Critical transition phases within top-level female football players in Europe

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Abstract

Women's football has gained in popularity over the last fifteen years and research into this area has developed. (Lopez, 1997; Scraton, Fasting, Pfister, & Bunuel, 1999; Williams, 2003, 2007, 2011; Fasting, 2004; Brus and Trangbaek, 2004; Pfister, 2006; Cauldwell, 2011). This research study has addressed the historical developments and inequalities with women's football and extended the existing knowledge of women's football and developed further the understanding of how female players transition through their playing careers.

Study One utilized in-depth interviews, (n=6), with senior administrators in the football organization to examine the organizational structure of six football associations (Denmark, England, Finland, Germany, Norway, The Netherlands), in Europe, to understand where women's football is situated within the organization. The status and location of women's football in the football organization was scrutinized to identify whether this affects the allocation of resources and working practices within women's football. The results identified the challenges women's football faced in gaining adequate resource to develop the women's game. Gaps in the development structures were identified and this led to the development of Study Two which recognized the need to examine how the players navigate through these structures.

Transition models (Wylleman and Lavallee 2014 holistic career model) have framed Study Two to explain how the players transition through their football careers. Seventeen elite players from the six European countries involved in Study One, were interviewed to gain an in-depth insight into how they navigate through their playing career. The findings from Study Two identified that the players found the transition from junior elite football to senior elite football problematic. This depended upon whether they had sufficient junior pathways in place to aid in this transition. Key themes identified in Study One were interwoven into this study, historical social cultural acceptance, migration and dual careers reaffirmed the complex nature of elite women's football and challenged the transition literature and models to explain how women's football fits into these models. Despite these complexities the players navigate through their careers, however there is little known about the player to why they continue playing football with all the challenges they face.

Study Three aimed to redress this, a case study narrative approach (Douglass and Carless 2006), has been adopted during this study to elicit the players own life experiences and to identify and evaluate the decision-making processes they go through, to play at the elite level. Two players from Study Two were interviewed five years on from their original interviews to explore how they have continued to navigate through the complex journey of women's football. The stories gave a more in depth insight into the player's careers and about the player. Resilience and player identity emerged to why these players continue to play at the elite level. The themes of migration and having to combine an academic/ vocation and elite sporting career successfully continued to develop from Study One and Two.

Key Words: transitions, women's football, dual career, qualitative research, narrative.

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Chapter one - Introduction

Over the last fifteen years there have been major developments in women's football across Europe. Such developments include the creation of a European women's competition, the inclusion of women's football in the Olympics and the mutual endorsement of football as an acceptable game that can be taken forward for women by the Union of European Football Associations, (UEFA), and Federation Internationale de Football Association, (FIFA), (Williams, 2007). Research into women's football in turn has witnessed growing attention from researchers (inc. Lopez, 1997; Scraton, Fasting, Pfister, & Bunuel, 1999; Williams, 2003, 2007, 2011; Fasting, 2004; Pfister, 2006; Cauldwell, 2011). These studies have concentrated on the historical development of the game and the inequalities female players face in the pursuit of the game. Given the significant milestones in the development of women's football it would seem appropriate to explore and understand whether the introduction of new development structures and mechanisms have had an impact in promoting the development of the women's game in Europe from an organisational perspective and the player's perspective.

In 1995 Sepp Blatter, the General Secretary of FIFA declared that "The future (of football) is feminine," (Saverdra, 2003; Williams, 2003; Harris, 2005; Pfister, 2006; Cauldwell 2011). From this point on Football Associations across Europe started to change their objectives and include women's football as a serious entity. A year later the inclusion of women's football in the Olympic games exposed the female game to a global audience. (Williams, 2007). The subsequent success of women's football in Europe can been attributed to the integration of women's football into the national football organisations and strategic vision of the organisation to include women's football (Pfister, 2003; Williams, 2003; Fasting,2004). This however was not without a struggle and the evolution of women's football organisations highlight the barriers women football administrators faced to develop the female game. This will be further evaluated in the chapter 3.

To understand the contemporary landscape of the developments of women's football in Europe it is important to acknowledge the specific organisational context in which women's football has developed and continues to operate within the countries used in this research. This work aims to gain an understanding of how women's football is structured and situated within the overall Football Association in six countries. The organisations are examined to ascertain whether the structures in place are comparable with all the Football Associations used in the study and whether this has led to women's football gaining a higher status within the organisation and in turn players having appropriate structures to develop within the game. An examination of the organisational structures allows us to understand that this has been argued as one of the key institutional barriers to women's football development and will help inform how the football associations operate (Pfister,2003; Williams, 2003; Fasting,2004; Brus and Trangbaek,2004).

The area of sports organisations has not been subjected to in-depth scrutiny compared to general research on organisations and authors such as Slack and Hinnings, (1992); Theodoraki and Henry, (1994); Hinnnigs, Thibault, Slack, Kikulis, (1996); Kikulis, (2000); Hoyle and Cuskelly, (2003); Slack and Parent, (2006); Gammelsæter and Jakobsen, (2008), Taylor and O'Sullivan, (2009), have helped to bridge this gap in the research. Gammelsæter and Jakobsen, (2008), noted however, there is a lack of empirical research on sport organisations.

This research extends this work and focusses specifically on a female football, within football organisations in Europe, and highlights the barriers women's football faces especially in a traditional male orientated sport, (White and Brackenbridge, 1985). The status and location of women's football within these organisations will be examined to explain whether women's football has adequate resources to develop women's football within the organization.

From a player's perspective there is little research on female footballer's experiences on how they move and navigate through their playing career. Athlete transition literature has provided a general insight into athlete careers and transitional models (Ogilvie and Taylor, 1993; Stambulova, 1994; Wylleman, Alfermann, & Lavallee, 2004). This research will further highlight how women's football has developed female players to become elite players and examine the complexity of moving through transitional phases to become an elite player within the countries involved. This will explore the relationships of transitions through the player's career and identify the intricacy of performance and lifestyle issues faced by female football players. However, there are no specific studies explaining how this works within female football and this research will add to the body of transition literature to offer this insight.

Discovering the critical transition phases faced by the elite female footballers presents a methodological challenge. Given the potentially complex and personal nature of trying to explore the lifestyle experiences of female footballers, qualitative methodologies were thought most appropriate to meet such a challenge. In this regard, researchers have argued that qualitative inquiry is gaining credibility (Dale, 1996). Having criticised methods of orthodox science for their inability to understand human behavior many authors have championed a variety of qualitative methodologies (Martens, 1987; Dewar & Horn, 1992; Dale, 1996; Tedlock, 2000; Bloor, Frankland, Thomas, and Robson, 2001; Foley, 2002; Tierney, 2002). Martens, (1987) suggested research must challenge and stretch epistemological and methodological boundaries and employ methods that integrate the practitioner and researcher within applied settings. More recently, Krane and Baird, (2005) also endorsed greater flexibility and more latitude in research designs that encourage creativity in finding the best strategies to answer a myriad of questions. In employing qualitative methodologies, researchers use words as data (Jackson, 1995), and immerse themselves in the groups or participants being studied. They stress notions of longitudinal involvement, collaboration and trust (Biddle, Markland, Gilbourne, Chatzisarantis and

Sparkes, 2001) and are thought most appropriate when there is an interest in understanding subjective experience. In this context the individual matters, where depth and richness of data is a priority, (Patton, 1980), and understanding the total picture counts, (Jackson, 1995).

The justification for this research is that it will provide the personal voice of the footballer player and provide more insight in to the complexity and uniqueness in pursuing a career in female football. Qualitative methodologies in this case will illuminate and explore the football careers and social behaviour of the players and this approach suggests that the players are actively engaged in the development of their own social lives (football career), they make their choices, they evaluate their opinions , they are reflexive (think about themselves, their situations and the other people involved in those situations) and they are motivated above all by a desire to do what is best for themselves. Therefore, the study will aim to examine the development structures of women and girls' football from a Pan European perspective, in order to identify, and illuminate the critical transition phases experienced by top- level female football players prior to, during and after their football career.

1.1 - Mapping the Research Journey & Clarifying the Structure of the Research

The overall aim of this research is;

The examine the development structures of women and girls' football from a Pan European perspective, to identify, and illuminate the critical transition phases experienced by top- level female football players prior to, during and after their football career.

Specifically, the three studies within this research will aim;

1. To ascertain the organisational structures(s) that exist within women's football and how these impact the development of women's football – **Study One**
2. To examine the developmental experiences of young female footballers from a Pan European perspective. **Study Two**
3. To better understand the complexity of performance and lifestyle issues affecting top level female European footballers. – Study Two
4. To capture the player's personal and unique transitional experiences throughout their career pathway. **Study Three**

The following section offers the reader a brief sense of the research journey and thesis structure. Study One aims to capture the essence of structural and protocol complexities of women's football in Europe. It explores the organisational structure, working mechanisms and philosophy concerning women's football development from a Pan-European perspective. The study allows a thorough understanding of the developmental philosophy and environment, (such as the political and ideological positioning, nature and status of the women's game) which play a critical role in the player development process. The study used a series of semi-structured interviews, (Biddle, Markland, Gilbourne, Chatzisarantis and Sparkes, 2001), which were conducted between March 2009 and January 2010, with the people responsible for women and girls football development within European football organisations. Alongside the interviews, strategic and operational policy and practices within women's football development programmes from European football organisations were collated. These included organisational charts, football development strategies and presentations. The interview schedule was deductively developed in accordance with the themes drawn from previous literature. The data from the interviews were deductively

analysed using content analysis procedures (Scanlan, Ravizza and Stein, 1989; Côté, Salmela, Baria and Russel, 1993. Data analysis and representation guidelines set out by previous interpretational (content analysis) studies with interviews were then adapted to create a series of summary content analysis tables amenable for peer dissemination (Biddle et al., 2001). Content analysis themes and raw data quotations were then discussed alongside relevant theoretical literature in order to present findings coherently and avoid repetition (Scanlan, Stein & Ravizza, 1989a; Smith, 1997).

Study Two follows on from Study One and captured the complexity of development (inclusive of performance/lifestyle) experiences of female players, focusing on areas such as lifestyle balance, post 16 experiences, aspirations and support networks and player pathway structure through to discontinuation. Furthermore, Study Two explored the relationship of the organisation structure of women's football and the individual player by examining how players navigate through their career using the development structures set out by their football organisation. Study Two further extends the Pan-European positioning through undertaking in-depth interviews with International players from six countries to gain a retrospective analysis of their development and transition to elite level performance and discontinuation. The sample of players included a range of experiences (i.e. early career (18-24 years and more experienced International players 28-35 years). Priority themes emerging from Study One supported the construction of the interview schedule. Interview data was analysed using the principles of content analysis (Scanlan et al., 1989; Côté et al., 1993).

Study Two adopts a life span perspective that extends within career transition to a female team sport which has not been studied in any depth and will allow the reader to understand the complex challenges faced by female players navigating through these transitions. Previous studies have concentrated on female individual sports gymnastics, equestrian, athletics and golf, (Stambulova, (1994); Pummell, Douglas and Carless, 2006; Harwood, and

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Lavallee, (2008). The study uses a holistic perspective outlining the beginning to end transition with the older age group, and within career transition for the first two age groups. Therefore, this current study was designed to understand the complex issues that European female football players face through their International football pathway and the transitions they face through their football careers.

Study Two investigates whether players have different experiences in their transition through their football pathway due country of origin, age of the player and aligns to the gap in the development pathway previously found in their country's football structures. The players ranged from early career (18-24) players, mid- career (24-28) players and players near retirement (28-35).

Study Three, further extends Study Two to encapsulate the player's journey in their career five years further on from Study Two. It uses a case study approach with two players involved in Study Two. This study looks further into the players positioning within their career as they have moved from early career to mid -career examining in-depth the significant transitions within this phase of their career addressing how the player navigated through complex transitions and how they made decisions which affected their career. It also examines the whole lifespan of a player's career leading to discontinuation and assess whether female players are prepared for retirement from football. The information was collated through evolving semi-structured interviews (Biddle et al., 2001), from topics used in the previous interview five years earlier and a narrative enquiry method was adopted to focus on the stories told by the players about their experiences. Gubrium & Holstein, (2008).

Study One: Interview – Football Associations
Chapter 3 – Study One Aim
A. To ascertain the organisational structures(s) that exist within women's football and how these impact the development of women's football
2009-2010

Study 2: Interviews- Players
Chapter 4 – Study Two Aims
B. To examine the developmental experiences of young female footballers from a Pan European perspective.
C. To better understand the complexity of performance and lifestyle issues affecting top level female European footballers.

2011-2012

Study Three – Case Studies – Players
Chapter 5 – Study Three aim
D. To capture the player's personal and unique transitional experiences throughout their career pathway
2017

Figure 1 - The Research Journey and Structure

Chapter Two - Methodology

2.1 My Journey

My research journey started in the early 1990s when I undertook my undergraduate dissertation, women's football was starting to gain attention and a team was dominating women's football, Doncaster Belles. I had grown up in the outskirts of Liverpool at the height of Liverpool Football club's dominance, and loved football, wanted to play football, but couldn't at that time, as girls didn't play football. I had to play netball, rounders etc., but could play a bit of football with the boys out of school, and I played football with my brothers at home. At secondary school I played hockey, to me, it was the next best thing. I was good at it and played successfully up to the age of 21 when I had a serious car accident while at university studying for my sport degree. Ironically, we had just started a women's football team at Carnegie and I was going to balance playing hockey and football the following season. The car accident was serious enough to end any sporting career I had hoped for. So, researching into football I guess was a way to be still involved at high level sport.

My undergraduate research project looked at how women footballers were socialised into football working with Doncaster Belles and Leeds United ladies football teams who were full of England internationals. I was fortunate enough to be based in Yorkshire while at university, so the access was good although, I had to rely on university friends to drive me to Doncaster as I was still not driving due the injuries I had sustained in my accident. This research was based on a lot of the feminist literature of the 1980s (Lensky,1986; Scraton, 1986, 1987; Talbot 1986; Hall, 1988; 1989). The findings highlighted that women had male role models and were socialised into football via their dads and their brothers and how they were encouraged to play more female traditional sports such as hockey, netball at school and if they played football they were ridiculed so they kept it a secret.

My teaching career carried on this work, and in my early years I was teaching socio -cultural and psychology aspects of sport focusing on gender and PE, coaching and sports

development. When choosing my masters research, I decided to shift to physical activity mainly because I was involved in personal training and coaching and my teaching had shifted to this. The research looked at sports and physical activity participation and highlighted gender roles and how this affected perception of sport and physical activity. I thought this would be where my research would end up. However, in 2000, I started coaching football in the USA and saw the effect of women's football in the USA at that time after their success of 1999 world cup. Soon after, the university I was teaching at in the UK, set up the international football institute, my love of football was ignited and by chance I started working with a local premiership football team who had a girls Centre of Excellence (CofE), and I started looking at its structure and this led to working on a piece of research assessing the structures of the CofE in England and where the gaps were. This led to conversations with the Football Association (The FA), and we organised the European championship conference in 2005 to coincide with UEFA European women's football championships which were held in the north west of England. There I presented the findings of the CofE research. There set the path for the PhD.

