https://doi.org/10.22271/kheljournal.2021.v8.i3d.2093>
- Jackson, R. C., & Beilock, S. L. (2007). Performance pressure and paralysis by analysis: Research and implications. In *Developing Sport Expertise* (pp. 126-140). Routledge.
- Jackson, S. J., & Haigh, S. (2013). *Sport and Foreign Policy in a Globalizing World*. Routledge.
- Jamshed, S. (2014). Qualitative research method-interviewing and observation. *Journal of Basic and Clinical Pharmacy*, 5(4), 87.
- Jana, T., & Freeman, M. (2016). *Overcoming bias: Building authentic relationships across differences*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Jarvie, G. (2011). Sport, social division and social inequality. *Sport Science Review*, 20(1-2), 95.
- Jiang, Q. (2013). Celebrity athletes, soft power and national identity: Hong Kong newspaper coverage of the Olympic champions of Beijing 2008 and London 2012. *Mass Communication and Society*, 16(6), 888-909.
- Jiménez Botta, F. A. (2022). A Gramscian organic intellectual: Stuart Hall and British cultural studies in the age of Thatcher and Blair. *比較文化*, 26, 81-103.
- Johnson, R. B., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2004). Mixed methods research: A research paradigm whose time has come. *Educational Researcher*, 33(7), 14-26.
- Jones, I. (2022). *Research methods for sports studies*. Routledge.
- Jones, M., & Stanley, G. (2010). Collaborative action research: A democratic undertaking or a web of collusion and compliance? *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, 33(2), 151-163.
- Jonker, L., Elferink-Gemser, M. T., & Visscher, C. (2009). Talented athletes and academic achievements: A comparison over 14 years. *High Ability Studies*, 20(1), 55-64.
- Kabeer, N. (2000). Social exclusion, poverty and discrimination towards an analytical framework. *IDS Bulletin*, 31(4), 83-97.
- Kalinowski, P., Bugaj, O., Bojkowski, Ł., Kueh, Y. C., & Kuan, G. (2022). Application of stress coping ability as a conduit between goal orientation and play effectiveness among Polish soccer players. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(12), 7341.
- Kallio, H., Pietilä, A. M., Johnson, M., & Kangasniemi, M. (2016). Systematic methodological review: Developing a framework for a qualitative semi-structured interview guide. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 72(12), 2954-2965.
- Kamlongera, M. I. (2023). 'So what's arts got to do with it?': An autoethnography of navigating researcher positionality while co-creating knowledge. *Qualitative Research*, 23(3), 651-667.
- Karjalainen, H. (2020). Cultural identity and its impact on today's multicultural organizations. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 20(2), 249-262.

- Kartakoullis, N., Karlis, G., & Karadakis, M. (2009). Sports for All Philosophy: The evolution in Cyprus and the transfer from a sport to a health orientation. *International Journal of Sport Management, Recreation and Tourism*, 3(1791-874X), 47-60.
- Kartakoullis, N. L., & Loizou, C. (2009). Is sport (football) a unifying force or a vehicle to further separation? The case of Cyprus. *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 26(11), 1652-1667.
- Katz, S. D. (2011). Reputations—A Lifetime to Build, Seconds to Destroy: Maximizing the Mutually Protective Value of Morals Clauses in Talent Agreements. *Cardozo J. Int'l & Comp. L.*, 20, 185.
- Kaushik, V., & Walsh, C. A. (2019). Pragmatism as a research paradigm and its implications for social work research. *Social Sciences*, 8(9), 255.
- Keser, U. (2007). Genç Türkiye devleti'nin cumhuriyet kazanımları ve bunların Kıbrıs Türk toplumuna yansımaları. *Çağdaş Türkiye Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 6(14), 41-83.
- Keser, U. (2011). 21 Aralık 1963 Kanlı Noel, Kumsal Faciası ve Bugüne Yansımaları. *Çağdaş Türkiye Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 11(23), 93-121.
- Keser, U. (2013). Christmas Of 1963 In Cyprus In the Light Of American Documents.
- Ker-Lindsay, J. (2017). Great powers, counter secession, and non-recognition: Britain and the 1983 unilateral declaration of independence of the “Turkish republic of northern cyprus”. *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 28(3), 431-453.
- Kersting, N. (2009). New nationalism and xenophobia in Africa—A new inclination? *Africa Spectrum*, 44(1), 7-18.
- Kılıç, H. (2007). *Beden eğitimi öğretmenlerinin olimpiyatlar hakkındaki farkındalığı* (Doctoral dissertation, Marmara Üniversitesi (Turkey)).
- Kidd, B. (2008). A new social movement: Sport for development and peace. *Sport in Society*, 11(4), 370-380.
- Kim, J. S., Bennett, J., Coman, A., Currie, G., Dahlstrom, M., De Brigard, F., Dennis, A., Dewey, A., Eden, A., & Fernández-Miranda, G. (2023). *Moral narratives workshop proceedings*.
- Kitching, G. (2015). The origins of football: History, ideology and the making of ‘The people’s game’. Paper presented at the *History Workshop Journal*, 79(1), 127-153.
- Kizilyürek, N. (2003). The politics of identity in the Turkish Cypriot community: a response to the politics of denial? *MOM Éditions*, 37(1), 197-204.
- Konstantopoulos, I., & Manoli, A. E. (2024). The five levels of sustainability in European football: mapping the sustainability approaches of UEFA’s member national associations. *Leisure Studies*, 1-15.
- Koukouris, K. (2005). Premature athletic disengagement of elite Greek gymnasts. *European Journal for Sport and Society*, 2(1), 35-56.
- KTFF. (2022). KTFF ile puma arasında dev işbirliği. Retrieved from <http://www.ktff.org/HaberinDetayi/Index/6436#:~:text=2022%2F23%20futbol%20sezonuyla%20ba%C5%9Flayacak,PUMA%20Orbita%20futbol%20topu%20kullan%C4%B1lacak>.

- KTFF. (2014). FourFourTwo Türkiye: "Akdeniz güneşinde, ambargo gölgesinde futbol". Retrieved from <http://www.ktff.org/HaberinDetayi/Index/2683>
- Kristiansen, E., Ivarsson, A., Solstad, B. E., & Roberts, G. C. (2019). Motivational processes affecting the perception of organizational and media stressors among professional football players: A longitudinal mixed methods research study. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 43, 172-182.
- Kusow, A. M., & Eno, M. A. (2015). Formula narratives and the making of social stratification and inequality. *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, 1(3), 409-423.
- Kyle, K. (1997). Cyprus. London: Minority Rights Group.
- Kyris, G. (2020). The European Union in Northern Cyprus: Conceptualising the Avoidance of Contested States. *Geopolitics*, 25(2), 346-361. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2018.1552945>
- Law, L. P. (2015). Humanizing education: Teacher leaders influencing pedagogical change (Doctoral dissertation, Iowa State University).
- Ledwith, M. (2015). Community development in action: Putting Freire into practice. Policy Press.
- Leff, S. S., & Hoyle, R. H. (1995). Young athletes' perceptions of parental support and pressure. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 24(2), 187-203.
- Lekakis, N., & Xenakis, D. (2022). Football as a national security threat for the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. *Security Journal*, 35(3), 913-933.
- Lekakis, N. (2021). Fifa diplomacy and global actors' interests in Cyprus: An unsuccessful 'alliance', 2013–2019. *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 32(4), 829-845.
- Lekakis, N. (2015). Can football loosen the 'Gordian Knot' in Cyprus?. *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 7(2), 255-282.
- Legard, R., Keegan, J., & Ward, K. (2003). In-depth interviews. *Qualitative Research Practice: A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers*, 6(1), 138-169.
- Leitner, M. C., & Richlan, F. (2021). No fans–no pressure: referees in professional football during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Frontiers in Sports and Active Living*, 3, 720488.
- Li, M., & Sum, R. K. W. (2017). A meta-synthesis of elite athletes' experiences in dual career development. *Asia Pacific Journal of Sport and Social Science*, 6(2), 99-117.
- Lim, W. M., & Koay, K. Y. (2024). So you want to publish in a premier journal? An illustrative guide on how to develop and write a quantitative research paper for premier journals. *Global Business and Organizational Excellence*.
- Liu, L., Gjebrea, O., Ali, F. M., & Atun, R. (2020). Determinants of healthcare utilisation by migrant workers in the State of Qatar. *Health Policy*, 124(8), 873-880.
- Loizides, N. G. (2007). Ethnic nationalism and adaptation in Cyprus. *International Studies Perspectives*, 8(2), 172-189.