My interest in transitions started about the same time of the CofE research. I was asked to be a Talented Athlete Scholarship mentor (TASS) and at this time I started coaching hockey working with national league players and working with England hockey, mentoring and tutoring coaches. I had to go on a series of workshops and transitions was one of the workshops. Again, this ignited something in me, I hadn't ever transitioned out of sport even though I had not played hockey since 1991. I spent many years hoping there was going to be a miracle cure for my damaged ankle. I hid from sport for many years, apart from my job, and now I was coaching regularly I was still desperately wanting to play. The transition workshop made me realise that my feelings of denial and that I would be able to come back from this injury was normal. I had felt this way for so many years, but it was only then that I realised what I had been dealing with. I wanted to know more, coaching and mentoring had become my substitute for playing.

2.2 Philosophical positioning

My philosophical positioning for this research was influenced by my existence as an elite team player, albeit in a different sport and a 'wan-a-be' football player, who was forced to retire from sport early due to injury and spent years looking how to fill that void. This led me to question what was my role in this research? I wasn't one of them (a footballer), I hadn't played football, I had coached it very briefly, but I was an elite junior player in the past and now an elite coach in a different team sport. I was fortunate I knew stakeholders in the women's game in England who I had numerous conversations with about women's football development. I had some understanding of the game and had experienced the lack of opportunities for females in my generation to play and the stigma attached to playing what was seen as a traditional male sport.

2.3 Ontological Assumptions

To help understand my philosophical foundations for this research and how this has directed my choice in research methods a brief review of the philosophies will follow. The nature of reality or ontology has been characterised by Blaikie (1993, p8) as relating to "claims and assumptions about the nature of social reality, claims about what exists, what it looks like, what units make it up and how these units interact with each other. In short, ontological assumptions are concerned with what we believe constitutes social reality". Ontological assumptions in social science research can be broadly classified into a series of paradigms that are important as they guide the researcher in viewing the world in a certain way. At the outset it must be stated that the literature provides several 'terms' to define each of these paradigms, which can often be used slightly inconsistently by different authors. However, for this study, a brief outline of the positivist, interpretivist and critical realism paradigms will be provided to show the philosophical positioning of where my research sits within these paradigms. Subsequently, my own position will be discussed in relation to my own research.

Positivism or objectivism as it is sometimes termed, 'assumes that social phenomena exist independently of both the observer and social actors; it is the regularities or patterns in this reality that social research endeavours to discover and describe, and it is elements of this reality that determine social behaviour' (Blaikie 2000, p12). Positivists view the world as having an external reality, separate from any of the descriptions that they might have of it. Therefore, for positivists the starting point is always a foundational description of what this reality 'out there' is, whether in experiential or material terms (Gergen, 1994). Furthermore, realists share "the belief that the natural sciences and the social sciences can and should apply the same kinds of approach to the collection of data and to explanation" (Bryman & Bell, 2003, p28). This implies that realists believe that by adopting specific research methods it is possible to make rational and universal claims by generalising from the data generated.

At the opposite end of the continuum, one finds the constructivist paradigm, which 'entails the assumption that social reality is produced and reproduced by social actors; it is a pre-interpreted, inter-subjective world of cultural objects, meanings and social institutions. A consequence of this position is that in any social situation there may be multiple realities' (Blaikie, 1993). It therefore treats knowledge as situated, contingent, accomplished for settings and institutional occasions (Potter, 1998). In recent years, the term has also come to include the notion that researcher's own accounts of the social world should be seen as constructions. In other words, the researcher always presents a specific version of social reality, rather than one that can be regarded as definitive (Bryman & Bell, 2003).

The third paradigm that will be taken into consideration is critical realism, which straddles the other two paradigms discussed above, "sharing a 'foundationalist' ontology with positivism and allowing for interpretation in research" (Grix, 2004, p86). Critical realism, among whose leading proponents are Bhaskar (1975, 1989); Ham and Madden,(1975), recognises "that knowledge of the real cannot escape the limitations of our particular social

context, but nevertheless holds it a mistake to abandon the task of searching for traces of the real in the manifestations which compose the actual world as we conceive it" (Brown, Pujol, Curt, 1998, p32). Bhaskar's (1978) ontological 'map' distinguishes between three types of domains that stratify reality: the empirical, the actual and the real. The empirical domain consists of those experiences that can be observed directly. It is separated from the actual domain where events happen whether they can be observed or not. The premise underpinning this domain implies that what happens in the world is not the same as that which is observed. In the real domain there are processes that can produce events in the world, that which metaphorically can be called mechanisms (or causal powers). The observation of the third domain of reality, the "deep dimension where generative mechanisms are to be found, is thus what distinguishes critical realism from other forms of realism (that is to say philosophical positions holding that things have an objective existence" (Danermark et al., 2002).

Table 1.0 - Basic beliefs of Inquiry paradigms

	Positivist	Critical Realism	Interpretative
Ontology	External - Realist	External-realist or Real but inter-relativist subjectively	Internal - idealist
Epistemology	Objectivist, dualist	Subjectivist, Interactive	Subjectivist, Interactive
Methodology	Nomothetic experimental, manipulative	Ideographic participative transformative	Ideographic, , hermeneutical, dialectical

Interests	Prediction and control (technical)	Emancipation (Criticism and liberation)	Understanding and interpretation (Practical)

Adapted from Sparkes (1992, p21)

According to Marsh and Smith, (2002), a critical realist ontology provides the researcher with the following four specific philosophical assumptions which will be discussed in light of this research study:

i. The world exists independently of our knowledge of it

ii. There are deep structures that cannot be directly observed, but which can be understood or conceptualised via theorisation and observations at different strata of reality: through retroductive inference

iii. Social structures and actors exert causal power; however, structures do not determine outcomes, rather they constrain and facilitate actions and may be modified by individual action

iv. People's discursive knowledge about 'reality' (which exists independently of that knowledge) may affect the outcomes of social interaction.

Critical realists believe that there are underlying structures that exist that might not be directly observable through empirical research, but which are discernible by their effects. It is an implicit understanding. However, there is a degree of superficial activity which sheds light on these structures. This does not necessarily occur at a conscious level and therefore some agents might not be aware of being, or do not claim to be, part of an epistemic community.

In the context of this research such structures could be taken to be the football associations and development structures in place at a national level, which could be both facilitating and for constraining agents or their actions, in this case female player's activities (Williams

2013)**.** Another example in which a critical realist analysis of player accounts will allow inference to the actual and the real domains is presented in Table 2.2 below, where a concrete example has been extracted from the interviews. One of the English players had noted how there is a discrepancy in the treatment between male and female players within football and their football association/club, assigning a professional status to the male player who can sign professional contracts and treating the females as semi-professional players. Thus as a female player she has to act (normally unconsciously) in ways which differ from male players, having to find alternative means to support herself so here we can see how gender structures in our societies have real consequences.

Table 1.1 - A critical realist ontological map

Dimensions of reality		Examples
Empirical	player interview	*you don't earn a lot of money, you do sacrifice a lot and I now probably what am I going to do after I retire, how much security will I have because I don't really have, apart from within the game, a lot to fall back on because I didn't go to university, yes I know I can always do it but supporting yourself through that is really tough. Frankie.*
Actual	Perceptions of the actual	Even if not perceived there are actual consequences of· being a player, a parent, a female athlete
Real	Can generate real causes	Gender structures, or institutional structures in

		football associations/clubs can have 'real' effects

However, to clarify these philosophical assumptions an elaboration on the terms of structure and agency will be provided as they are deemed critical concepts underpinning all social scientific research (Cruickshank, 2003).

2.4 Epistemology

Epistemology is concerned with how we know the world. It attempts to provide answers to questions such as how and what can we investigate about social reality? As Willig, argues "this involves thinking about the nature of knowledge itself, about its scope and about the validity and reliability of claims to knowledge" (Willig, 2001; p51).

Critical realists are willing to accept that scientific inquiry operates in a climate of 'epistemic relativism' in which knowledge is always conditional, subject to discussion (Bhaskar, 1986; Collier, 1994). In accordance with a critical realist epistemology the research is more concerned with constructing a narrative than discovering the 'truth' (Cruickshank, 2003). It is about the players' version/s of the truth. The researcher and player jointly construct a 'story' about the player's perceptions of reality. By using the interviewing method to capture life stories the objective is more to understand the reality constructed by the interviewees rather than discovering or investigating the truth about this reality. As Cruickshank, (2003), continues to argue another aspect to take into consideration with this research is that in constructing a narrative about the perceptions of reality of these individuals, the social origin of the researcher will influence to a certain degree the outcome of such an interaction. Subjective epistemology in this research context was taken to imply that the researcher and respondent co-create understandings and therefore the narrative that gets co-constructed is "as much about the researcher's biography as the people studied" (Cruickshank,2003).

As will be discussed in this chapter, the level of interaction between myself and the players during the interview process was a key aspect that characterised the empirical stage of this research study. In conclusion, the ontological and epistemological assumptions in relation to adopting a narrative approach to life-stories (where reality was being co-constructed) was taken to reflect the type of resources these participants had available including' linguistic, epistemic and material (economic / institutional). As Cohen, (1989), argued 'resources provide agents who have access to them with a range of facilities to achieve outcomes', and therefore through this research process I was able to identify the type of resources that were available to these players to manage their dual career successfully. A player might of course make unconscious use of resources. I may borrow money, for example, because lenders know I have affluent relatives. I may be unconscious of the nature of this resource and not therefore report it at interview. I may assume all players would have the same facility to borrow. However, the interview provides a means to reflect on one's own situation, and the structures and actions which constitute one's own world.

Therefore, it was concluded that adopting a qualitative research strategy and specifically the life-story method as advocated for example by McGillvray and McIntosh, (2006), Gearing (1999); Sparkes and Smith, (2002); and Roderick, (2006), would provide an effective approach as it allowed myself as the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the lives of the players interviewed. These life stories do not however stand on their own and a context of how they 'sit' within the human world and the social reality characterising it is critical to understand what kinds of knowledge are attainable through this research process.

2.5 What is a life story?

A life story is an effective method used for obtaining in-depth accounts about and by an individual. It allows myself as the researcher to gain a fuller understanding of the interviewees being studied and more importantly allows the latter to account for their life in the manner that they prefer. As McAdams (1990) argues, the stories that people choose to tell about themselves define who they are, shaping their identity as they go through their life experiences. One of the strengths of life story research is that it captures how people develop and change over time. As Atkinson, (1998), observes: In the telling of a life story, we get a good sense of how and why the various parts of a life are connected and what gives the person meaning in life. Perhaps more accurately I would get a good sense of how the interviewee now makes sense of the connections between the various parts of her life. One of the principal aims for conducting this study, as was discussed above, was to gain insight into how female football players portrayed their career and constructed their world-view. The study therefore took into consideration the pathways that participants had chosen to negotiate their way through their educational/vocational and football career, which opportunities they had availed themselves of, and which others they had had to forego. By engaging the players in a dialogue through life stories, I was able to trace the decision-making processes that gave meaning to the players' lives and how these decisions then affected the way these players viewed their world. Although informed by a concern with transitions, by using a non-directive form of questioning the interviews were able to encompass more elements of the participants' life over a period. There are several strengths in using such a method but perhaps the most critical to note is that it gives 'voice' to the interviewees, empowering them from the very start of the interview process, and shifted the power balance in their favour as they could take greater control of the narrative provided. As Atkinson, (1998), argues, as a way of meaning making, identifying life influences, and interpreting experiences, there may be no better method than the subjective narrative of the life story to help the researcher understand a life from the insider's point of view. As Lieblich et al. (1998, p3) observed "by studying and interpreting self-narratives, the researcher can

access not only the individual identity and its systems of meaning but also the teller's culture and social world" (Lieblich et al., 1998). Since systems of meaning that get constructed are embedded within a historical and social. world, this had immediate implications for the life-stories conducted in each of the countries/players under study. Each of these accounts had to be understood within a specific point in time, representing one of the many voices of that culture. As Crotty, (2003), has argued every human being is born in a world of meaning where 'a system of significant symbols' are inherited to be able to comprehend the social world they inhabit: When we first see the world in a meaningful fashion, we are inevitably, viewing it through lenses bestowed upon us by our culture. Our culture brings things into view for us and endows them with meaning, and by the same token leads us to ignore other things. Extending the above observation to this research study, it is possible that the way that these elite players are making sense of their world is through the values and targets that both their sporting and national culture are inculcating. For example, targets that are meaningful to elite players may be attributed to winning championships, leagues or cups which are encouraged within the sporting culture but perhaps to the detriment of other aspects in life potentially education and their family. Furthermore, although all the players interviewed inhabited the world of elite football there were still nuances that were specific to individuals, such as the opportunities available to them, the support structures available and the life stage that they were at. At a more complex level, one also had to take into consideration that there were further differences between national football cultures, which could have led to even more diverse interpretations of the same phenomena· (Crotty, 2003). Therefore, to help the reader, contextualise these life accounts better, the following chapter will provide a socio-historical outline for each of the six countries: Denmark, England, Finland, Germany, The Netherlands and Norway giving particular attention to their elite football structures and resource allocation.

2.6 Adopting a life story approach

In the socio-psychological literature, life stories are often used to trace the critical moments of a person's life, (Nesti, Littlewood, O'Halloran, Eubank and Richardson 2012). Sometimes referred to as 'career transitions' or 'status passage narrative' by Plummer (2001), for example, these life events can tell us a lot about an individual's identity and the "decision-making processes that usually take place around these 'turning points'. Such transitions can range from the conventional life events such as getting married or divorced, other significant changes such as moving to a new house, changing careers or living in a new country. The shift into new roles brings with it a shift into new identities and therefore this method has been chosen to capture both the transitions that players go through in their personal and football career and the decision-making processes that they make use of in order to cope with such critical moments.

From the players' point of view, knowing about how elite football fits within their wider picture of life course transitions is still an under-researched area (Lavallee, 2000b; Wylleman et al., 2004). Learning about major transitions such as moving from compulsory schooling to higher education or employment, leaving home to independent living, moving countries or being selected for senior teams all intersect within the same period of a footballer's life. Therefore, this research is targeted towards providing insight into these complex life experiences and seeking where possible to propose ways of facilitating these transitions for the benefit of both the footballers and the club or National team. From a policy point of view there is also a concern expressed by Douglas and Carless, (2006a) with regards to the way that elite athletes have been investigated by the research community to date. 'As a result of the research methods used and the way research findings are often represented, the experiences of athletes themselves are often missing from the research' (Douglas & Carless, 2006a). This has led to some re-direction in the type of studies that are being commissioned both by UK Sport nationally and other elite sport governing bodies globally, in line with recent policy shifts in elite sport development; that of a more athlete-centred

approach (Douglas & Carless, 2006a); (De Bosscher et al., 2006); (Thibault & Babiak, 2005). Therefore, this study focuses predominantly on the player's experiences to recapture their 'voice' and give primacy to it.