- Lowe, V. (1989). *The Cyprus Question and the Turkish Position in International Law*. By Zaim M. Necatigil, [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989, xxiii, 316 and (Appendices) 27,(Bibliography) 1 and (Index) 5 pp. Hardback£ 35· 00 net.]. *The Cambridge Law Journal*, 48(3), 550-551.
- Lownds, P. M. (2006). *In the shadow of Freire: popular educators and literacy in Northeast Brazil*. University of California, Los Angeles.
- Lukomski, J. (2020). On the finalisation of international football transfers and professional football players' contracts. *The International Sports Law Journal*, 20(3), 157-179.
- Mahoney, M. J., & Meyers, A. W. (2021). Anxiety and athletic performance: Traditional and cognitive-developmental perspectives. In *Anxiety in Sports* (pp. 77-94). Taylor & Francis.
- Mohanty, A., Pradhan, R. K., & Jena, L. K. (2015). Learned helplessness and socialization: A reflective analysis. *Psychology*, 6(7), 885-895.
- Magee, J. (2006). When is a contract more than a contract? Professional football contracts and the pendulum of power. *ESLJ*, 4, xxvi.
- Maier, S. F., & Seligman, M. E. (2016). Learned helplessness at fifty: Insights from neuroscience. *Psychological review*, 123(4), 349.
- Mansyur, C. L., Amick III, B. C., Franzini, L., & Roberts, R. E. (2009). Culture and the social context of health inequalities. *International Journal of Health Services*, 39(1), 85-106.
- Mason, C., & Lovell, G. (2000). Attitudes, expectations and demands of English Premier League football association referees. *Football Studies*, 3(2), 88-102.
- Masten, A. S., & O'Connor, M. J. (1989). Vulnerability, stress, and resilience in the early development of a high risk child. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 28(2), 274-278.
- Mavromati, D. (2011). *Status of the Player and Training Compensation-A Short Study on the Status of a Player in the Light of the Jurisprudence of the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS)*. CAS Bulletin/Bulletin TAS.
- McBride, K., Misnikov, Y., & Draheim, D. (2022). Discussing the foundations for interpretivist digital government research. In *Scientific Foundations of Digital Governance and Transformation: Concepts, Approaches and Challenges* (pp. 121-147). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- McCracken, G. D., & McCracken, G. (1988). *The Long Interview* (Vol. 13). Sage.
- McCall, G. J., & Simmons, J. L. (1978). *Identities and Interactions*. New York: Free Press.
- McCrone, K. (2005). A Game for Rough Girls? A History of Women's Football in Britain. *Sport History Review*. <https://journals.humankinetics.com/view/journals/shr/36/2/article-p193.xml>
- McGillivray, D., Fearn, R., & McIntosh, A. (2005). Caught up in and by the beautiful game: A case study of Scottish professional footballers. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 29(1), 102-123.
- McIlveen, P. (2008). Autoethnography as a method for reflexive research and practice in vocational psychology. *Australian journal of career development*, 17(2), 13-20.

- McKenna, J., & Dunstan-Lewis, N. (2004). An action research approach to supporting elite student-athletes in higher education. *European Physical Education Review*, 10(2), 179-198.
- Meca, A., Ritchie, R. A., Beyers, W., Schwartz, S. J., Picariello, S., Zamboanga, B. L., Hardy, S. A., Luyckx, K., Kim, S. Y., & Whitbourne, S. K. (2015). Identity centrality and psychosocial functioning: A person-centered approach. *Emerging Adulthood*, 3(5), 327-339.
- Menary, S. (2023). The Politics of Alternative Football: Curious Friends. In *The Geopolitical Economy of Sport* (pp. 185-190). Routledge.
- Menary, S. (2010). Football and the Cyprus conflict. *Soccer & Society*, 11(3), 253-260.
- Meredith, D. (2021). *Explaining Research: How to Reach Key Audiences to Advance Your Network*.
- Mertkan-Ozunlu, S., & Thomson, P. (2009). Educational reform in North Cyprus—Towards the making of a nation/state? *International Journal of Educational Development*, 29(1), 99-106.
- Miguel, E., Camerer, C., Casey, K., Cohen, J., Esterling, K. M., Gerber, A., Glennerster, R., Green, D. P., Humphreys, M., & Imbens, G. (2014). Promoting transparency in social science research. *Science*, 343(6166), 30-31.
- Mihovilovic, M. A. (1968). The status of former sportsmen. *International Review of Sport Sociology*, 3(1), 73-96.
- Miyazaki, A. D., & Taylor, K. A. (2008). Researcher interaction biases and business ethics research: Respondent reactions to researcher characteristics. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 81, 779-795.
- Mohajan, H. K. (2017). Two criteria for good measurements in research: Validity and reliability. *Annals of Spiru Haret University. Economic Series*, 17(4), 59-82.
- Morsing, M., & Schultz, M. (2006). Corporate social responsibility communication: Stakeholder information, response and involvement strategies. *Business Ethics: A European Review*, 15(4), 323-338.
- Muhammad, M., Wallerstein, N., Sussman, A. L., Avila, M., Belone, L., & Duran, B. (2015). Reflections on researcher identity and power: The impact of positionality on community based participatory research (CBPR) processes and outcomes. *Critical Sociology*, 41(7-8), 1045-1063.
- Morgenroth, T., Ryan, M. K., & Peters, K. (2015). The motivational theory of role modeling: How role models influence role aspirants' goals. *Review of General Psychology*, 19(4), 465-483.
- Morris, R., Cartigny, E., Ryba, T. V., Wylleman, P., Henriksen, K., Torregrossa, M., Lindahl, K., & Erpič, S. C. (2021). A taxonomy of dual career development environments in european countries. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 21(1), 134-151.
- Morris MacLean, L., Posner, E., Thomson, S., & Wood, E. J. (2019). Research ethics and human subjects: A reflexive openness approach. American Political Science Association Organized Section for Qualitative and Multi-Method Research, Qualitative Transparency Deliberations, Working Group Final Reports, Report I, 2.
- Nazarov, A. M. (2020). Psychological Mechanism For Improvement Of Psychological Protection Of Sportsmen. *Theoretical & Applied Science*, (1), 435-438.