2.7 Approaches to life stories

Miller, (2000), identifies three types of approach to conducting life stories. 'Although this typology is not intended to be followed in its ideal form, it is informative and structured in a way to aid myself as the researcher to adopt a practical position in relation to the field and people under study. As Miller, (2000), reiterates; real researchers operate across the borders of the approaches and, while they may be based primarily within one approach, they will be aware of the arguments and virtues that constitute the strengths of the other schools and will utilise features of the other approaches in a pragmatic manner.

Table 1.2: Three Approaches to biographical and family history research

Realist	Neo-positivist	Narrative
Inductive	Deductive	Fluid nature of individual's standpoint actively constructed as an ongoing (situational) project
Grounded theory based upon factual empirical material	Theory testing through factual empirical material	Questions of fact take second place to understanding the individual's unique and changing perception

Reality arises from the 'respondents' perspectives Unfocused interviews	Focused interviews The most hermeneutic actor's subjective perspective as affected by social structure -the interplay between actor and structure Life history as a 'microcosm' of a 'macrocosm'	Life stories Reality structured by interplay between interviewee and interviewer in terms of representations, (semiotics) 'postmodern', 'chaotic', ethno-methodological
Saturation (multiple interviews with multiple respondents eventually reaching a point where little new is revealed by additional interviews) Life history as a 'microcosm' of a 'macrocosm'	Validity is important	Present is a lens through which past and present can be seen
Reliability is important,	The 'why?' question (e.g. why interaction proceeds as it does)	Interplay between interviewee and interviewer as a 'microcosm' of a macrocosm The 'how?' question (e.g. how is context constituted?)

(Miller, 2000)

2.8 Realist Approach

The realist approach to life stories is more concerned with uncovering structural or collective symbolic phenomena in society as Bertaux, (2005), argued. This choice of ontological assumption about social historical reality is required when adopting this approach. Similar to Grounded Theory based research, this particular method is of an inductive nature whereby multiple cases are collected and analysed in an attempt to discern common patterns emerging from the data. This process is continued until there is not any significant 'new' data emerging from the analysis of the additional life stories also known as saturation (Miller, 2000).

2.9 Neo-positivist Approach

Starting off with a concept of an objective reality, the neo-positivists share the same ontological thinking as the realists. However, their method of collecting data is largely of a deductive nature. This requires the researcher to begin with a hypothetical prediction which is then tested empirically against observed or reported phenomena. Hence, focused modes of data collection or interviewing with semi-structured schedules are used. Issues of conceptual validity are important for this approach, (Miller, 2000).

2.10 Narrative Approach

Positioned at the constructivist end of the ontological spectrum, the narrativist approach is largely concerned with the individual, the subjective meaning and the context. A particular strength of the narrative interview is that it gives the interviewee more control in shaping the agenda for the interview. In contrast to the standard interview where the researcher usually makes use of a series of pre-set questions or theories that she/he would like to explore in detail this approach gives opportunity to the participant to identify central themes or key aspects that they deem important, (Murray, 2003). The critical aspect of this approach focuses on the 'interplay between the interview partnership of interviewee and interviewer,

(Miller, 2000), and therefore finding the right balance during the interview process is perhaps the most challenging, accomplishment.

In the context of this research study, the approach to life-stories that was adopted lent itself more to the narrative approach since explained in the preceding sections the interviews were co-constructed between the myself and the players. However, as indicated above the three approaches advocated by Miller, (2000), were not designed to be exclusive and therefore there were some elements from the realist and neo-positivist perspectives incorporated.

2.11 Power relations in life-story research

There are obviously some issues to be addressed with adopting a narrative approach to life-story research because as Murray, (2003), argues if the story is in fact a co-construction between two people then it may be the case that one party exerts more influence during the interview process which can lead to the narrative being shaped in a particular way as a result of this interaction. Therefore, getting the power balance right is a continuous challenge for the narrative researcher, in order not to reinforce one dominant plot line which may have not have resonance with the other participant's world view. In the case of the interviews with the players, I believe the power balance overall was equal, I had some areas to discuss with the players, however the narrative was shaped by the players who told their stories in their own words and they told the stories their way. The only exception was with the Norwegian players who I interviewed together and their responses to any question was brief and the interview ended up being led by myself to try and elicit more response from these players. The power balance shifted to them in this sense, because they were cautious to what they answered and did not really open up. This may have been because they did not want to talk openly in front of each other or they did not feel what we were discussing was relevant to them and they did not know me and may not have trusted me.

As Murray, (2003), argues social scientists are increasingly becoming more aware of the power issues that pervade all social relationships since the work of Foucault, (1980), and therefore they must reflect on how these issues can be extended within a particular social context. He reiterates the importance of acknowledging the various power interests that are at play within each social interaction as in this case between the researcher and player and warns against the risks of reinforcing one narrative over another. Murray, (2003), also hints at the link between personal narratives and dominant social discourses that might be influencing the participants either implicitly or explicitly in viewing their world in a particular way: Societal narratives are not value-neutral but represent various power interests. The adoption of dominant narratives becomes a means of social discipline. People are constantly engaged in a process of negotiating the connection between their personal narratives and these dominant societal narratives.

Another important aspect to note is that the challenge in getting the power balance right does not stop with the data collection phase but carries on during the analysis stage of the interview as well. Thus, myself as the researcher had to ensure that some reflection on how my own personal narrative influenced the co-construction this is outlined in chapter 6. As Goodley et al.; (2004), argued the researcher has to be 'reflexive that is, sensitive to how personal biography shapes the study and systematically reflects on this throughout the study'. An elaboration of how I dealt with such issues of power in practice, both during the data collection phase and the analysis will ensue in a subsequent section of this chapter, where a detailed outline of the actual interviewing process will be provided. Truth in life story telling Some questions that have always been posed by life story telling are: how can the story be evaluated? How can we tell a 'good' story from a 'bad' one? Must they be 'true' to be of any worth? And what might 'truth' mean? Are all stories equally valid or are there important ways of distinguishing between them? (Plummer, 2001). Plummer (2001), suggests six ways on how one distinguish and evaluate a 'true story' drawing on various paradigms and approaches such as the 'correspondence theory of truth', realism,

interpretivism, narrative theory of truth, aesthetic theory of truth and the pragmatic function of life stories. Atkinson (1998), adopting the latter approach, then uses measures like internal consistency and corroboration and persuasion to ensure validity. Roos (in (Humphrey, Miller, & Zdravomyslova, 2003), adds the concepts of authenticity, context, reflexivity and referentiality in his suggestions. Plummer (2001), goes further in that he examines the possible sources of bias and presents a checklist against which the researcher can evaluate how valid his/her life documents are. The sources of bias generally lie either with: (i) the subject being interviewed, (ii) the researcher conducting the life stories, (iii) the interaction between the subject and the researcher.

2.12 Trustworthy, authenticity in narrative research

Within narrative research, researchers attempt to be trustworthy and honest. (Etherington, 2004). In my research I was concerned with the trustworthiness and authenticity of the player's accounts by presenting to what I believe was the reality of the players. Of course, I cannot know fully whether what the players recounted to me is true. Some of the players may have exaggerated their stories or poor memory may have resulted in inaccurate stories. This I had to consider, and my role of the narrative researcher was to tell their story as accurately as I could and develop their narratives. My role was to tell their stories in context and trust what they had told me even if I could not verify the truth in their stories.

Lincoln and Guba, (1985) suggest a member check to find out whether the interviews represent the 'true story' of the participant. All interviews were sent to the stakeholders/players, so they could read them and indicate that they believe what they have read was a true account of our interviews. In the first and second study's, none of the participants contacted myself to confirm the interviews were an inaccurate account of our interviews, neither did they contact me to say they were satisfied they were an accurate account.

Member checking have been criticised because the participants usually see it as written text and corrects or retails it accordingly, locating it in a different frame of reference. The researcher and the narrator have co-created the story in interaction with each other, and the written text does not wholly reflect this. (Lincoln and Guba 1985). This may be a reason why the players/stakeholder did not feel it was appropriate to make comments on the transcripts. Also, the full research account is a transformation by myself as the researcher of what I received from the players/stakeholders and may have prevented the players from recognising their own stories because of this transformation. Member checking therefore can be seen as problematic. According to Lincoln and Guba, (1989), peer debriefing is also used, and in this research my supervisors separately analysed the data (interviews) and we compared our findings, which I believe add to the trustworthiness of the research.

With regards to authenticity I believe the stories of the players/stakeholders was appropriately presented and informed consent was gained throughout this research not just at the beginning of each interview. I believe the players were empowered to tell their stories through this research because they had not had the opportunity before to tell the stories of their careers and the problems they had faced to become elite footballers. For myself as the researcher this was important, I wanted these players to help inform others of the complexities of pursuing a football career as a female and to help future players fulfil their ambition without the struggle these players have had.

2.13 Research Methods - Interviews

The CofE research was my ticket to explore what other countries were doing in their development structures. The English Football Association (The FA), gave me the contact details of key stakeholders in the European Football Association's, these people were responsible for women's football in their respective FA's. The concerns I had were, would I be able to get the stakeholders to share the information on their experiences and gain an understanding of their structures because I was an outsider from football and their country?

Interviews I believed would capture this information. All interviews took place at the football associations in each country I was on their territory so maybe they were more at ease in their own environment. At the beginning of our meeting we talked about each other's involvement in football and other sports and this maybe naively put me on what I felt on an equal footing with whom I was going to interview. Etherington, (2004), discusses reflexive interviewing can follow the usual format of the researcher asking questions that the participant answers: where it is different is that the interviewer share personal experience of the topic. Therefore, this style of interviewing created an opportunity for me to reach more deeply into the stakeholders lived experience than might have been the case had I not shared some of myself in the conversation, (Etherington, 2004). I respected their position in the organisation and I believe they respected me as a researcher who wanted to know more about their football association and that I did have an elite sport background and I knew a bit about football! All the interviews for the first study I believe the dynamics were positive and each interviewee were passionate about what we talked about. By nature, women's struggle in football was discussed and positioning of power was discussed and how women's football was treated within the organisation as a result of this. Out of the six interviewees, one was male, and he had worked with the male elite teams and was now responsible for women's football in that football association. I expected perhaps a different dynamic with him than with the women who had spoken passionately about developing women's football and their frustration to move the game forward. However, he was equally frustrated and possibly more because he had experienced male elite football.

The interviews started with an understanding of how the stakeholder became involved in football, so I understood the beginning of the story and the reasoning behind their motivation to develop women and girls football. The interviews themselves varied, with the corporate line being towed by some of the participants. Other interviewees really did say it how it was and criticised the organisation for a lack of support. However, the interviews did give a varied understanding of women's football in those organisations and strategic documents

and previous research confirmed these issues within the existing women's football structures. Interviews I believed were the appropriate way to understand how these football associations operated and where women's football was situated and what resource was available to develop the female game.

Study Two brought more challenges of trying to gain access to the players I had to wait until the world cup was over before I could access the German players and then I had to go to the clubs to interview the players. Similarly, this happened with England, the access was problematic unless I went to the clubs and then I could speak with them before training or a scheduled game. Denmark, Norway and Finland were different I went to the Algarve cup in Portugal and spoke with players in their down time within the tournament. The Netherlands I had access to the team during a friendly game with Germany.

I believed conducting interviews would gain a deeper understanding of each player. The players were put into three different categories and I wanted to hear their stories believing each individual player would have a story to tell. The age categories would help identify their transitions through their careers in accordance with the structures in place or lack of structure. This was the main reason I did not consider focus groups and in fact my earliest interviews were with the Norwegian players who did in fact ask to be interviewed together. I only managed to interview two players from Norway instead of the three as requested. This interview was difficult, the players provided short answers and it felt like they did not want to talk to me with the other player being present. This interview did not add too much to the study in terms of quality data. The other interviews which were held with individual players provided in-depth data and the interviews were in a relaxed atmosphere.

Study three involved a series of interviews with two players from study two. This took place over a five- year period which retrospectively tracked how these players transitioned through their football career. The interviews from study two were given to the players so

they could refresh their memories of what was discussed five years previously. This formed the basis of this set of interviews. The first meeting involved a recap of each player's career and what they had been doing in the five years leading up to this final study. This time the interview was more relaxed and was more like a conversation where I let each player talk about their experiences rather than ask too many questions.

More specific details on each study's interviews are recorded in chapter 3, 4 and 5.

2.14 Being the reflexive researcher: positioning myself within the research

At the beginning of this chapter I spoke about my own research journey. This process helped me understand why I became interested in transitions within female football careers and the complexities involved in females pursuing a football career. This also led me to question my position as a female researcher in a sport traditionally associated as a male sport and the inequalities that have been associated to female football over the years (Lopez, 1997; Scraton, Fasting, Pfister, & Bunuel, 1999; Williams, 2003, 2007, 2011; Fasting, 2004; Brus and Trangbaek, 2004; Pfister, 2006; Cauldwell, 2011). Previous women's football research has been gender based and feminist researchers have been concerned with power relations. Reflexity according to Etherington, (2004), is more in tune with female ways of knowing and being. Etherington, (2004,) suggests, feminists, being concerned with power relations, challenged researchers to make their values and beliefs more transparent so that readers could see how their subjective experiences influenced their interpretations. This required a shift from the objective voice of the researcher to the subjective. It was inevitable then that my own biases in relation to women's football may have impacted upon the interpretation of the data and this highlights the importance of being reflexive.

Finally, reflexivity needs also to be practised when interpreting and representing the data as my own experiences, feelings, biases, social and cultural background could influence

the way that the data is read and interpreted. To counter such biases, the data was triangulated with my research supervisors who are both male. Etherington, (2004), asserts the importance of such reflexivity as, in doing so, we can come close to the rigour that is required of good qualitative research. I personally found the interpretation of the stories the most challenging aspect of the analysis process. It was such a privilege to hear the stories of these players and I was fearful that my interpretation did not represent the angst and resilience theses players demonstrated in our meetings. However, I analysed their stories with the integrity and professionalism shown to me by these players in this research. I hope in doing so I have been able to provide honest and open interpretation of their stories and, it is because of these processes, that I believe gives degrees of authenticity to their accounts.

In this chapter I provided a detailed account of the processes and practicalities of the study. As discussed, the methodologies employed in this research is not without its challenges to ensure the stakeholders and players views are embodied in this research. However, I do see these methodologies as fitting to help me understanding how female football players navigate through a complex football career and the challenges they face along the way within their respective country. The next chapter I will present the football structures within the six countries and the background to how they evolved.