- Newson, M., Bortolini, T., Buhrmester, M., da Silva, S. R., da Aquino, J. N. Q., & Whitehouse, H. (2018). Brazil's football warriors: Social bonding and inter-group violence. *Evolution and Human Behavior*, 39(6), 675-683.
- Ngo, B. (2008). Beyond “culture clash” understandings of immigrant experiences. *Theory into Practice*, 47(1), 4-11.
- Nijhawan, L. P., Janodia, M. D., Muddukrishna, B. S., Bhat, K. M., Bairy, K. L., Udupa, N., & Musmade, P. B. (2013). Informed consent: Issues and challenges. *Journal of Advanced Pharmaceutical Technology & Research*, 4(3), 134-140.
- North, J., & Lavallee, D. (2004). An investigation of potential users of career transition services in the United Kingdom. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 5(1), 77-84.
- Novosseloff, A. (2021). Assessing the effectiveness of the United Nations peacekeeping force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) and the office of the special adviser to the secretary-general on Cyprus (OSASG).
- Nurmi, J.-E. (2004). Socialization and self-development: Channeling, selection, adjustment, and reflection.
- O'Brien, J., & Finch, C. F. (2017). Injury prevention exercise programs for professional soccer: Understanding the perceptions of the end-users. *Clinical Journal of Sport Medicine*, 27(1), 1-9.
- O'Connor, A. (2016). The New Left and the emergence of cultural studies. *British Marxism and Cultural Studies* (pp. 44-64). Routledge.
- O Leary, J., & Caiger, A. (2000). Shifting power and control in English football. *New Zealand Journal of Industrial Relations*, 25(3), 259-276.
- Odabasi, B. (2013). The effect of learned helplessness to the success. *International Journal of Academic Research*, 5(4).
- Olmos-Vega, F. M., Stalmeijer, R. E., Varpio, L., & Kahlke, R. (2023). A practical guide to reflexivity in qualitative research: AMEE guide no. 149. *Medical Teacher*, 45(3), 241-251.
- Oltmanns, T. F., & Castonguay, L. G. (2013). General issues in understanding and treating psychopathology. *Psychopathology. From Science to Clinical Practice*, 1-16.
- O'Neil, L., Amorose, A. J., & Pierce, S. (2021). Student-athletes' dual commitment to school and sport: Compatible or conflicting?. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 52, 101799.
- Osman, G., & Alkan, V. (1997). Denizli Orta Öğretim Kurumlarındaki Sporcu Öğrencilerin. *Pamukkale Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 4(4), 14-21.
- Ouyang, Y., Wang, K., Zhang, T., Peng, L., Song, G., & Luo, J. (2020). The influence of sports participation on body image, self-efficacy, and self-esteem in college students. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10, 499087.
- Ozanne, J. L., Davis, B., Murray, J. B., Grier, S., Benmecheddal, A., Downey, H., Ekpo, A. E., Garnier, M., Hietanen, J., & Gall-Ely, M. L. (2017). Assessing the societal impact of research: The relational engagement approach. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 36(1), 1-14.
- Ötting, M., Deutscher, C., Schneemann, S., Langrock, R., Gehrmann, S., & Scholten, H. (2020). Performance under pressure in skill tasks: An analysis of professional darts. *PloS One*, 15(2), e0228870.

- Øversveen, E. (2022). Capitalism and alienation: Towards a Marxist theory of alienation for the 21st century. *European Journal of Social Theory*, 25(3), 440-457.
- Özsaglam, M. T. (2018). Sınırlı Tanınma ve Sınırlı İlişkiler: KKTC. *Yönetim ve Ekonomi Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 314-328. <https://doi.org/10.11611/yead.448147>
- Öztürk, F. (1998). *Toplumsal Boyutlarıyla Spor*. Bağırhan Yayınevi.
- Page, M. J., McKenzie, J. E., Bossuyt, P. M., Boutron, I., Hoffmann, T. C., Mulrow, C. D., Shamseer, L., Tetzlaff, J. M., Akl, E. A., & Brennan, S. E. (2021). The PRISMA 2020 statement: An updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. *BMJ*, 372.
- Pagidipati, N. J., & Gaziano, T. A. (2013). Estimating deaths from cardiovascular disease: a review of global methodologies of mortality measurement. *Circulation*, 127(6), 749-756.
- Panter, A. T., & Sterba, S. K. (Eds.). (2011). *Handbook of ethics in quantitative methodology*. Routledge.
- Park, S., Lavallee, D., & Tod, D. (2013). Athletes' career transition out of sport: A systematic review. *International review of sport and exercise psychology*, 6(1), 22-53. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1750984X.2012.670759>
- Parrish, R. (2016). Two Players One Goal? Sport in the European Union edited by Walter Tokarski, Dirk Steinbach, Karen Petry & Barbara Jesse. *Entertainment and Sports Law Journal*, 3(1).
- Parrish, R. (2015). Article 17 of the FIFA regulations on the status and transfer of players. *Maastricht Journal of European and Comparative Law*, 22(2), 256-282. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1023263X1502200206>
- Patrick, H., Ryan, A. M., Alfeld-Liro, C., Fredricks, J. A., Huda, L. Z., & Eccles, J. S. (1999). Adolescents' commitment to developing talent: The role of peers in continuing motivation for sports and the arts. *Journal of youth and adolescence*, 28(6), 741-763. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1021659904046>
- Penfield, T., Baker, M. J., Scoble, R., & Wykes, M. C. (2014). Assessment, evaluations, and definitions of research impact: A review. *Research evaluation*, 23(1), 21-32. <https://doi.org/10.1093/reseval/rvt021>
- Peng, F., & Zhang, L. W. (2021). The relationship of competitive cognitive anxiety and motor performance: Testing the moderating effects of goal orientations and self-efficacy among Chinese collegiate basketball players. *Frontiers in psychology*, 12, 685649. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.685649>
- Pensgaard, A. M., Ivarsson, A., Nilstad, A., Solstad, B. E., & Steffen, K. (2018). Psychosocial stress factors, including the relationship with the coach, and their influence on acute and overuse injury risk in elite female football players. *BMJ open sport & exercise medicine*, 4(1), e000317. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjsem-2017-000317>
- Petersen-Wagner, R. (2017). Cultural consumption through the epistemologies of the South: 'Humanization' in transnational football fan solidarities. *Current Sociology*, 65(7), 953-970. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392116686480>