Chapter Three - Women's European Football: Structures, Organisation and Working Practices

3.0 - Study One – Aims & Literature Review

Study One incorporates the following aim:

To ascertain the organisational structures (s) that exist within women's football and how these impacts the development of women's football.

Study One aims to explore the organisational structure and culture, working mechanisms and philosophy concerning women's football development from a Pan-European perspective (Denmark, England, Finland, Germany, Norway and The Netherlands). The study allows a thorough understanding of the developmental philosophy and environment, such as the political and ideological positioning, nature and status of the women's game, which play a critical role in the player development process.

The literature review that follows firstly clarifies for the reader how women's football evolved within football associations and the difficulties in integrating women's football within so called male organisations, outlining the positioning of power in organisations. The review then explores how organisations are structured and what strategies are in place to develop the women's game. This will allow the reader to understand the difficulties female players faced within the game and how it has developed over the last 15 years.

3.1 Evolution of women's football organisations

To fully understand the culture and evolution of women's football and how it is organised within the respective football associations a brief history will follow to allow the reader to appreciate the context of women's positioning within football associations.

Germany, Norway, Denmark and England have had a history with women's football dating back to the early 1900s. There is a lack of literature depicting the history of women's football

in Holland and Finland before the 1970s. However, this long establishment of women's football in Europe has seen many obstacles. The main obstacle being the fact that the women's game has to compete with the male game. Pfister, (2003); Williams, (2003, 2007); Fasting, (2004); Brus and Trangbaek, (2004), have highlighted the struggle women faced to play football. Football was the preserve of men all over the world. Women entering this male-dominated world had to challenge the norms regarding a 'real' women's sport, (Brus and Trangbaek, 2004). Football belonged to those sports that according to popular belief, was not suited to the female disposition, and therefore should be left to the male of the species, (Pfister, 2003).

Another obstacle was the ban imposed by the Football Associations on women playing on FA affiliated grounds. This therefore put a ban on women playing regularly. In England this ban was implemented in 1921. Over 34 years later the Royal Dutch football association (KNVB) imposed a ban on women playing on affiliated grounds in 1954 and the German Deutscher Fußball Bund (DFB) did the same in 1955. It was not until the 1970s that a new women's football movement began to develop world- wide, (Williams, 2007). This coincided with Germany and England lifting the ban in 1970. The difference resulting in this was that the English FA had its ban in place for almost 50 years, whereas Germany for a shorter period of 15 years, (Pfister, 2003). This lengthy ban by English Football Association has been attributed to the slow development of women's football in England during this period in comparison with its European counterparts, (Williams, 2003).

Besides the lengths of these bans in the European countries, much more crucial according to Fasting, (2004); Pfister, (2006), and Williams, (2011), was that the organisation's responsible for the women's game, were separate to the male game in all cases. The women's separate Football Association could move the game in a certain direction but came into conflict with the male equivalent if they wanted to develop the game with the men's game being the priority and very little resource being allocated to the female game in terms

of facilities, and staff. Some women did not want to integrate their organisation into the male dominated football organisation because they felt they would lose their control and it was better to compete against than join. However, in European countries such as Germany, Norway, Denmark, Finland, and the Netherlands the game was fully integrated into their National Association in the 1970s after UEFA recommended in 1971 that National Associations should take control of the women's game in order ...."to embrace the spirit of the request and truly develop the sport." (Lopez, 1997). This directive from UEFA led football associations to include women into the game, however there were challenges in terms of resources, status within the organisation and appropriate competitions and leagues for the women to play in. (Fasting,2004; Gartner,2005; Pfister,2006; Williams 2011).

Before this recommendation was made Germany had already made similar decisions in 1971 and Norway in 1976. Interesting to note that according to Gartner, (2005), those nations which did fully integrate women's football into the main body of their FA back in the 70s, are now among the world leaders. In contrast the English FA only, integrated women's football in 1993 when the Women's Football Association (WFA) was almost forced to surrender through pressure from UEFA to integrate in line with other European countries. Williams, (2003), states the takeover highlighted many conflicting interests, those in the WFA did not want to let go of something they helped build and some representatives of the FA were against the development of the women's game. It was going to be hard for the game to develop in such circumstances.

This shift in the status of the game globally resulted in a number of key developments, for example, it experienced a better integration of women's football into the football family and the introduction of European championships and a world cup. Countries introduced domestic leagues and a structure was now in place for women's football to flourish in terms of participation figures, exposure to the media, and an increasing profile of women's football. (Lopez, 1997; Fasting, 2004; Pfister, 2006; Williams, 2007). This integration of women's

football into the FA's did however bring new challenges. Strategies and policies were dominated by the people who controlled the organisation which were mainly males. England is a classic example of this, the English FA had limited access to female administrators and the decision-making body the FA main board had 12 members, none were female. However, a Women's committee was set up and only one out of the nine members was female. The head of football development at the time had limited power and no power over the decisions regarding women's football. (Gartner, 2005). Therefore, even though women's football had become integrated they were in no better situation than before with no control over how the female game was going to develop within the organisation. Lopez, (1997) highlights this point and argues the decisions had to be agreed by male line managers and due to the complex structure of the FA the majority of decisions were made by a small number of FA senior male individuals who have little experience and hardly any knowledge of the game. Williams, (2003) agrees that there is a lack of women and ex -players in decision making roles at the top level in their sport and argues the few women who are afforded senior positions actually end up supporting the system that excludes the many by adopting the organisational culture they were working in. However, this has changed in some countries. Norway and Germany for example are nations where former women footballers have occupied important national and international positions. As a result, decisions were taken in their respective football organisation on a basis of an understanding of women's football and not in order to construct a mere replica of men's football, (Lopez, 1997). These progressive nations saw early success in European competitions and still dominate to this day.

Norway was the first nation to include females in their organisational structure. The first key development was to appoint a female member to the Norwegian FA executive board, Elle Wilee, in 1985. Since 1992 three out of eight board members have been female. One of the most influential people in this process was Karen Espulund who became Vice President of the Norwegian FA in 1996, taking on the main responsibility for the development of women's

and men's football. In 1999 she became the first female secretary general of the NFA. She has been the major force in the development of the domestic and international football and is also a member of the UEFA women's football committee. (Gardner, 2005). Espulund, in a speech in 1995, stressed the fact only a continuity of personnel within bureaucracies would eventually lead to total female integration into the Norwegian FA including identical rules and regulations for males and females. This would help create appropriate role models for women. The integration of women's football in Norway into the FA shows Norway to be the most progressive female football country in Europe. Women's football in Norway according to Fasting, (2004), certainly enjoys parity of status and resources.

The evolution of women's football has evidenced how barriers such as the ban excluding women playing on FA affiliated football grounds impeded the development of women's football in Europe and the integration of the female game in the football organisation in the 1970's in most cases helped develop a structure. In the case of Denmark, it was not until the 1990s that the finances became available from the Dansk Boldspil-Union (DBU) to develop women's football in Denmark at grassroots and the elite level. The DBU recognised the stagnation in the membership of the men's football clubs and therefore increased the value of women's football. Brus and Trangbaek, (2004) argue the DBUs unwillingness to invest in a women's football elite in Denmark, is the latest example of women's football being an accepted, but still not a respected, sport for women. In England it took until 2000 and the introduction of Sport England's active sport funding which specifically targeted women and girls football and put for the first time a structure in place for women and girl's football to develop. This has seen its rewards by winning junior European Championships, and the recent success of the senior team.

3.2 Power Struggle/Hegemony in sport organisations

To gain further understanding of how women's football has been positioned within football organisations it is pertinent to assess how sports organisations use power to pursue their own sectional interests at the expense of other social groups (Jarvie, 2006). Burton, (2015), argues it is important to situate sport as a gendered space and identifies that organisations allows sport to be masculine. Anderson, (2009), confirms this notion and argues that sport actively constructs boys and men to exhibit, value and reproduce traditional notions of masculinity and that sport serves as a social institution organised around certain forms of masculinity. This culture becomes the norm and is accepted, while denigrating others. Sport further operates as a space to define and reproduce hegemonic masculinity, through allowing sport to adopt practices that incorporates sport leadership in organisations to become masculine. Shaw and Frisby, (2006), note the importance of recognising that gender not only shapes identities but also operates an axis of power, playing an influential role in interactions, structures and processes of sport organisations.

Outlined previously, women's football was banned by the European football nations in the interest of the male game. It is not, however just football that has seen an under representation of females in positions of power within sport organisations. White and Brackenbridge, (1985), evidenced that women had little influence at the top level of sports management and administration even in traditional female sports such as hockey. In 2003, a UK sport strategy document found that women are under-represented in the leadership and decision making of all sport and sport-related organisations (1994 principle 6).

Acosta and Carpenter, (2004), found that men dominate positions in sport organisations in the United States of America (U.S) and internationally. Women hold fewer than 25% of senior leadership roles across all U.S. professional sports leagues. Outside of the U.S. women are less likely to hold leadership positions in sport organisations, including volunteer and professional level organisations (Claringbould and Knoppers, 2008). International

working group on women and sport 2012) Burton, (2015), highlighted that these statistics reinforce that the organisational demography of leadership positions in sport organisations is skewed to male leaders which serves to reinforce the notion of masculinity and masculine leadership as the norm in sport.

White and Kay, (2006), argue the importance of female role models and suggest they are vital for younger women and girls to have such role models so they can aspire to be in top leadership roles in sport organisations. The continued absence from positions of power only serves to reinforce gender stereotypes to aspiring female sport leaders. Furthermore, White and Kay, offer the argument that a female perspective in management and decision-making is not only more democratic but allows different skills and experience to be brought to the process of sport. (Hall et al, 1989; Cohen, 1993; and Hargreaves, 1994), have suggested that the power structures of many sports are heavily weighted in favour of men and the most educational and amateur sport systems continue to exclude women from positions of power and influence due to the closed nature of the organisational culture within these organisations. (Birrell and Theberge, 1994).

Burton, (2015), argues this hegemonic masculinity serves as an operating principle within sports organisations that restricts women's access to leadership positions within sport. In this sense hegemonic masculinity can be associated with men's dominant position in the organization and this justifies the subordination of women, within the organisation This has been supported by Weisnant, Pederson and Obenour, (2002), who examined the influence of hegemonic masculinity on the rate of advancement of women and men to senior leadership positions in the US collegiate system. Their findings support the influence of hegemonic masculinity as men maintain control of athletic director positions at the highest level of intercollegiate sport and have higher rates of organisational success at this level compared to women.

White and Kay, (2003), extended the work of Brackenbridge and White, (1985), and highlighted that this lack of female representation in organisations had improved with females holding senior positions in national sport organisations, and the number of women in position of influence on committees, councils and boards had risen significantly with the exception of rugby and football. Although this finding is not surprising that women play a small part in the governance of football, their token presence itself a direct result of the recent growth and popularity of women's football. However White and Kay, (2003), argue that their influence will continue to be marginal within football organisations. This was evidenced further in White and Kay's study. They argue the age of an organisation influences the demographics of the organisation with regards to male and female representation. The FA and Rugby Football Union are long established sports organisation which have had primarily men governing the structure, therefore, to allow women to enter this is challenging the organisational culture which has been adopted for many years.

The noticeable improvements in female representation White and Kay found were in traditional female sports such as hockey and netball and in new organisations that were established in the last 10 years. They argue, however, decision making and influence on resources were still in the favour of male counterparts who are in the power positions within organisations, Shaw and Frisby, (2006), noted the importance of examining power and how power influences the experiences of women in sport organisations. Ely and Padavic, (2007), indicated that power is linked to gender within organisations in at least three different ways, first, power connects to gender in the structure of organisations, as men who are overrepresented in higher status jobs have higher pay and more status within organisations. In addition, power is demonstrated through social practices that perceive men as powerful and women as compliant, and therefore positions and tasks are constructed to favour men, forming organisational cultures and practices. The organisational culture dominates how power can be used in the process of gender identity formation within the organisations such

that external forces of power endorse particular meanings of gender and internal pressures. The following section will add context to the structure and culture of football organisations and the power struggle female administrators face dependent where they are situated within the organisation.

3.3 Structure and Organisation

To gain a greater understanding of how women's football is located within a nation's football governing body and how the structures operate, it is useful to adopt an existing framework to analyse the significance of the organisation arrangements (structure) in the development of women's football in each country. According to Relvas, Littlewood, Gilborne, Nesti and Richardson, (2010), it is not easy to define, in depth, a football association's structure and/or organization. Similarly, a review of the management literature indicates a lack of a clear organisational understanding or definition. However, Daft, (1997), attempts to define organisational structure as a framework in which the organisation defines how tasks are divided, resources are deployed, and departments are co-ordinated. Hinnings, Thibault, Slack, Kikulis, (1996), specifically relate to sports organisations and suggests considering an organisational structure in terms of roles and responsibilities, values and how they are related. For this study it is appropriate to understand how organizations are structured and how they operate to add context to where women's football is situated within the organization and how the organization makes decisions on the allocation of resources to specific areas within an organization.

A review of management studies (Slack and Hinnings, 1992; Theodoraki and Henry, 1994; Hinnnigs, Thibault, Slack, Kikulis, 1996; Kikulis, 2000; Hoyle and Cuskelly, 2003; Slack, 2006; Gammelsæter, 2008; Gammelsæter and Jakobsen, 2008; Taylor and O'Sullivan, 2009), has revealed that Mintzberg's, (1979), 'structuring of organisations' is still the most appropriate framework aligned to this research. Slack and Parent, (2006), argue it is one of the most sophisticated and frequently used of all organisational typologies. Mintzberg's

work highlights the ideal organistional structure (although not necessarily aligned with sport organisations) and proposes five designs (simple structure, machine bureaucracy, professional bureaucracy, divisionalised form and adhocracy). Mintzberg, argued that there are five parts of an organisation and five methods by which co-ordination is achieved and identifies five key organisation areas, namely, the operating core; strategic apex; middle line; technostrutcture; and support staff as illustrated in the figure 2.1.
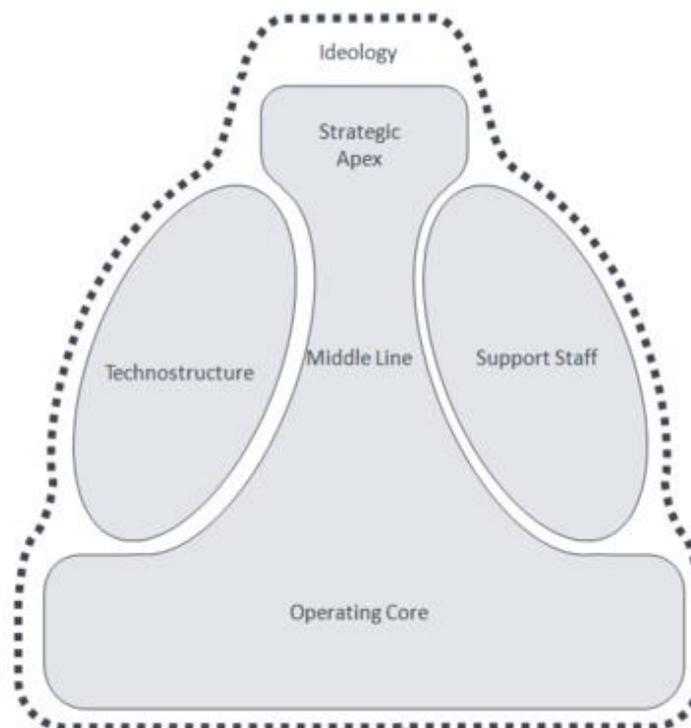
Figure 2.1 Represents Mintberg's Five Basic Parts of the Organisation (Machine bureaucracy) p5

Mintzberg, believed that the work within these five key organisational areas was based around one or more of five mechanisms namely, mutual adjustment; direct supervision; standardization of work processes; standardization of outputs; and standardization of skills. Accordingly, it appears that the stability and effectiveness of these organisations was based

on notions of order, coherence, and consistency. Organisational structure therefore can be defined as the 'manner in which the tasks of a sport organisation are broken down and allocated to employees or volunteers, the reporting relationships among these role holders, and the co-ordinating and controlling mechanisms used within the sport organisation' (Mintzberg, 1979, p.15). This definition will be explored further in the context of football associations in section 2.4.

Sports organisations such as National governing bodies can be applied to Mintzberg's machine bureaucracy design. According to Guttman, (1978), many major governing bodies of sport exhibit a number of these characteristics, which has been supported by the work of (Slack and Hinnings, 1992; Theodoraki and Henry, 1994; Hoyle and Cuskelly, 2003; Taylor and O'Sullivan, 2009). (Figure 2.1)

Mintzberg, (1979), Slack, (2006), and Rollison, (2002), each describe organisations as having different levels of operation (i.e., tiers) (normally) in a hierarchical structure. According to Rollison, (2002), the higher up the organisation the greater is the responsibility for outcome. Such an empowerment hierarchy affects the status and location within the organisation. Notably, the higher up in the organisational chart the position, then the greater influence that person has in the decision-making process (Mintzberg, 1979; Rollison, 2002). Mintzberg (1979), states that the strategic apex is charged with ensuring that the organisation serves its mission in an effective way, and that it serves the needs of the people who control or otherwise have power over the organisation. This role will be discussed later in the chapter and how it has influenced the development of women's football in the football associations within Europe.

3.4 Structure of each country's Football Association

The following section will provide an overview of the structure of six European football associations/federations, (Denmark, England, Finland, Germany, Norway and The

Netherlands), to give a background to each football organisation and how it is structured and how it operates.

The Danish Football Association (*Dansk Boldspil-Union;* DBU) was founded in 1889. It operates with a board of directors and an executive committee. The board/council is the representative body which has all member clubs are a member. The executive committee is involved with the daily operations of the organisation and is represented in the figure 2.2.
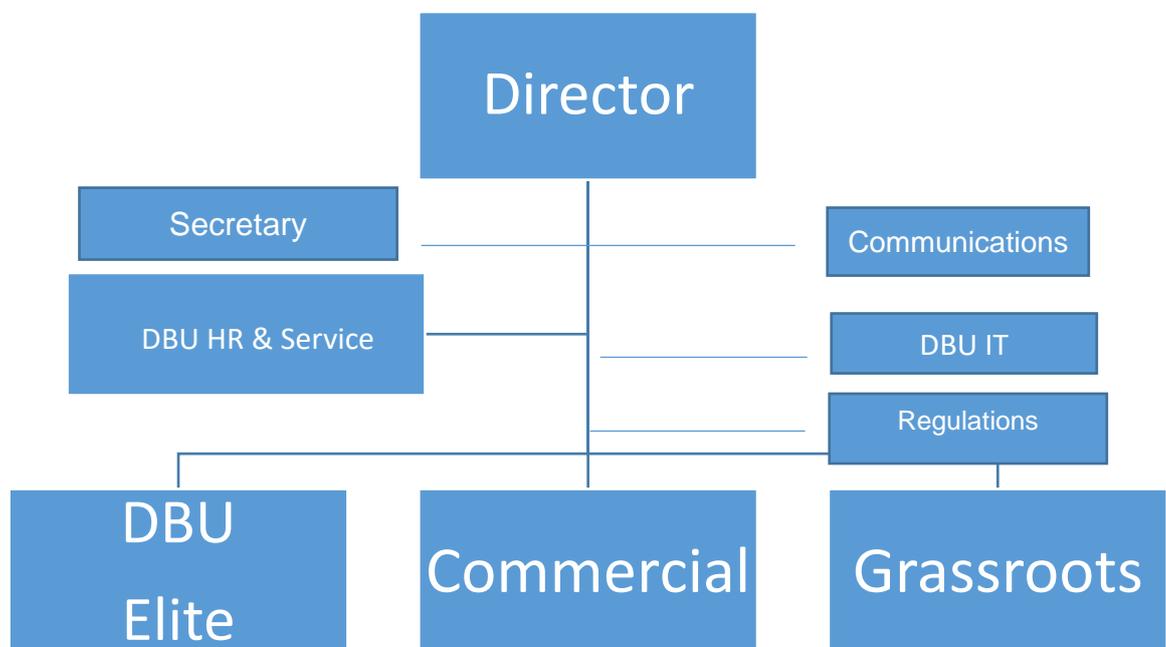
Figure 2.2 The Danish Football Association (*Dansk Boldspil-Union;* DBU) organisational chart, (2009).

The English football association was founded in 1863 and is the oldest football association in the world. The English FA has The FA Board, and FA committees. This set of committees,

govern, all areas of football in England. The FA council, which all clubs have representation on and the FA management is the operational part of the organisation with a CEO and 10 directors are responsible for areas such as Human resources, strategy, finance and Participation and development this structure is represented in figure 2.3.

THE FA DIVISIONS

Figure 2.3 The English FA Management structure. The FA (2009).

The Football Association of Finland was founded in 1907. An executive committee overseas the organisation, headed by the President and the association has an administrative body, like Norway with a General secretary and directors for finance, marketing and communications, which are the operational part of the organisation.

The German Football Association (*Deutscher Fußball-Bund*; DFB) was founded in 1900. It consists of a presidential board with 17 members on the board. The board is elected by the

local associations. The vice presidents have responsibility for areas such as League operations and football development, grassroots football, women and girls football, referees and qualification. (DFB 2009).

The Football Association of Norway (NFF) was founded in 1902. It organises football with an executive committee overseen by the president of the association and the operational function of the association is through the administrative body led by the General Secretary.
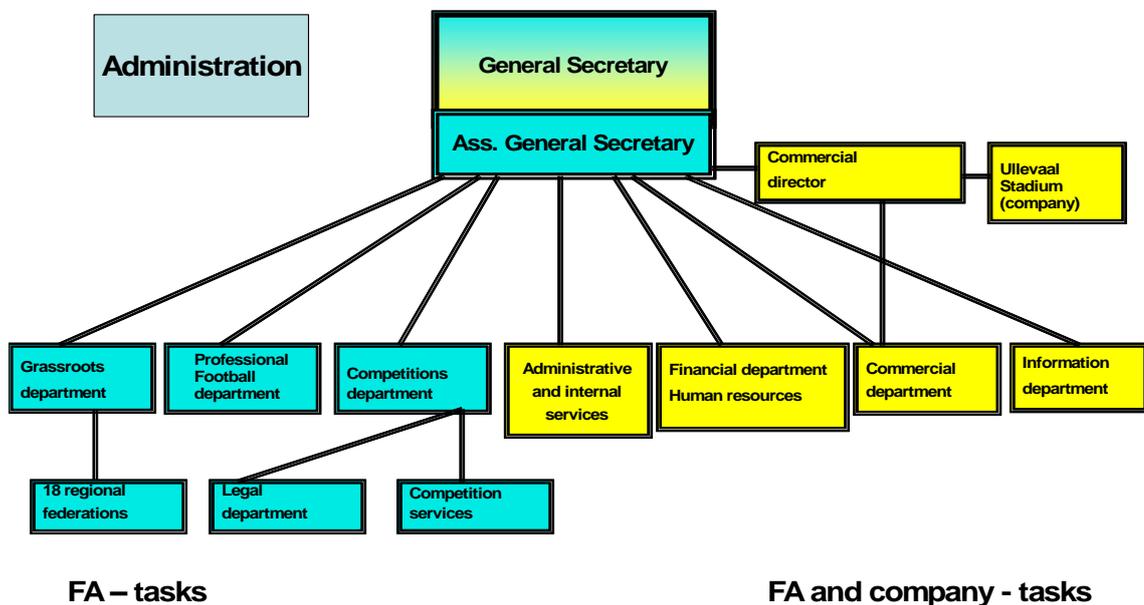
Figure 2.4. The Football Association of Norway administrative body structure (NFF 2009)

Royal Dutch Football Association (KNVB) was founded in 1889. The association has two structures, a professional structure and an amateur structure. The Federal President, General secretary and technical director are the management of the organisation and the organisation is then split into the two structures, one for the professional game which has three directors; a general director, a commercial director, and a financial director. Further

to this, there was a director for the amateur game with a structure which consists of 2 directors the general director and operations director. (KNVB 2009).

The six associations have commonalities with a hierarchical structure which aligns to Mintzberg's (1979), 'The structuring of organisations'' model. All the football associations are led by a President The president in most cases is responsible for overseeing the FA board and does not have responsibility for the day to day running of the organization. This day to day role is fulfilled by the CEO, or General secretary/director. The Royal Dutch Football Association, (KNVB), is the only football association that separates it's professional and amateur responsibilities, whereas the other organisations integrate both these areas.

With regards to women's football, as earlier highlighted the women's game became fully integrated within the football associations after UEFA directed that the football associations should take control of the women's game (Lopez, 1997). The only football association that singles out women's football through their structures is Germany who has a vice president responsible for women and girls football. With the other football associations, it is difficult to specifically find where women and girls football is situated. This will be further explored in later in the chapter.

3.5 Women and girls football development Strategies/Policies

Within each football association a strategy has been developed and this incorporates how the organisation aims to develop women and girls football within their respective country. These development strategies have incorporated and developed from the objectives laid out by FIFA. These are: To ensure that every girl and woman who wants to play football has the opportunity to do so. To help member associations to overcome the main challenges of developing women's football. To promote female opportunities, both on and off the pitch. To involve more former female players. To have more quality top-level female coaches. To help build sustainable (professional) national and regional women's football competitions at various levels. To constantly improve the quality, the organisation and the expansion of

FIFA women's football competitions. To encourage the promotion and marketing of women's football at all levels to grow participation, build the audience and target potential partners. These are the basis of each football development strategy produced by the countries in this study. (FIFA 2010).

Denmark has launched vision 2015 and will allocate 18.5 million kroner per year (£2.2 million) in the next five years to launch a number of initiatives to strengthen girls' and women's football. They aim to develop female football talent and strengthen elite football in Denmark and create a good framework for all girls and women who want to play football at all levels and ambitions. DBU recognizes the need that the elite structure cannot be created without increasing participation, this is, just as important than concentrating on developing only the talented players. (DBU 2010).

England's strategy 2008-12 Championing Growth and Excellence: The FA plan for women's football in England. Introduces five elements that will combine to deliver The FA's plans for women's football over five years: These are:

Create an Elite Performance Unit. Deliver a new commercial strategy. Develop The FA Women's Super League. Grow participation. Grow the fanbase. This has succeeded their previous strategy.

The FA will invest £3.5 million into women's football in England over the next four years to deliver the Elite Performance Unit and the The FA WSL. (The FA 2010).

Finland launched their women and girls football strategy in 2001 and called it F.U.N. It targets three areas "Futa, Unelmoi, Nauti" (Play Football, Dream, Enjoy). Its objectives are to increase the number of women and girl's playing football 10% a year. To increase by 20% more clubs organising girls and women's football. To improve the image of the game. In 2007 two further objectives were added to promote school football and to support women to become more active in club decision making. (Palloiitto 2009).

Germany introduced their women and girls football strategy in 2004 I'm playing football what about you? (Ich spiele FuBball und Du?). Its objectives were to increase the number of female member/teams. To create playing opportunities for girls in different age groups and standards of performance. Build up a wide range of female players (grassroots) to have a good base for talent systems/selecting teams. To stay as the number one sport for females. Develop and strengthen structures in girls' football at the basis (in districts and clubs). (DFB 2010).

Norway's objectives for women and girl's football are to create interest by inviting more girls to the football clubs, through schools. Introduce separate girl's teams from the age of 6 years. To have more experienced coaches and administrators involved in the game. Improve attitudes towards girl's football. Cooperate with other clubs. Co-operate with schools/institutions. Increase the capacity of club facilities and look at developing all types of pitches (grass and artificial turf). (NFF 2010).

The Netherlands strategy has outlined four key objectives. To increase the participation and retention of women and girl's players. To develop a comprehensive club and coaching structure. To increase the number and standard of playing facilities. To expand the Eredivise Semi- professional league from seven teams to ten teams. (KNVB 2010).

The objectives outlined in the six countries football strategies for women and girls football, have common objectives, primarily to increase participation. This follows generic sport development strategies adopting the model of sports development continuum to create an appropriate environment to encourage more participants and to develop elite players. Figure 2.5 illustrates this concept.
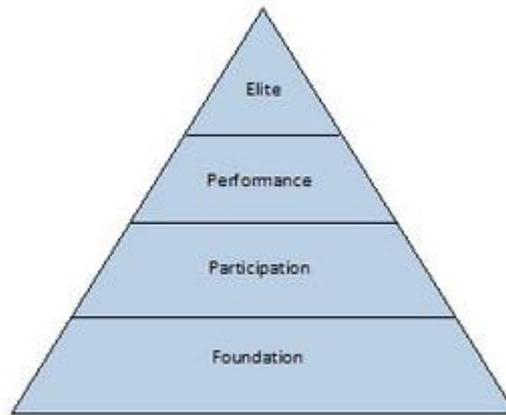
Figure 2.5 Sports Development continuum model adapted from Eady (1993)

This model was originally adopted by the UK in the late 1980's. (Houlihan and White, 2002). This model has drawn contention due to the need to work at both grassroots level and elite levels. Disagreements over where the focus should be and disputes about the importance of each area has bedeviled the strategies of football organisations. (Hylton, 2005). Criticism of this model is based on the hierarchical nature of the model giving more importance to the elite level and less emphasis on the foundations and grass roots levels. However, football associations have identified that this area is equally important. Nonetheless, the continuum model has provided organisations with a logical coherent model for their strategies which had not been available previously to them and developed coherent player pathways to develop more participants in the game and to increase the talent pool to develop more elite players. (Hylton, 2005; Houilihan and White, 2006). The football associations have adopted this model and adapted it to their women and girl's strategy, Figure 2.6

Figure 2.6 England FA Talent pathway model

This section aimed to set the context of how women's football has evolved and the challenges that were faced to move the development of the game forward. The literature further added insight into how organisations are structured and how this can be applied to football organisations, to explain the challenges of women's football in their respective football associations. Does women's football carry status within the organization? Does the status and location of women's football in the organisation have an effect on the resources allocated to women and girls football? Subsequently, does the allocation of resources affect the development strategies and policies for women and girl's football to achieve their aims? The following study, aims, to ascertain the organisational structures(s) that exist within women's football and how these impacts the development of women's football.