- Petitpas, A. L., Danish, S., McKelvain, R., & Murphy, S. (1992). A career assistance program for elite athletes. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 70(3), 383-386. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6678.1992.tb01696.x>
- Petrova, E., Dewing, J., & Camilleri, M. (2016). Confidentiality in participatory research: Challenges from one study. *Nursing ethics*, 23(4), 442-454. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0969733015573124>
- Petry, K., Steinbach, D., & Tokarski, W. (2004). Sport systems in the countries of the European Union: similarities and differences. *European Journal for Sport and Society*, 1(1), 15-21.
- Pike, E. C., & Smith, A. (2023). Sport and the politics of in/equality. *Frontiers in Sociology*, 7, 1087572. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2022.1087572>
- Pilipiec, P., Groot, W., & Pavlova, M. (2021). The effect of an increase of the retirement age on the health, well-being, and labor force participation of older workers: a systematic literature review. *Journal of Population Ageing*, 14, 271-315.
- Pink, M. A., Lonie, B. E., & Saunders, J. E. (2018). The challenges of the semi-professional footballer: A case study of the management of dual career development at a Victorian Football League (VFL) club. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 35, 160–170.
- Plumley, D., & Wilson, R. (2022). Finance of the FIFA world cup. In *The Business of the FIFA World Cup* (pp. 119-133). Routledge.
- Ponto, J. (2015). Understanding and evaluating survey research. *Journal of the advanced practitioner in oncology*, 6(2), 168.
- Psarrou, E. (2003). *National Identity in an Era of Globalisation*. London School of Economics and Political Science (United Kingdom).
- Price, J. H., & Murnan, J. (2004). Research limitations and the necessity of reporting them. *American journal of health education*, 35(2), 66-67. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19325037.2004.10603613>
- Proctor, E. K., Powell, B. J., & McMillen, J. C. (2013). Implementation strategies: Recommendations for specifying and reporting. *Implementation Science: IS*, 8, 139. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1748-5908-8-139>
- Prilleltensky, I., & Gonick, L. (1996). Politics Change, Oppression Remains: On the Psychology and Politics of Oppression. *Political Psychology*, 17(1), 127. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3791946>
- Ramos, A. S., Hammerschmidt, J., Ribeiro, A. S., Lima, F., & Kraus, S. (2022). Rethinking dual careers: success factors for career transition of professional football players and the role of sport entrepreneurship. *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship*, 23(5), 881-900.
- Reis Monteiro, A., & Monteiro, A. R. (2015). Sociology of the Professions. *The Teaching Profession: Present and Future*, 47-60.
- Relvas, H. (2010). *A qualitative exploration of the transition from youth to professional football across Europe: A critique of structures, support mechanisms and practitioner roles*. Liverpool John Moores University (United Kingdom).
- Quarmby, T., & Dagkas, S. (2010). Children's engagement in leisure time physical activity: Exploring family structure as a determinant. *Leisure Studies*, 29(1), 53-66. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02614360903491275>

- Queirós, A., Faria, D., & Almeida, F. (2017). Strengths and limitations of qualitative and quantitative research methods. *European Journal of Education Studies*, 3(9), 216-234. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.886749>
- Queloz, M. (2021). *The practical origins of ideas: Genealogy as conceptual reverse-engineering* (p. 304). Oxford University Press.
- Rahi, S. (2017). Research design and methods: A systematic review of research paradigms, sampling issues and instruments development. *International Journal of Economics & Management Sciences*, 6(2), 1-5. <https://doi.org/10.4172/2162-6359.1000S2-013>
- Reade, J., Schreyer, D., & Singleton, C. (2020). Echoes: What happens when football is played behind closed doors? Available at SSRN 3630130.
- Reicher, S., Spears, R., & Haslam, S. A. (2010). The social identity approach in social psychology. *Sage Identities Handbook*, 2010, 45-62. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446200977.n4>
- Reid, H. L. (2006). Olympic sport and its lessons for peace. *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport*, 33(2), 205-214. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00948705.2006.9714650>
- Rice, S. M., Purcell, R., De Silva, S., Mawren, D., McGorry, P. D., & Parker, A. G. (2016). The mental health of elite athletes: A narrative systematic review. *Sports medicine*, 46, 1333-1353. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40279-016-0492-2>
- Richter, H. A. (2014). The Grand Game and Britain's Acquisition of Cyprus. *Çanakkale Araştırmaları Türk Yılığ*, 12(17), 85-96.
- Robazza, C., Pellizzari, M., & Hanin, Y. (2004). Emotion self-regulation and athletic performance: An application of the IZOF model. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 5(4), 379-404. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1469-0292\(03\)00030-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1469-0292(03)00030-1)
- Roberts, G. C., & Ommundsen, Y. (1996). Effect of goal orientation on achievement beliefs, cognition and strategies in team sport. *Scandinavian Journal of Medicine & Science in Sports*, 6(1), 46-56. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1600-0838.1996.tb00017.x>
- Robinson, J. L. (2018). *Visible and concealed marginalized identity and microaggressions: Impact on well-being* (Doctoral dissertation).
- Rodriguez, L. L., Hanna, K. E., & Federman, D. D. (Eds.). (2003). *Responsible research: A systems approach to protecting research participants*.
- Ronkainen, N. J. (2014). *An existential-narrative perspective on career, identity and spirituality in sport*. Health, Aarhus Universitet.
- Ronkainen, N. J., Ryba, T. V., Littlewood, M., & Selänne, H. (2018). 'School, family and then hockey!' Coaches' views on dual career in ice hockey. *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching*, 13(1), 38-45. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1747954117740102>
- Royce, E. (2022). *Poverty and power: The problem of structural inequality*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Rutherford, D. (2003). *Raiding the Land of the Foreigners*. Princeton University Press.
- Ryba, T. V., Stambulova, N. B., Ronkainen, N. J., Bundgaard, J., & Selänne, H. (2015). Dual career pathways of transnational athletes. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 21, 125-134. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2015.05.003>

- Rynning, S. (2012). NATO'S network: On the purpose and challenge of partnerships. *Studia Diplomatica*, 65(1), 45-56.
- Saarijärvi, M., & Bratt, E. L. (2021). When face-to-face interviews are not possible: tips and tricks for video, telephone, online chat, and email interviews in qualitative research.
- Sadigursky, D., Braid, J. A., De Lira, D. N. L., Machado, B. A. B., Carneiro, R. J. F., & Colavolpe, P. O. (2017). The FIFA 11+ injury prevention program for soccer players: a systematic review. *BMC sports science, medicine and rehabilitation*, 9, 1-8.
- Sakkas, J., & Zhukova, N. (2012). The Soviet Union, Turkey and the Cyprus problem, 1967-1974. *Les Cahiers Irice*, (2), 123-135.
- Sallen, J., Hemming, K., & Richartz, A. (2018). Facilitating dual careers by improving resistance to chronic stress: Effects of an intervention programme for elite student athletes. *European Journal of Sport Science*, 18(1), 112-122. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17461391.2017.1392412>
- Sanderson, J., & Weathers, M. R. (2019). "Every time someone comes forward, it makes it easier for the next survivor to be heard": Sport as a triggering agent to break the silence of child sexual abuse. *Communication Quarterly*, 67(3), 333-353. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01463373.2019.1573692>
- Sanders, M. R., & Turner, K. M. (2018). The importance of parenting in influencing the lives of children. In *Handbook of Parenting and Child Development across the Lifespan* (pp. 3-26).
- Sari, I. (2015). Satisfaction of basic psychological needs and goal orientation in young athletes: A test of basic psychological needs theory. *Kinesiology*, 47(2), 159-168.
- Sarmiento, H., Clemente, F. M., Araújo, D., Davids, K., McRobert, A., & Figueiredo, A. (2018). What performance analysts need to know about research trends in association football (2012–2016): A systematic review. *Sports Medicine*, 48, 799-836.
- Sarmiento, H., Frontini, R., Marques, A., Peralta, M., Ordoñez-Saavedra, N., Duarte, J. P., Figueiredo, A., Campos, M. J., & Clemente, F. M. (2021). Depressive symptoms and burnout in football players: A systematic review. *Brain Sciences*, 11(10), 1351
- Sarıkaya, T. (2023). The Effects of Interactions In Virtual Communities On Social Media In The Shaping And Reproducing Of Cultural Memory, Neighborhood Identity, And Culture. *Communication Papers. Media Literacy and Gender Studies.*, 12(24).
- Sawyer, M. Q., & Gooding, C. C. (2013). Racism, Body Politics, and Football. *A Companion to Sport*, 164-178.
- Schinke, R. J., Stambulova, N. B., Si, G., & Moore, Z. (2018). International Society of Sport Psychology Position Stand: Athletes' Mental Health, Performance, and Development. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 16(6), 622-639.
- Schlossberg, N. K. (1981). A model for analyzing human adaptation to transition. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 9(2), 2-18.
- Schoorman, D., & Bogotch, I. (2010). Moving beyond 'diversity' to 'social justice': the challenge to reconceptualize multicultural education. *Intercultural Education*, 21(1), 79-85.

- Schwartz, S. J. (2001). The evolution of Eriksonian and neo-Eriksonian identity theory and research: A review and integration. *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research*, 1(1), 7-58.
- Setia, M. S. (2016). Methodology series module 5: Sampling strategies. *Indian Journal of Dermatology*, 61(5), 505-509.
- Shaw, M. (2014). The Cyprus game: Crossing the boundaries in a divided island. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 12(2), 262-274.
- Skinner, R. A., & Piek, J. P. (2001). Psychosocial implications of poor motor coordination in children and adolescents. *Human Movement Science*, 20(1-2), 73-94.
- Sidin, A. I. (2016). The obstacles of valid informed consent. *International Invention Journal of Medicine and Medical Sciences*, 3(5), 84-88.
- Singer, J. N. (2005). Understanding racism through the eyes of African American male student-athletes. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 8(4), 365-386.
- Singer, M. K., Dressler, W., George, S., Baquet, C. R., Bell, R. A., Burhansstipanov, L., Burke, N. J., Dibble, S., Elwood, W., & Garro, L. (2016). Culture: The missing link in health research. *Social Science & Medicine*, 170, 237-246.
- Shonkoff, J. P. (2012). Committee on psychosocial aspects of child and family health; committee on early childhood adoption and dependent care; section on developmental and behavioral pediatrics (2012). The lifelong effects of early childhood adversity and toxic stress. *Pediatrics*, 129, e232.
- Smith, M., Duda, J., Allen, J., & Hall, H. (2002). Contemporary measures of approach and avoidance goal orientations: Similarities and differences. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 72(2), 155-190.
- Smith, B., & Sparkes, A. C. (2016). Interviews: Qualitative interviewing in the sport and exercise sciences. In *Routledge Handbook of Qualitative Research in Sport and Exercise* (pp. 125-145). Routledge.
- Soligard, T., Schweltnus, M., Alonso, J., Bahr, R., Clarsen, B., Dijkstra, P., Gabbett, T., Gleeson, M., Hägglund, M., Hutchinson, M., Rensburg, D., Khan, K., Meeusen, R., Orchard, J., Pluim, B., Raftery, M., Budgett, R., & Engebretsen, L. (2016). How much is too much? (Part 1) International Olympic Committee consensus statement on load in sport and risk of injury. *BMJ*. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bjsports-2016-096581>
- Sorkkila, M., Aunola, K., & Ryba, T. V. (2017). A person-oriented approach to sport and school burnout in adolescent student-athletes: The role of individual and parental expectations. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 28, 58-67.
- Spaaij, R., Farquharson, K., & Marjoribanks, T. (2015). Sport and social inequalities. *Sociology Compass*, 9(5), 400-411.
- Spanou, A. (2015). Sports and local government. Case study of Strovolos municipality.
- Stodolska, M., & Tainsky, S. (2015). Soccer spectatorship and identity discourses among Latino immigrants. *Leisure Sciences*, 37(2), 142-159.

- Stambulova, N. B., Ryba, T. V., & Henriksen, K. (2021). Career development and transitions of athletes: The international society of sport psychology position stand revisited. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 19(4), 524-550.
- Stambulova, N. B., Engström, C., Franck, A., Linnér, L., & Lindahl, K. (2015). Searching for an optimal balance: Dual career experiences of Swedish adolescent athletes. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 21, 4-14.
- Stambulova, N. B., & Ryba, T. V. (2014). A critical review of career research and assistance through the cultural lens: towards cultural praxis of athletes' careers. *International review of sport and exercise psychology*, 7(1), 1-17.
- Stambulova, N. (2010). Counseling athletes in career transitions: The five-step career planning strategy. *Journal of sport psychology in action*, 1(2), 95-105.
- Stott, C., Hoggett, J., & Pearson, G. (2012). 'Keeping the Peace' Social Identity, Procedural Justice and the Policing of Football Crowds. *The British journal of criminology*, 52(2), 381-399.
- Sparkes, A. C., & Smith, B. (2013). *Qualitative research methods in sport, exercise and health: From process to product*. Routledge.
- Starfield, S. (2013). Researcher reflexivity. *The encyclopedia of applied linguistics*, 1-7.
- Stavrou, N. A. M., Psychountaki, M., Georgiadis, E., Karteroliotis, K., & Zervas, Y. (2015). Flow theory—goal orientation theory: positive experience is related to athlete's goal orientation. *Frontiers in psychology*, 6, 1499.
- Steele, A. R., van Rens, F. E., & Ashley, R. A. (2020). A systematic literature review on the academic and athletic identities of student-athletes. *Journal of Intercollegiate Sport*, 13(1), 69-92.
- Stephen, M. (1997). *The Cyprus Question*. British-Northern Cyprus Parliamentary Group.
- Stets, J. E., & Burke, P. J. (2003). A sociological approach to self and identity. *Handbook of self and identity*, 128152(1), 221-9.
- Stewart, M. J., Makwarimba, E., Reutter, L. I., Veenstra, G., Raphael, D., & Love, R. (2009). Poverty, sense of belonging and experiences of social isolation. *Journal of Poverty*, 13(2), 173-195.
- Stone, C. (2013). The role of football in everyday life. In *Football fans around the world* (pp. 7-22). Routledge.
- Stork, S., & Sanders, S. W. (2008). Physical education in early childhood. *The Elementary School Journal*, 108(3), 197-206.
- Stryker, S. (1980). *Symbolic interactionism: A social structural version*. Menlo Park: Benjamin Cummings.
- Sunay, H. (2010). *Sporda Organizasyon* (1. basım ed.). Gazi Kitabevi.
- Surmiak, A. (2020). Should we maintain or break confidentiality? The choices made by social researchers in the context of law violation and harm. *Journal of Academic Ethics*, 18(3), 229-247.
- Szerovay, M. (2018). *Global and local interactions in football: Comparing the development paths of Finland and Hungary* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Jyväskylä).