Methodology – Interviews

Chapter two has provided a rationale to why interviews were used within this research. The following will provide more detail on the how the sample was selected and how the interviews were constructed.

3.6 Sample selection and composition

The top ten ranked European countries for women's football (FIFA 2010), were contacted at the time of this study, to participate in this research. Denmark, England, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands and Norway agreed to participate.

The following section offers a brief background of each country's emergence, history and positioning within women's European football. The relevant themes emerging from the content analysis of the data and the examination of the secondary data collated via the strategic documents are then presented.

 Germany are the current European Champions. They have won the UEFA European championship a record eight times (1989, 1991, 1995, 1997, 2001, 2005, 2009 and 2013), the FIFA world cup twice (2003 and 2007) and are currently ranked number two in the world.

Norway is the veterans of European women's football, winning the European championship in 1987 and 1993 and the women's World cup in 1995. They are currently ranked number 11 in the world.

Denmark have been semi-finalists in the European championships in 1984,1991, 1993, 2001, 2013, and are currently ranked 15th in the world.

England reached the final of the first European Championships in 1984. More recently they contested the 2009 European Championships Final and reached the quarter final of the World cup in 2007, 2011 and 2015 England beat Germany to finish 3rd in the world cup. They are currently ranked number five in the world.

The Netherlands and Finland both reached the quarter final stages of the 2009 European Championship finals. Finland are ranked 28th in the world and the Netherlands are 12thin the FIFA/Coca Cola Women's world rankings (FIFA 2010).

The Football associations were written to and asked if the person responsible for women and girls' football development from each of these six associations could be interviewed. Permission was granted by each football association and the interviews took place at the respective country's football association. Interviews were semi-structured in nature and followed a series of phases and themes (see Table 1).

3.7 Ethics

Prior to the data collection ethical consent was sought and granted by Liverpool John Moores University's ethics board. Prior to each interview, each participant signed consent forms and were given the opportunity to read a participant information sheet about the study (see appendix1).

3.8 Construction of the Interviews

Holloway, (1997), defines a qualitative interview is a conversation with a purpose in which the interviewer aims to obtain the perspective; feelings and perceptions on a given topic from the participant in the research. This I felt was the most appropriate way to understand how women's football operated within each organisation. Semi structured interviews, using a pre-planned interview guide helped direct me to discuss relevant topics with the stakeholders. It relied on predominantly open-ended questions to allow the stakeholder to share their experiences and information about women's football. There is a relatively tight structure allowing to collect important information about the topic being addressed, while giving the participants the opportunity to report on their own thoughts and feelings. (Sparkes and Smith, 2014).

While qualitative researchers have adopted varying approaches when designing an interview, the general consensus is that the authors offer some evidence of structure (Arnis,

2006). Table 1, summarises the content and structure of the interview schedule while the complete interview schedule can be seen in Appendix 3.

The interview schedule was deductively developed in accordance with the themes drawn from previous literature, (Slack and Hinnings, 1992; Theodoraki and Henry, 1994; Hinnnigs, Thibault, Slack, Kikulis, 1996; Kikulis, 2000; Hoyle and Cuskelly, 2003; Slack, 2006; Gammelsæter, 2008, Taylor and O'Sullivan, 2009; Gammelsæter, & Jakobsen, 2008; Relvas, Littlewood, Nesti, Gilbourne, and Richardson, 2010). Each association provided the researcher with a copy of their strategy for women and girls' football for information.

Table 2.1. Interview Phases Study One

1. Structure of Organisation – Aim to ascertain the working mechanisms of the organisations and to clarify the role the organisation has in developing football development working practices (Slack and Hinnings, 1992;Theodoraki and Henry, 1994; Hinnnigs, Thibault, Slack, Kikulis, 1996; Kikulis, 2000; Hoyle and Cuskelly, 2003; Slack, 2006; and Gammelsæter, 2008, Taylor and O'Sullivan, 2009).
2. Philosophy of the organisation – Aim to explore whether the philosophy of the football organisation and the key personnel is the same/similar or whether there are conflicting roles. (Maguire and Pearton, 2000; Gammelsæter, & Jakobsen, 2008; Relvas, Littlewood, Nesti , Gilbourne, and Richardson, 2010.)
3. Political/ideological positioning –Aim to examine how the key personnel in the football organisation can influence the decision making process and how this can influence the status of women's football within the respective organisation/country. (Relvas, Littlewood, Nesti , Gilbourne, and Richardson, 2010).
4. Working Practices- Aim to clarify how women's football development operates within the organisation and any potential gaps/issues in the development structures in each country, (Relvas, Littlewood, Nesti , Gilbourne, and Richardson, 2010).

3.9 Data Analysis & Representation

When using qualitative research methods, according to Smith and Sparkes, (2014), there remains a noticeable importance to clearly outline its contents. Staying close to the data is the most powerful means of telling the story whilst interpreting data in the participant's language, rather than that of the researcher (Smith and Sparkes, 2014, Jones and Gratton,

2015). Guidelines set out by previous interpretational analysis studies with interviews (Côté et al, 1993; Miles and Huberman 1994; Côté and Salmela, 1996; Silverman 2006; Smith and Sparkes, 2014, Jones and Gratton 2015), were adopted by myself as the researcher that resulted in the process detailed below.

The interviews were listened to, transcribed, read and re-read by the researcher; content of the verbatim transcriptions typed from the interviews were read several times by the researcher to ensure familiarity was established with the transcriptions and the participants. Transcripts consisted of 107 pages (almost 67 500 words) of single spaced text.

Initially content analysis helped to organise the raw data into interpretable and meaningful themes and categories. However, it is unrealistic to expect any researcher to begin a study without the requisite knowledge to understand the subject under consideration (Krane et al., 1997). This acknowledges aspects of deductive analysis in this process (Meyer & Wenger, 1998). Indeed, I did not pretend that presumptions did not exist, but acknowledged such bias exists due to existing literature on women's football and inequalities that existed in the past, (Krane Anderson, & Strean, 1997; Fasting, 2004; Pfister, 2006; Williams 2011).

The data was coded so I could organise the raw data into conceptual categories (Gratton and Jones, 2004). This is the first stage in providing some form of logical structure to the data. This procedure coded large amounts of data into blocks that represented a common theme (Côté, Salmela, Baria and Russell, 1993). The process began with identifying a quote that clearly identified a theme in the interview schedule. First order themes were then identified by clustering the quotes around underlying uniformities (common threads), that in turn became the emergent themes (Biddle, Markland, Gilbourne, Chatzisarantis and Sparkes, 2001). This process involved comparing and contrasting each quote with all other quotes and emergent themes, to unite quotes with similar meanings and separate quotes with contrasting meanings (Biddle et al., 2001).

The process continued to build upon itself as the same comparing and contrasting procedures identified new, higher-level themes (2nd order themes). Analysis continued building upward until it was not possible to locate further underlying uniformities (general dimensions) to create a higher theme level (Biddle et al., 2001).

Throughout the process 'tags' (see Krane et al. 1997) were assigned to every quote. The letters represented the respective country (D-Denmark, E – England, F - Finland, G - Germany, H - Netherlands and N-Norway) and the number reflected the page number within the interview transcript where the raw theme was situated. (e.g., E3 represents something that the English interviewee reported and was seen on page 3 of their interview transcript).

The above process created a series of 'Complete Content Analysis Tables from Player Interviews' which consisted of 53 pages of data (refer to the data authenticity file). Given its extensive nature, 1st, 2nd, order and general dimensions were then extracted and united in a series of summary content analysis tables amenable for peer dissemination (Biddle et al., 2001) illustrated in tables 2.0 to 2.3.

3.10   Study One – Interviews - Results and Discussion

The following section comprises of content analysis tables and discussions of each theme. The results and discussion of content analysis themes are discussed alongside relevant theoretical literature and presented together in order to present findings coherently and avoid repetition (Smith, 1997). As outlined within the preceding methodology, results relating to the structure, organisation and working practices of the six football associations are discussed using each of the 4 tables / general dimensions and their corresponding, 2nd and 1st order themes. Raw data quotes are integrated into the following section to clarify categories and demonstrate the depth and richness of data (Scanlan, Stein & Ravizza,

1989). The section concludes with a broader discussion in relation to the data as a whole and the overall aim of the research. Given the extensive nature of these results, only the most pertinent 1st order themes are extrapolated. Every effort has been made to ensure that a variety of themes related to the organisation and working practices of women's football is presented.

The following results begin by offering an insight into the relevant emerging themes from the interviews conducted and the secondary data collected. Within this section the generic structure of the respective national football organisations is discussed. The results will scrutinise the similarities and/or differences in the respective Football Associations (FAs) approaches to, and location of, women's football within these structures. The development philosophies of each football organisation are examined to look at similarities and differences, and the implementation of these are assessed, identifying any potential gaps within the working practices. The themes will follow in sequential order and will show casual relationships between themes. (Gratton and Jones, 2004).

The first theme to be discussed will concentrate on the external environment and how it has been influential in incorporating women's football into the organizations within the study. The 2nd order themes will specifically highlight the role of external organisations and their impact and examine social perceptions within each county and the influence that has had of the women's football.

Content Analysis tables

Table 2.2

General theme	2nd order	1st order
External Influence	Positive impact	FIFA/UEFA influence
	Positive impact	Country perception to women's football
	negative	Country perception to women's football

Table 2.3

General Theme	2nd order	1st order
Organisational structure	Sufficient resource allocation	Number of People involved in women 's football
		Allocation of Money
	Insufficient resource	Organisational Support
	Status and location within organisation	

Table 2.4

General Theme	2nd Order Theme	1st Order Theme
Developmental philosophy	Progressive football vision Non Progressive football vision	Clear positive organisation vision Influence of stakeholder on vision

Table 2.5

General Theme	2nd Order Theme	1st Order Theme
Working practices	Negative Development structure positive Development structure Negative Development structure Negative Development structure	Combining football & education/career Clear Player pathway Forced Migration Gaps within pathway

3.10.1 External influence (table 2.2)

This theme captures how the football organisations within this study are subject to external influences such as the World and European governing bodies of football, and the country (1st order themes) within the organisations are situated. The following quotes act to demonstrate the relative constraints of the content analysis table 2.0 which portrays the second order themes and how these influences (1st order theme) have made a positive or negative contribution to women's football with each football organisation.

3.10.1.1 Influence of FIFA/UEFA

Slack and Hinings, (1992); Kikulis (2000), reported that the high visibility and value of sport world-wide has encouraged governing bodies to pressure sport organisations into assuming a more professional approach to the delivery and design of the sport product (e.g., National Sport Organisations in Canada). In this sense, football (and its structures) has changed considerably during the last few decades. (Relvas et al., 2010).

The following quotes from the associations of Denmark, Norway and Finland highlight the influence of FIFA and UEFA to integrate women' s football within the country's football associations and to develop the women's game with the inclusion of the World cup and European championships.

> *UEFA actually made a standpoint in the middle of the 90s and said that women's football should be part of the integrated FA's… In1976 it officially adopted women's football. I think that has been vital. N10*

Norway was one of the first countries to integrate women's football in their football association and believe the directive from FIFA and UEFA was important to progress the female game. Denmark's interviewee believes that FIFA has influenced the board within their association and has helped raise the profile within their football association which is positive.

> *the more the board of DBU gets to know about women's football the more they actually see that it's a good way out, and if they hear Blatter say that women's football is the future then they believe that. D5*

The Finish interviewee described how the introduced of FIFA and UEFA tournaments has helped develop the standard of women's football and that integration within the football governing bodies and country football associations is important to progress women's football

I really do think that there's a general development, women's football at international level the standards have got better and also the visibility and let's say if you think about the FIFA and UEFA tournament…. I'm a firm believer of interaction and integration and I think that's been the very important part. F3

These quotes from Norway, Denmark and Finland, is a development on previous research (Williams, 2003, Fasting, 2004, Pfister, 2006), on women's football, which argued women's football has been marked by institutional disapproval and, often, out-right bans. The progressive nature of such developments have been evidenced through this data and the mid-1990s, and even more so, in the last 10 years, institutions have created employment positions and organisational roles focused entirely on women's football, included women's football in official strategy documents, and made public statements affirming the legitimacy of women's football. (Aoki, Crumbach, Creesen, Schmitter, and Smith 2010; Williams 2011).

It can be argued that organisations are subject to external influences from International organisations and are not immune to the influence of environmental changes (Doherty and Chelladurai, 1999). This can be evidenced by the football association of Denmark, Norway and Finland that the external influence of FIFA and UEFA with their recommendation to move the women's game forward. The future is feminine quote by Sepp Blatter is a typical example, of how an environment can have an impact on an organisation's policy which has led to a change in the organisation within the countries in this study. For women's football this has been positive impact with participation figures increasing significantly.

Evolvement of global institutionalisation within this date has contributed to the emergence of similar organisational structures, goals, programmes and/or missions. It appears that within and between the countries, formal structures have become homogenised (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983), and produced similar strategies on how to develop women and girls football which chapter one has eluded to.

England, Germany and The Netherlands did not specifically mention FIFA and UEFA in helping to develop women's football in their organization. However, the positive impact of FIFA and UEFA have created structures for the game on a global platform, and the stewards of the global game have required national associations to earmark 10% of funding provided by FIFA specifically for women's football, a reflection of the participation statistics published in 2006. In 2006, an estimated 26 million females played football, of whom 4.1 million were registered players. Although that represented only 10 percent of all football players in the world, the trend shows that female participation is on the rise and those ratios are changing towards more participation of females: The number of female players had increased by 19% since 2000 and the number of registered players by 54%. This means that women's football grew more than twice as much as the male sport (21%) in the same period of time. The number of national teams, an indicator for the worldwide development of the game, has also increased dramatically. Specifically, for Europe, currently, there are around 6.5 million females who play football in UEFA-member countries. Perhaps as women's football gains increasing legitimacy, the fact that UEFA is third in percentage of female participants is also a driving factor for UEFA's increased investment. (Aoki, et al 2010; Williams 2011).