- Szymonik, A. (2023). Obesity as a threat to health security. *De Securitate Et Defensione. O Bezpieczeństwie i Obronności*, 9(1), 151-163.
- Şeker, C. T. (2011). Trade and diplomacy in the Ottoman-Venetian relations during the 16th century (Master's thesis, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü).
- TAK. (2012). KTSYD'nin "sporun vizyonu" konulu eğitim semineri başladı. <https://www.kibrispostasi.com/c41-SPOR/n70229-KTSYDnin-Sporun-Vizyonu-konulu-egitim-semineri-basladi>
- Tandon, P. S., Kroshus, E., Olsen, K., Garrett, K., Qu, P., & McCleery, J. (2021). Socioeconomic inequities in youth participation in physical activity and sports. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 18(13), 6946.
- Tardy, C. H. (1985). Social support measurement. *American journal of community psychology*, 13(2), 187.
- Taylor, M. (2005). Building a National League: The Football League and the North of England, 1888–1939. *The International Journal of Regional and Local Studies*, 1(1), 11-27.
- Taylor, J., & Ogilvie, B. C. (1994). A conceptual model of adaptation to retirement among athletes. *Journal of applied sport psychology*, 6(1), 1-20.
- Tekavc, J., Wylleman, P., & Erpič, S. C. (2015). Perceptions of dual career development among elite level swimmers and basketball players. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 21, 27-41.
- Tello, F. P. H., Martínez, L. N., Núñez, M. L., & Calvo, T. G. (2010). A structural model of goal orientation in sports: Personal and contextual variables. *The Spanish Journal of Psychology*, 13(1), 257-266.
- Tezel, A. (2008). Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyetinin devlet olarak Kıbrıs sorununun çözümüne etkisi (Master's thesis, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü).
- Thelwell, R. C., Greenlees, I. A., & Weston, N. J. (2006). Using psychological skills training to develop soccer performance. *Journal of applied sport psychology*, 18(3), 254-270.
- Thomas, J., & Harden, A. (2008). Methods for the thematic synthesis of qualitative research in systematic reviews. *BMC medical research methodology*, 8, 1-10.
- Thorne, L., & Saunders, S. B. (2002). The socio-cultural embeddedness of individuals' ethical reasoning in organizations (cross-cultural ethics). *Journal of Business Ethics*, 35, 1-14.
- Thornton, J. S., Dvorak, J., & Asif, I. (2021). Health education through football (soccer): the '11 for health' programme as a success story on implementation: learn, play and have fun!. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 55(16), 885-886.
- Torres, C. A. (2014). *First Freire: Early writings in social justice education*. Teachers College Press.
- Torres, C. A. (2008). Paulo Freire and social justice education: An introduction. In *Social justice education for teachers* (pp. 1-11). Brill.
- Tracy, S. J. (2019). *Qualitative research methods: Collecting evidence, crafting analysis, communicating impact*. John Wiley & Sons.

- Troisi, O., Grimaldi, M., Loia, F., & Maione, G. (2018). Big data and sentiment analysis to highlight decision behaviours: A case study for student population. *Behaviour & Information Technology*, 37(10-11), 1111-1128.
- Vaismoradi, M., & Snelgrove, S. (2019). Theme in qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis.
- Vaismoradi, M., Jones, J., Turunen, H., & Snelgrove, S. (2016). Theme development in qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis.
- Vandermeersch, H., Van Regenmortel, T., & Scheerder, J. (2017). 'There are alternatives, but your social life is curtailed': Poverty and sports participation from an insider perspective. *Social Indicators Research*, 133, 119-138.
- Van Hoof, A., & Raaijmakers, Q. A. (2002). The spatial integration of adolescent identity: Its relation to age, education, and subjective well-being. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, 43(3), 201-212
- Vealey, R. S. (2004). Self-confidence in athletes.
- Verschuren, P. (2003). Case study as a research strategy: Some ambiguities and opportunities. *International journal of social research methodology*, 6(2), 121-139.
- Voight, M. R., Callaghan, J. L., & Ryska, T. A. (2000). Relationship between goal orientation, self-confidence and multidimensional trait anxiety among Mexican-American female youth athletes. *Journal of Sport Behavior*, 23(3).
- Von Rosen, P., Kottorp, A., Fridén, C., Frohm, A., & Heijne, A. (2018). Young, talented and injured: Injury perceptions, experiences and consequences in adolescent elite athletes. *European journal of sport science*, 18(5), 731-740.
- Vural, Y., & Özuyanık, E. (2008). Redefining identity in the Turkish-Cypriot school history textbooks: A step towards a united federal Cyprus. *South European Society and Politics*, 13(2), 133-154.
- Vural, Y., & Rustemli, A. (2006). Identity fluctuations in the Turkish Cypriot community. *Mediterranean Politics*, 11(3), 329-348.
- Wan, K. M., Ng, K. U., & Lin, T. H. (2020). The political economy of football: Democracy, income inequality, and men's national football performance. *Social indicators research*, 151(3), 981-1013.
- Washington, R. E., & Karen, D. (2001). Sport and society. *Annual review of sociology*, 27(1), 187-212.
- Waterman, A. S. (1999). Identity, the identity statuses, and identity status development: A contemporary statement. *Developmental review*, 19(4), 591-621.
- Weir, D. R., Jackson, J. S., & Sonnega, A. (2009). National football league player care foundation study of retired NFL players. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Institute for Social Research.
- Wheeler, S. (2012). The significance of family culture for sports participation. *International review for the sociology of sport*, 47(2), 235-252.
- White, S. A., & Zellner, S. R. (1996). The relationship between goal orientation, beliefs about the causes of sport success, and trait anxiety among high school, intercollegiate, and recreational sport participants. *The sport psychologist*, 10(1), 58-72.

- Williams, F. (2018). Care: Intersections of scales, inequalities and crises. *Current Sociology*, 66(4), 547-561.
- World Health Organization. (2022). *World Health Statistics 2022: Monitoring Health for the SDGs*. World Health Organization.
- Wylleman, P., Rosier, N., De Brandt, K., & De Knop, P. (2016). Coaching athletes through career transitions. In *The psychology of sports coaching* (pp. 7-20). Routledge.
- Wylleman, P., & Rosier, N. (2016). Holistic perspective on the development of elite athletes. In *Sport and exercise psychology research* (pp. 269-288). Elsevier.
- Wylleman, P., & Reints, A. (2010). A lifespan perspective on the career of talented and elite athletes: Perspectives on high-intensity sports. *Scandinavian Journal of Medicine & Science in Sports*, 20, 88-94.
- Wylleman, P., Alfermann, D., & Lavallee, D. (2004). Career transitions in sport: European perspectives. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 5(1), 7-20.
- Wylleman, P., & Lavallee, D. (2004). A developmental perspective on transitions faced by athletes. In *Developmental sport and exercise psychology: A lifespan perspective* (pp. 507-527).
- Xanthopoulos, M. S., Benton, T., Lewis, J., Case, J. A., & Master, C. L. (2020). Mental health in the young athlete. *Current psychiatry reports*, 22, 1-15.
- Yetim, A. (2000). Sporun sosyal görünümü. *Gazi Beden Eğitimi Ve Spor Bilimleri Dergisi*, 5(1), 63-72.
- Yildiz, S. M. (2015). The relationship between bullying and burnout: An empirical investigation of Turkish professional football players. *Sport, Business and Management: An International Journal*, 5(1), 6-20.
- Yin, R. K. (1989). *Case study research: Design and methods*, revised edition. Applied Social Research Methods Series, 5.
- Young, J. C., Rose, D. C., Mumby, H. S., Benitez-Capistros, F., Derrick, C. J., Finch, T., Garcia, C., Home, C., Marwaha, E., & Morgans, C. (2018). A methodological guide to using and reporting on interviews in conservation science research. *Methods in Ecology and Evolution*, 9(1), 10-19.
- Young, J. A., Pearce, A. J., Kane, R., & Pain, M. (2006). Leaving the professional tennis circuit: Exploratory study of experiences and reactions from elite female athletes. *British journal of sports medicine*, 40(5), 477-483.
- Zhang, L. (2017). How to understand Stuart Hall's "identity" properly? *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 18(2), 188-196. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649373.2017.1309498>
- Zhou, Y., & Zhou, F. (2019). Cognitive neural mechanism of sports competition pressure source. *Translational neuroscience*, 10(1), 147-151.
- Zorba, A. B. (2015). Mental illness stigma in Turkish and Greek Cypriot Communities living in Cyprus: A pilot study. *The European Journal of Social & Behavioural Sciences*.

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Participants' Information

1. Title of Study

Structural Inequity and Identity Politics within International Football: The impacts of exclusion from the international arena on the KTFF/CTFA Süper Lig.

2. Version Number and Date

Version 1.0 and the date is 01.02.2021

3. Invitation Paragraph

You are being invited to participate in a research study. Before you decide whether to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and feel free to ask us if you would like more information or if there is anything that you do not understand. Please also feel free to discuss this with your friends, relatives and team coaches if you wish. We would like to stress that you do not have to accept this invitation and should only agree to take part if you want to.

Thank you for reading this.

4. What is the purpose of the study?

The aim of this research is to define the extent to which the embargo-driven structural inequity experienced by football players from Northern Cyprus impacts players' careers.

5. Why have I been invited to take part?

This project focus on the professional football players at the highest league in Cyprus and you play that football in Cyprus.

6. Do I have to take part?

No, the participation in this study is voluntary and participants are free to withdraw participation at any time without explanation and without incurring a disadvantage.

7. What will happen if I take part?

The researcher will do an interview with you about your football life, career, and personal goals in your professional life. The researcher will be Simay Kanan, the duration of the interview is 30-45 minutes. According to the Covid-19 restrictions, the interviews can be done online with the Microsoft Teams application. If you do not have that program or application on your computer or on your phone, the researcher will ask to download it just for the interview. We can work with an alternative platform for example zoom. The interview will be recorded, and the data will be remain secure during and after the research.

8. How will my data be used?

The University processes personal data as part of its research and teaching activities in accordance with the lawful basis of ‘public task’, and in accordance with the University’s purpose of “advancing education, learning and research for the public benefit”.

Under UK data protection legislation, the University acts as the Data Controller for personal data collected as part of the University’s research. The University privacy notice for research participants can be found on the attached link https://www.uclan.ac.uk/data_protection/privacy-notice-research-participants.php

Further information on how your data will be used can be found in the table below.

| | |
|--|---|
| How will my data be collected? | Interview |
| How will my data be stored? | SharePoint with restricted access |
| How long will my data be stored for? | 5 years |
| What measures are in place to protect the security and confidentiality of my data? | with restricted access |
| Will my data be anonymised? | Yes, after the interview the data will be anonymised. |
| How will my data be used? | The data will be the information you will give the researcher at the interview. The data will consist of the your professional football life. When the data collected, the analysis will be done in different football players. |
| Who will have access to my data? | Only the researchers of this project can access the data. Simay Kanan and Prof. John Ewing Hughson can access the data |
| Will my data be archived for use in other research projects in the future? | No |
| How will my data be destroyed? | Deleted from the document |

9. Are there any risks in taking part?

No.

10. Are there any benefits from taking part?

Participating in the interview may help you to reflect on your goals and ambitions as a professional football player.

11. Expenses and / or payments

No

12. What will happen to the results of the study?

The results will be published in academic journals. If you would like to receive published articles, please request from Simay Kanan to send you the published article. You will not be identified in published work.

13. What will happen if I want to stop taking part?

You are free to withdraw your participation at any time by contact to the researcher. You do not need to offer any reasons or explanation for why you wish with to withdraw from the study.

14. What if I am unhappy or if there is a problem?

If you are unhappy, or if there is a problem, please feel free to let us know by contacting Simay Kanan, +905338490700 and we will try to help. If you remain unhappy, or have a complaint which you feel you cannot come to us with, then please contact the Research Governance Unit at OfficerForEthics@uclan.ac.uk.

The University strives to maintain the highest standards of rigour in the processing of your data. However, if you have any concerns about the way in which the University processes your personal data, it is important that you are aware of your right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office by calling 0303 123 1113.

15. Who can I contact if I have further questions?

Simay Kanan, telephone no: [REDACTED] and the email address is skanan@uclan.ac.uk

Contact details of investigatory team

Appendix C – Interview Questions

Age:

National team:

Education:

1. How many workouts do you do per week?
2. Approximately how many hours per week (training, playing, matches) do you spend at the club or internationally?
3. Can you describe yourself in normal life / as an actor?
4. What does a typical day look like for you? Education etc.? A long day?
5. What changes on a match day compared to a normal training day?
6. Why did you choose football?
7. How many years have you played in the Cyprus Super League?
8. How many clubs have you played for?
9. What was the reason for leaving the previous club?
10. Apart from training and playing, do you have any other responsibilities at the club or the national team? Can you explain them a little?
11. Is psychological support provided by the club?
12. What do you think in terms of motivation, how do you get motivated?
13. If you weren't a football player, what do you think you would be doing now?
14. How do you see your football career?
15. Do you think players need insurance while playing?
16. Do you work or study alongside football? (When/how did this change?) What does it mean in terms of time?
17. Have you completed a bachelor's degree or any other training? Why did you choose that degree or course? If yes, are you the only person in your family who has a diploma?

18. Who started you playing football? Was it the decision to stay in business when you were younger, as it wasn't a career option - did you have to make a 'choice'? How did you make this choice? And why? (from academic or school)
19. What qualities do you need to have to be successful as a professional football player?
20. People look at the life of a football player and think it's cool/glamorous, really?
21. What would you recommend to a younger player regarding contract details, advice in general?
22. Do you think players need pension insurance while playing?
23. Have you ever had a serious injury?
24. Worried about injury?
25. Do you think football is a safer career today? Was your injury long-term? Did you recover as expected? What is it like to be injured?
26. Have you thought a lot about what to do next? Do you believe there should be training programs to support players during and after their careers?
27. Do you feel supported by your club and coaches? Or international organization? Have there been situations where you felt unsupported?
28. If I told you first, who are you – a football player, father, friend, partner, sibling, or family member – what would you say first? Why is that?
29. I hear a lot about the word "pressure." Are the players under pressure? What kind of pressure exactly?
30. Are players expected/encouraged to 'look good' on the pitch to be recognized by football/themselves/sponsors?
31. Where will your football life take you? Where do you think you will be in 10 years?
32. How do you think we can develop football in Cyprus? What needs to be done?

Appendix D – Survey Questions (Football Players)


1. Kulübünüz? / Club Name?
2. Yaşınız? / Age?
3. Eğitim Seviyeniz / Education Level
4. Daha önce milli takımda görev aldınız mı? / Have you played in the national team before?
5. Haftada kaç antrenman yapıyorsunuz? / How many workouts do you do per week?
6. Bir antrenmanınız yaklaşık olarak kaç saat sürüyor? / Approximately how many hours do your one workout take?
7. KTFF Süper liginde kaç yıldır futbol oynuyorsunuz? / How many years have you been playing football in the CTFA Super League?
8. Şimdiye kadar kaç kulüpte futbol oynadınız? / How many clubs have you played football so far?
9. Şuanki kulübünüz tarafından psikolojik destek sağlanıyor mu? / Does your current club provide
10. Kulübünüz ve antrenörlerin tarafından desteklendiğini hissediyor musunuz? / Do you feel supported by your club and coaches?
11. Futbolcular psikolojik baskı altında mı? / Are the players under psychological pressure?
12. Yaralanma konusunda endişeli misiniz? / Are you worried about injury?
13. Futbolcuların sağlık için sigortaya ihtiyaçları var mı? / Do players need health insurance?
14. Futbolcuların emeklilik sigortasına ihtiyaçları var mı? / Do players need retirement insurance when playing?
15. Kendinizi normal hayatta bir futbolcu olarak tanımlayabilir misiniz? / Can you describe yourself as a football player in normal life?
16. Neden futbolu seçtiniz? / Why did you choose football?
17. Bir önceki kulüpten ayrılma sebebiniz neydi? / What was the reason for leaving the previous club?
18. Futbolcu olmasaydınız şimdi ne yapıyor olurdunuz? / If you weren't a football player, what do you think you would be doing now?
19. Futbol kariyeriniz nasıl? / How is your football career?
20. Kendinizi nasıl motive ediyorsunuz? / How do you motivate yourself?