3.10.1.2 Country's perception of women's football

The previous literature review has discussed the difficulties women's football has faced in each of the countries. Pfister, (2003); Williams, (2003); Brus and Trangbaek, (2004); Fasting, (2004), argue one of the greatest hindrances to the development of women's football is the way in which male-dominated football associations have retained 'conventional stereotypes of hegemonic masculinity in western culture. For women to enter the powerful domains and the controlled world of football, they have had to challenge dominant notions of appropriate female sports. Equally the hegemonic universe of masculinity is most pronounced in relation to organisation and management. All of the representatives interviewed within the study shared how there have been difficulties with the perception of the game as a female sport, and the standard of play, and a lack of

resources. The following quotes align to the second order theme of negative impacts of the country's perception on women's football and the difficulties that women's football has faced. Evidence of negative perceptions of women's football was described by the Danish interviewee. In the past women's football was perceived as being too slow and the players did not have sufficient technique.

> *The perception I think has got better the of women's football that is due to the progression of the sport, it's quicker now… I think five, ten years ago it was more of a physical game, the girls were not as quick and they couldn't kick the ball hard so it's become more of a sport to watch and then of course the technical level has also risen, so it's definitely a positive development. D7*

In Norway, the female game was not perceived well by their male counterparts in the past. (Fasting 2004). The Norwegian interviewee described how the perception is now improving. However, female players do not have the parity of training facilities or money in women's football compared to the male game in Norway.

> *It's attitude. Mostly from men, but that's as we said earlier it's getting better, much, much better, I wouldn't like to say that there are no barriers, not at all, because you have the clubs struggling, they're fighting for money, they're fighting to get the training facilities and everything like that. N3*

In the Netherlands, a similar argument is raised to Norway's statement on the lack of facilities and that male football is given more precedence over women's football

> *We'll always beg for funding, always beg facilities, the fact that we're always the last game on a Sunday, so we're going to be the one that's called off. We don't own our facilities, whereas boy's clubs do, so we don't have any facilities of our own. So, funding, facilities, media but the men's professional game takes so much of finance and of the media and the facilities that it just takes a while to come down, so is a big issue. H7*

In Finland, the perception of women's football is getting better, however it is still a lot to do to develop the women's game. The Finish interviewee echoed those of the Norwegian interviewee recognizing that developing female football it is a long process, and that a commitment by the respective football association and the support by the FA's was essential in terms of investment and resources.

> *Mental barriers are getting lower, but it's continuous work, you have to show that you have initiatives and you have to show that you have support and you have to show that you have investment on those things to demonstrate it to the players. I think we have things we need to address on the women's game, we have to put resources on them. F3*

The English interviewee described how women's sport in general is not perceived favourably and women who are individual athletes' are perceived better than women who play team sports. This does not help to raise the profile of sports such as women's football because it does not get the media attention individual female athletes receive

> *So for me it's not a football problem it's a women's sports problem in this country, a lot of these issues are about women's sport and however much it upsets me our country does not except women playing team sport, they select individuals that do well and they support individuals that do well, but they have a thing about team sports for some reason, and we don't get the media support that we want, and that's something that we're really working on. E6*

In Germany the perception of women's football has been negative in the past, however due to the success of the women's national team, the perception has changed and having support from the Chancellor has helped raise the profile and change the perception in the country.

> *If you would have asked me ten years ago, I would have said of course there is some prejudice on behalf of people, of course there are still people who say, come on, football is not my sport, okay women football is not my sport, okay, accept it. But depending on our success, the World Cup, depending on our Chancellor who supports us, people started thinking about I and changed and we see that they don't have any more arguments and if you don't have arguments you are lost, so the arguments are on our side. G5*

Governmental actions have directly influenced the opportunities given to girls and women to participate in organized sport, creating a strong youth development in women's football, (Aoki et al., 2010; Williams 2011). Further evidence, from the interviewees in Norway and Germany suggests the influence of the president within a country which can help change perception of women's football within a particular country. Both of these countries' have witnessed success in women's football in terms of tournament wins, and an increase in their world ranking. Fifa.com

Many women have been fighting, if the top politicians don't accept it you have problems, the President since 1988 has been extremely tough on fighting the position of women's football and you need political and administrative politicians to see this. You see the same thing happening in Germany right now you get a new president that promoting women's football all the time suddenly you see things happening. N15

two days ago our chancellor said an interesting sentence in our reception for the new year for the World Cup, she said the ball has no interest, for the ball it is not important who kicks the ball, if it's a she or a he, or thick or a thin, or black or a green, or a yellow coloured person, the ball doesn't care, and these are also very important arguments why women let their daughters go to football and why men say oh yes my little girl, football is in, so it's changed totally in Germany. G12

Williams, (2011), supports that women's football, like all sports, does not exist in a vacuum but is greatly impacted on by the social and political context. The participants in this study have all expressed that women's football has had negative perceptions in their respective countries, some still exist, however there is evidence from the football associations that the perception has improved. Norway is a good example of how the perception in their country has created a positive impact of women's football. The Norwegian Football Federation (NFF), made a decision to focus on creating facilities for young people to play football by building mini artificial football pitches all over Norway. This has resulted in one of the highest participation rates in the world, with almost a third of all registered football players in Norway being female. (Fasting, 2006). Equality laws in Norway have also resulted in it being mandatory for organisations such as the NFF to have female representatives on various boards and decision making bodies, resulting in a greater female focus.

Norway is the leading example of the six nations involved in the study. Football is now starting to be an acceptable sport for women and girls in all the countries examined, this is supported by the work of Pfister, (2003); Williams (2003); Fasting, (2004); Brus and Trangbaek,(2004). In this sense, the change in the organisation (i.e., embracing women's football) is primarily reflected through social need and put simply, there was an increasing demand for women's football. (Williams, 2003; Pfister, 2003; Fasting, 2004; Brus and

Trangbaek, 2004). The results reflect the earlier work of (Pfister, 2003; Williams 2003; Fasting, 2004; Brus and Trangbaek, 2004), and suggests women's football in the countries included in this study is progressing in terms of profile, acceptance and standard of play, relating to the second order theme of the positive impact on the country's perception on women's football. The following quotes from Denmark, Norway and Finland capture the positive development of the game.

> *I think now it's not as bad for a girl to play football, there's a lot more women football players and girl's football players out there. So it's developed in a positive direction, and it's continuously progressing in a positive way, if people actually go out and watch a game or watch a World Cup, a Euro Cup, on television, they're surprised about how high the quality is. So it's definitely progressing in a positive way. D11*

> *Now what gives football the social credibility in society, which it has in Norway, which is very, very strong movement, it is of course because it includes all. Now it's obvious that girls are included, it's not a discussion any more, if you tell a girls' team of 12, 14, 16 years of age why girls are not allowed to play to play football 20 years ago, or 25 years ago, they would say WHAT! They won't understand the history, and that is good. N5*

> *I think that first of all the profile of the women's national team has got much higher, and I think that the strategy that we've had that we have integrated in all the activities that we have, we have them in competition, we have them on the youth, we have then on the grass roots, we have them on the technical and coach, because I think that has been successful, I think that's a major improvement. It's also visible and much better than it used to be. F12*

It appears evident that external influences such as FIFA, UEFA and the country's perception can influence the development of women's football in the countries associated with this study. The data suggests poor, but misjudged perceptions of the women's game alongside a lack of resources and investment has marred the progression and development of the women's game. (Pfister,2003; Williams, 2003; Fasting,2004; Brus and Trangbaek, 2004). The new directives from FIFA, UEFA, and a changing and more positive perception of the women's game respective countries has shown to have a positive impact on the development of the female game.

3.10.2 Women's football organisational structure

To fully understand where women's football is situated within the Football associations included within this study. It is pertinent to appreciate how the football associations are structured this will allow the reader further context of the complex relationship women's football has with its organization.

When comparing the six structures it was apparent that the structure of each country's main Football Association (i.e., inclusive of the women's game) was complex with many layers. England, Holland, Germany and Norway appeared to possess more than one structure. Holland for example had a structure for their professional game and one for the amateur game. While, England and Norway had structures for committees and an executive/administration structures. Germany had a Presidential Board and Chairmanship structure that incorporated Vice Presidents who had responsibility for areas such as Women and Girl's football and qualifications. They also had a general structure headed by the General secretariat. The Danish FA operated with one structure that incorporated everything (inclusive of grassroots and competitions). Within the six organisations it was evident through organization charts that were collated and asking the participants in the study to draw their organizational structure, that there were two general organisational structures that existed. One dealt with the strategic and one the operational areas of the organisation. These structures are represented by the organisational chart included (see Figures 2.7& 2.8). Both structures are based on a typical hierarchical structure with layers (departments) below, (Mullins, 1992; Daft, 1997; Slack and Parent, 2006). Figure 2.7 represents the structure used in England, Norway and Germany with a designated figure head (i.e., President or Chair) at the top of the structure (Slack, 2006). Generally, the occupant of this position has overall authority in developing and sanctioning the key strategies of the organisation.
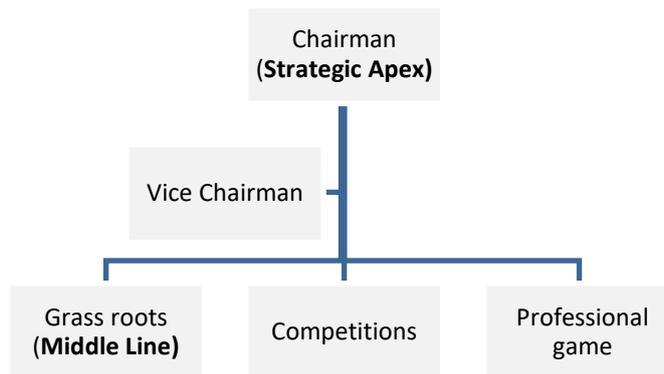
TECHNO-STRUCTURE & SUPPORT STAFF

Figure 2.7. – Represents a generic depiction of the organisational structures that represent the football governing bodies of Norway, Germany, Finland & England's

Figure 2.8. Represents the generic organisational structure adopted in the Netherlands and Denmark. Although this structure appears hierarchical in nature there appears to be more than one unit (position) in the strategic apex of the structure of these respective FA's.
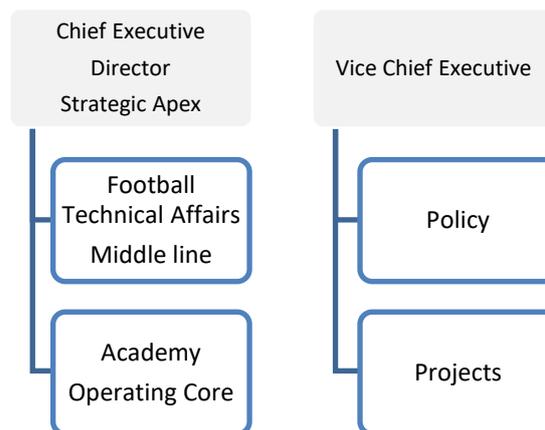
TECHNO-STRUCTURE & SUPPORT STAFF

Figure 2.8 The.Netherlnds Organisational Structure

Mintzberg's (1979), model can be applied to the organisations used in the study. The results show the five key organisational areas appearing to be within the football associations.

These are the organization (the respective football association): the operating core – (the players, coaches and player pathway); strategic apex – (chief executive and chairman); middle line – (football development managers); techno-structure and support staff (finance, human resources). These are all the elements that work within the football organisation and help with operational practice. The Netherlands' organisational structure shows the Chief Executive, Director and the Vice Chief Executive Director are afforded the same level of responsibility, therefore there is more than one senior stakeholder who has the overall responsibility and shares the allocation of tasks and resources. This differs from Mintzberg's model where the strategic apex in the hierarchical structure allows for only one senior stakeholder who has overall responsibility for the organization.

3.10.2.1 Status and location of women's football in the organisation

In all the organisations the key stakeholder, interviewed as part of the study, worked within the middle line of this model, (each possessing a football development remit). The following section examines how the middle line within the football organisation operates and how this has an impact on the location and status of women's football with the organisation. Furthermore, after offering a general discussion about the respective FA's organisational structure, it appears relevant at this point to explore specifically how women's football operates within each of the national association structures.

The aforementioned recommendations by UEFA appear to have led to the existence of similar organisational structures (i.e., homogeneity) amongst national football organisations across Europe (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Relvas et al., 2010). However, within the global organisational structure, distinct sub-organisational or department structures were evident. At the time of this research, each association's women's football section was integrated within the respective national organisation. Evidenced earlier by Pfister, (2003); Williams, (2003); Fasting, (2004); Brus and Trangbaek, (2004), the integration of the women's administration within the host FAs was complex. In essence,

women's football was (technically) competing with their male counterparts within the same organisation. Such inter-organisational tension appears to have lessened since the more readily accepted integration of the women's sections within the national associations. For example, in Norway, male and female football is now integrated into the same organisation at elite level and the grass roots department now covers both girls' and boys' football development. Similarly, the competition department includes the male and female game at both grass roots and the elite level. This integration has been positively received and championed as a model of good practice across Europe by UEFA. (Fasting 2004; Aoki et al., 2010). The model has been subsequently adopted by several other countries including England, the Netherlands and Denmark. The following quote highlights how this model attracted media attention and raised the profile of the model which resulted in England adopting the integration of grassroots for girls and boys.

> *"We are all integrated in Norway in regards to our organisational structure. The BBC came in 1995/6 to make a documentary to see how we all work together in our development"*- N15

In England, the administration of the female game is located within the Football development department. This department houses both male and female development (i.e. inclusive of amateur, grass roots and elite levels of the women's game). The professional men's administration (i.e., inclusive of the elite level) is housed within the Professional Football Association (i.e., a distinct department within the national association). This structure is similarly evident in Germany and Finland. In Denmark, women's football is present within four departments namely; DBU national teams, DBU elite development, DBU tournaments and DBU education. In the Netherlands, the women's football administration is located within their technical affairs department. The location of these areas within the overall structure indicates that the key women's football administrators are situated away from the strategic apex of the respective associations (i.e. where the decision-making process and resource allocation is generally located). Germany is the only nation in this

study that has a key strategic stakeholder (i.e. their vice president who is responsible for the development of women and girls' football) located within the strategic apex of the FA. Previously Norway had such a key representative in the strategic apex. However, the NFF have failed to replace Karen Espulund as General Secretary since her retirement in 2009. Typically, the results indicate that key strategic stakeholders for female football are situated within the middle line of the football association. Whilst such a position within the organization has an element of direct authority over the operating core (e.g., coaches and players) they have little influence within the strategic apex and subsequent strategic direction of the organization as a whole. According to Mintzberg (1979), the lack of presence within the strategic apex ultimately results in reduced levels of influence, empowerment and subsequent allocation of resource. For example, and with respect to decision-making within the organisation, the middle line stakeholders have to go through several layers and/or channels or communication before a definitive decision can be made. If these key strategic stakeholders for the women's game were closer to the strategic apex it is more likely (although not guaranteed) that more decisions would go in their favour, (Mintzberg 1979; Slack and Parent, 2006; and Rollison 2002). It is also more likely that these key stakeholders will be able to better influence the hierarchy with respect to the allocation of the appropriate resources, or at the very least. Ensure that these issues were afforded appropriate time for discussion at relevant meetings.