21. Futbol kariyerinizin yanısıra başka sorumluluklarınız var mı? / Do you have other responsibilities besides your football career?
22. Sizi futbol oynamaya kim başlattı? / Who started you playing football?
23. Yaralanmak nasıl bir duygu? / How does it feel to be injured?
24. Futbol kariyerinizden sonra ne yapacağınızı düşündünüz mü? / Have you thought about what to do after your football career?
25. Profesyonel bir futbolcu olarak başarılı olmak için hangi niteliklere sahip olmanız gerekir? / What qualities do you need to be successful as a professional football player?
26. Genç bir oyuncuya sözleşme ile ilgili ne önerirsiniz? / What would you recommend to a young player regarding the contract?
27. Kendinizi ne olarak görüyorsunuz? / What do you see yourself as?
28. 10 yıl sonra nerede olacağınızı düşünüyorsunuz? / Where do you think you will be in 10 years?
29. Kuzey Kıbrıs'ta futbolu nasıl geliştirebiliriz? / How can we develop football in North Cyprus?

Appendix E – Survey Questions (Referees)

1. Yaşınız / Your Age
2. Eğitim Seviyeniz / Your Level of Education
3. Hakemliğinizin yanısıra çalışıyor musunuz veya eğitim alıyor musunuz? / Besides refereeing, do you work or are you pursuing education?
4. KTFF tarafından psikolojik destek sağlanıyor mu? / Does the CTFA provide psychological support?
5. Kendinizi nasıl motive ediyorsunuz? (Birden fazla seçenek seçebilirsiniz.) / How do you motivate yourself? (You may select multiple options.)
6. Sizi hakemliğe kim başlattı? (Birden fazla seçenek seçebilirsiniz.) / Who got you started in refereeing? (You may select multiple options.)
7. Başarılı bir hakem olmak için hangi niteliklere sahip olmanız gerekmektedir? (Birden fazla seçenek seçebilirsiniz.) / What qualities do you need to have to be a successful referee? (You may select multiple options.)
8. Farklı bir ülkede hakemlik yapmak ister misiniz? / Would you like to referee in a different country?
9. Hakemler psikolojik baskı altında mı? / Are referees under psychological pressure?
10. 10 yıl sonra futbolun neresinde olacağınızı düşünüyorsunuz? / Where do you see yourself in football in 10 years?
11. Yurt dışında tanınmamanın hakem olarak etkileri nelerdir? / What are the effects of being unrecognized abroad as a referee?

Appendix F - Isokinetic FIFA Conference: *Football Medicine - Players' Voice Conference in Lyon, France, (2022)*



ULUSLARARASI
FİNAL UNIVERSİTESİ

Structural Inequity and the Determinants of Injury Anxiety: Yenicami Ağdelen S.K as a Case Study

Simay Kanan* & Alethea Melling**
*Final International University, Cyprus
**University of Central Lancashire Research Centre for Applied Sport, Physical Activity and Performance



University of
Central Lancashire
UCLan
Where opportunity creates success

ABSTRACT

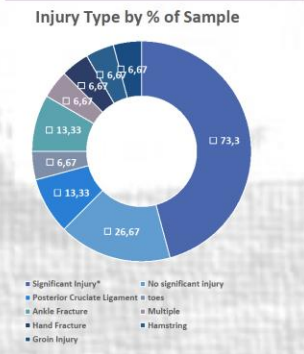
The Cyprus Turkish Football Association (CTFA) is affiliated to the Confederation of Independent Football Associations (ConIFA), the governing body representing national teams who are not recognized by the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA). Membership of FIFA has important knowledge, financial, and political implications for national clubs. We use the term structural inequity as players from unrecognized countries are attributed an unequal status to others within international football. For players within the Cyprus Turkish Football Association (CTFA), structural inequity has a resonance beyond geo-politics, impacting on player development, motivation, and retention.

METHODS

- An ethnographic approach, utilizing the researcher/participant experience to enable co-production of evidence.
- Semi Structured Interviews are transcribed and coded to themes.
- Transcriptions of player stories are analysed with NVivo qualitative data analysis (QDA) software.
- The evidence was co-produced with n=15, professional players aged 24.1 ± 6.6.
- Evidence was gathered through >60-minute semi structured interviews.

The interviews are completed during the summer 2021. As this study is based on n=15 players from one club, data must be treated with caution in terms of being representative of the CTFA Süper Lig.

RESULTS

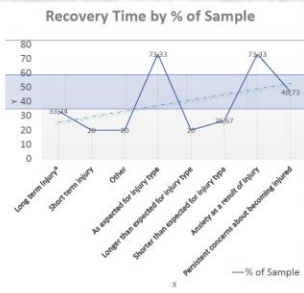


BACKGROUND

A professional football career is synonymous with high injury risk. However, international players under the auspices of FIFA and UEFA have better access to comprehensive research and health care. (2) As CTFA does not have this infrastructure, international players within CTFA Süper Lig are attributed unequal status by denying them the healthcare privileges afforded to FIFA players. Structural inequity within international football leaves Yenicami Ağdelen SK players disadvantaged in terms of health care and injury management, leading to injury related anxiety.

"No one cares for the injured football player due to the (unrecognised) state of football in the country, and he is automatically kicked out of football. His football career is coming to an end".
A Player's Voice, (Yenicami Ağdelen SK, 2021)

"Inequality is structural when policies keep some groups of people from obtaining the resources to better their lives. They do not have a chance to pursue their idea of happiness". (Amadeo, 2021)

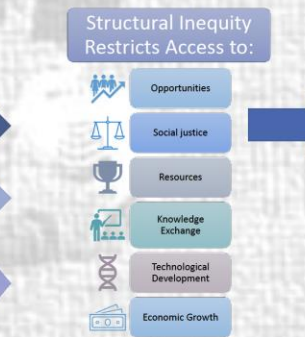


REFERENCES

Dotson, K. "Conceptualizing Epistemic Oppression." *Social Epistemology* 28.2 (2014): 115-138.
 FIFA. 2022. 09 Feb 2022. <<http://www.footballmedicinecentre.com/>>.
 Rookwood, J. "The Politics of ConIFA: Organising and Managing International Football Events for Unrecognised Countries." *Managing Sport and Leisure* 25.2 (2020): 6-20.



- #### PRIMARY AND SECONDARY AIMS
- To identify the psychosocial determinants of injury anxiety within Yenicami Ağdelen S.K, a CTFA Süper Lig Club.
 - To explore the extent to which players experience injury anxiety, and the implications for performance management
 - To inform the global governing bodies for soccer about the psychosocial impact of a geo-policy which prevents some national teams of players 'from obtaining the resources to better their (professional sporting) lives.'



THE PSYCHOSOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF INJURY ANXIETY

The psycho-social determinants of injury anxiety: appropriate Health Insurances; recovery and rehabilitation; post-injury health care resources; financial difficulties; loss of identity.

Regardless of injury type and recovery time, the study showed that 73.33% of participants suffered anxiety as result of being injured.

46.7% identified as having persistent anxiety about becoming injured and the possible long-term impacts.