The presence and (apparent) acceptance or embracement of the women's game in the strategic apex of the German governing body the DFB, appears to offer the German women a significant advantage with regards to their status and location within the organisation compared to the other nations. Specifically, such a strategic position appears to have led to the allocation of more resources for women's football within the DFB compared to the other countries, (Pfister 2006).

> *Then we had some really tough woman, like Hannelore Ratzeburg, she is used to fighting for us to play football, she was then involved into our structures, so since 1977 she's part of the technical structure, then she became part of the board, now she's vice president and allocates the resources we need. G10*

Denmark is a nation like most of the Nordic countries that has seen relative success and have featured in the top ten of the FIFA rankings. The argument recounted earlier by Brus, (2004), DBU's unwillingness to invest in a women's football elite in Denmark, even though women's football has, over the years, become more readily accepted by the Danish population as a major sport in Denmark. However, concerns were expressed by their key stakeholder that a lack of resources and financial investment in women's football in Denmark was preventing the game from moving forward and keeping up with the emerging Nations such as Holland, Finland and England. Such frustration was articulated within this quote;

> *Within the DBU, there are limits to what we can do. The more the board see and know about women's football, and if they see Sepp Blatter say women's football is the future, they listen, and believe that. What we have to play on, is women's football is a ground of development. Men's football has reached it's peak. You have the participants, it is the most popular sport, and they have to make sure they keep them. Whereas in women's football, there is room for development. If you want to put money in it we want to get more players also we want success and if you have more attention you need results; like what has happened in Germany and Sweden, they have had results, they have a great league, money in the clubs. We have not had that success yet. We need more money and more projects so that we can get to that level and the clubs that can do better. D25*

This section has discussed where women's football is situated within each organization. It suggests that if women's football is located near the top of the organization (strategic apex) and in the case of Germany, it has led to a better resource allocation. The following section will discuss further the importance of the strategic apex in the football associations.

3.10.2.2 Organisational support for women's football

Within organizations, decision-making structures (e.g., executive board, chief executives) are regarded as decisive in the definition of behaviours, interests, goals, priorities, relationships and communication processes (Kikulis, Slack, & Hinings, 1995). Moreover, executive personnel need to encourage and guarantee stakeholders' full commitment in order to establish and maintain the effectiveness of the organization. Indeed, the shared values and goals of the organization must be clear and accepted by all stakeholders (Wilson, 2001; Zink, 2005; Slack & Parent, 2006; Relvas et al 2010).

The results indicate that in order to move the female game forward the key policy maker in the main national governing body (i.e., those at, or near to, the top of the strategic apex), has to be on-side with the women's game and subsequently foster support for the development of the game at all levels. Where such an individual has been in position (i.e., in say Norway and Germany) they have become instrumental in the development of the female game within their organisation. Such head or lead positions vary in name or title including; Chairman, General Secretary or President but are typically situated at the top, or near to the top, of the strategic apex of the organisation. The study has found that this role in the organisations has significantly influenced the development of the women's game in four (England, Norway, Germany and Finland) out of the six countries. In all but two of the countries, the key policy maker coincided with the major developments within the game in their respective country. This situation is captured by the English representative:

> *The new chairman (Lord Triesman) is supportive of us. When he came in he wanted to know our vision and where we wanted to go. When we told him what we wanted he asked us to cost it out. It was obvious to me that he wanted to support us and see women's football go forward. We launched this strategy and we were told we were going to get another 5.3 million pounds for this strategy on top of what we already had for the next 3 years for super league, centrally contracted players, performance unit that was brand new money…that was a big statement. When people give you money that says to me they appreciate what you are doing, believe in what you are doing and want to buy into that. E3*

The now former chairman of the English FA, Lord Triesman, had put women's football as a major growth area within England. Germany has shown where the federation was adamantly opposed to women playing football until the early 1970s, perhaps the greatest supporter of women's football has become their president. In a monumental public show of support, the DFB president, Dr. Theo Zwanziger, later shown in a nationally-televised documentary, waited pitch-side to enthusiastically hug the Germany national team players as they exit the field after a win during the 2007 Women's World Cup in China. (Aoki et al 2010). The German interviewee captures this in the following quote;

> *2006 we got a new president, (Mr Zwanziger), who really is a fan of women's football, so its success of the women's national team, if you have got a president who has in each and every speech he held at least two sentences to women's football, even more usually, it's the best advertisement you can get, and through it is good arguments, good work, hard work, background work, our team is through. G7*

The countries that did not appear to have the support from the key policy maker were The Netherlands and Denmark. As mentioned earlier, Denmark has suffered more recently from a lack of investment and resource. The angst suffered in the Netherlands is evidenced by their representative below:

> *The board says that they are supportive, but this goes as far as Men's Football. Nobody on the board has asked me about the problems I have had. Not a text message, not a phone call, not a meeting, nothing! This has put their supportiveness of women's football into a dark perspective. H13*

The support of the key personnel with the associations will highlight further the significance of the 1st order themes of number of staff and money allocated which will be discussed in relation to the 2nd order themes of sufficient resource allocation and insufficient resource allocation.

3.10.2.3 Resources – people

To add content to understanding the key role in developing women and girl's football and how this resource is utlilised in the football associations, the following offers an insight to the background of the interviewees. Within each of the national associations the key person responsible for developing women's football (i.e., typically situated in the middle line of the organisation) had different roles (including titles) and responsibilities. Germany, England, Norway, Denmark and the Netherlands have females responsible for the development of the women's game in their organisation situated in the middle line of the organisation. Finland is the only country that had a male representative responsible for the women football situated in this middle line of the organisation. Research into the evolution of women in management roles within sports organisations has reported the lack of females in higher management roles (White and Brackenbridge, 1985). More recently work by White and Kay (2006), has highlighted a positive change within the location of women within management roles in sports organisations, especially within UK sports organisations. This research has evidenced women being successful in middle management roles. However, it still highlights the lack of females represented in chief executive positions (i.e., at the top of the strategic apex in highly influential roles).

The specific roles of the respective interviewees within each organisation appeared to vary. Five out of the six were female with one male. At the time of interview, the representative from the Netherlands was the Women's national team coach, whereas the Norwegian representative was in a developmental role similar to the English and German representatives. Four out of the six representatives were ex-national team players; the other two came from an education and sports development background, although they both had football backgrounds. Four of the six representatives solely worked within the women's game.

The size of the department within the organisation responsible for the development of the women's game also varied. The German representative identified that when she started she was the only woman in the organisation in 2002.   At the time of interview there were 12 women working in the women's department.   In this regard, the DFB was by far the largest women's section within this study. At the time of the study, England had five full-time staff working in the women's football department, with only one member of staff in 2000.   The Dutch women's department had six full time staff.   However, these staff possessed expansive remits that included other responsibilities with the senior and junior national teams as well as working in the districts and clubs. Denmark and Finland possess the least staff members within their women's football departments with three members each. This had expanded from one member since 2006.

The various structures, roles, responsibilities and personnel can be seen to reflect how the women's game is developing with each country. It would appear that Germany are seeking to consolidate their success in recent years through continued investment in resource and personnel. England also appears to be progressing and their recent success at junior internationals and getting to the finals in the senior European championship has helped secure more resources, (Aoki et al., 2010). Finland has only recently started to feature in the European championship with their first qualification in 2005 and more recently hosting the 2009 championships. (Williams, 2011).

3.10.2.4 Resources - Allocation of money to women's football

The results highlight that in four of the six organisations it has proven to be more beneficial for the women's football to be integrated within the overall FA structure. This has (generally) led to improved resources. (Aoki et al., 2010).

 However, it could be argued that there such resources are still restricted (and relatively punitive) in some of the organisations, (Pfister, 2003; Williams, 2003, 2007; Fasting, 2004; Brus and Trangbaek 2004), the following quotes from three of the interviewees highlights

this. The location and status of the women's department, and subsequently the key strategic stakeholder, in five of the six countries, is within the middle tier of the organisation and subsequently is afforded less power and influence that similarly aligned administrators responsible for the men's football.

Well if they would give us some more money to develop the game. It's always what comes first, is it that we must put a lot of money in so we can get the results and then get the spectators, or do we need to get the results, get the spectators, and then the money comes? It's always the discussion. D15

my job is also to fight for the resources and that's something I need to lay on the table all the time, if you want to do the development we also need the resources and, so I think that from my point of view it's important that we have the resources for the people to do their job and the resources and the possibilities for the players who are aiming at the top. N10

Obviously, there's always issues around money, and how much money we can have, and you know there will always be that toing and froing. E9

Women's football is not the core business within the organisations and their contribution to income generation is not comparable to the male game. Therefore, parity and status is something that will be difficult to achieve unless women's football becomes a professional sport in those countries and generate television and sponsorship revenue in line with the male game. (Aoki et al., 2010; Williams, 2011).

The results suggest the importance of resources to develop women and girls football in each country and the results suggest there are inequalities within the organization compared to the male game. The countries that have a better resource allocation in terms of people and money are developing the game quicker Germany is the main example of this with more staff, more money and this ultimately is reflected by organizational support.

3.10.3 Developmental Philosophies/vision

Sports organisations have some form of a strategic plan which presents the strategic direction of the organization and lists its vision and objectives, (Watt, 2003). Put simply the strategic plan sets out a vision of where the organization wants to go and how it wants to

get there. The vision sets out a clear and collection direction and reveals a variety of opportunities and possibilities, (Mullens, 2010).

Emerging from the data collected, was the importance of having a vision for women's football, and an understanding was gained in how women's football development is situated within the overall strategy of the organisation. The themes highlight the importance of a clear vision for women and girl's football, the influence of the Chairman or President of the organisation and their support of the strategy employed to develop women's football. The theme also reflects whether the football organisations have a progressive or non-progressive vision for women and girls football. Maguire and Pearton, (2000), argue that development itself depends on several elements: the efficiency of the sport organisation; sport human resources; methods of coaching and training; and the application of Sports Medicine and Sports Sciences. These elements are supported within the data collected.

3.10.3.1 Clear vision

New visions and philosophies dominate how the organisation will operate. Prior to the 1990s, most of the FA's involved in this study with the exception of Norway were not part of the football association philosophy to develop women's football. Pettigrew, (1979) believed organisations have to move away from traditions set by those who influence the decision making before an organisation can move forward and "break down core beliefs from the old guard", p575. The results suggest this has started to happen and the football associations in this study have put new strategies in place which have shared visions by the organization. According to Ansoff, (1965), cited in Rollison, p450 "a vision is essentially a plan or design to achieve aims, goals or objectives" The following quotes give examples of clear visions for women's football.

Denmark have prioritized in developing participation. They believe that by having more female players involved in football, they will have a better talent pool to choose from and this turn will lead to an increase in the standard of women and girl's football.

> *In Denmark we'd like to get a lot of players in and the masses feed the league, so we believe that the more girls we can get in, the more attention and, the more attention we can bring on to women's football the better the league is going to be. So yes we believe that the masses feed the leagues. D14.*

England similarly want to grow the participation of women's and girl's football, but also to keep women and girls in the game by making the game inclusive and attractive to women and girls'. They also want to increase the standard of coaching to help develop the standard of women's football which leads to their ambition of success at major tournaments.

> *Well the philosophy of the FA is to lead and serve the whole football family in England, and going with success and also confident leadership. So I've taken what the FA did, and I've included that in women's football strategy, whatever the FA's mission is we should be striving for the same things. So, it would be to get to the semi- finals because England is really important to us, to grow and retain participation within the game and to develop better players, coaches and volunteers as part of the game. So if I was asked to say what, the top three out of all of those were then they would be those. E16*

Germany has high aspirations in their overall vision and want to sustain their success in major tournaments that is their main priority. Similarly, to England and Denmark they also recognize the importance of developing the game at the grass root level. Germany also want to develop further their league structure.

> *Well our next period is from 2010 to 2012, the development plan, till now, 2010, we focused of course on getting the World Cup, have a focus on the high level things, stay successful, do everything for that top level structure, and the second target on grass root level was how can we implement our thinking into the grass root structure into the regional levels. These are the two ways we start working on this women's football. Another target our president gave to us please develop the league structure, with bundesliga, second league, which is also a big challenge for us, I think you will have the same answer in all the other countries. G17.*

The quotes indicate that each organization has a progressive vision to develop the women's game within their organization in line with the directives from FIFA which was to ensure that

every girl and woman who wants to play football has the opportunity to do so. To promote female opportunities, both on and off the pitch. To involve more former female players. To have more quality top-level female coaches. To encourage the promotion and marketing of women's football at all levels to grow participation, build the audience and target potential partners. (FIFA, 2010). These are the basis of each football development strategy produced by the countries in this study

3.10.3.2 Stakeholder influence on the FA vision

Stiles, (2001), outlines that the Chairman or chief executive is responsible for the strategy within the organisation and is the mediating force between the organisation and its environment. Strategy formulation therefore involves the interpretation of the environment and the development of consistent patterns in streams of organisational decisions to deal with it. (Mintzberg and Waters, 1985; Noda and Bower, 1996; Stiles, 2001).

It can be argued that the influence of FIFA and UEFA and their mandate to develop women and girl's football has led football national governing organisations to explore and implement new strategies which incorporate the development of women's football. It is likely that the more recent strategy development for football organisations was developed within the strategic apex of the organisations. Five out of six of the organisations, (Germany, England, Finland, Norway and the Netherland), have demonstrated their effectiveness in developing the women's game by increasing the profile and participation and in part been successful in the recent international tournaments, (FIFA 2010). The key stakeholders for women's football within the study demonstrated that they were working together with the Chairman/chief executive role to develop the women's strategy which fell in line with the FA's overall goals.

> *Our philosophy is the same as the whole organisation, the new president is fan of women's football, G20*

> *The FA philosophy is to lead and serve the game and I have taken what the FA has said and included it in this strategy. Yes of course whatever the FA mission*

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statements says we should be striving for the same thing, but we wouldn't have come up with this mission statement or purpose unless they had of included women's football in that consultation. So when I read the vision being a world class organisation with a winning mentality that is a good mission to have and we were comfortable to have this in our document. Anything the FA was doing in regards to their purpose and mission were we bought into the same mindset. E2

The following quotes show how women's football development is now central to these football organisations. The main aims within each country are similar and that is to increase the participation of girl's football in each country. The Norwegian strategy is inclusive and does not separate the concentration on women and girls football. The Finish strategy is to look at player development specifically the individual and develop their technical ability. The German philosophy is more unique they embrace what the rest of the nations are aiming to do. However, they believe in developing talent within the organization using the experience of ex-players to progress their players and future coaches.

My point of view is to increase technical development the main focus is on the player and the individual, everything has to come from there, football is a team sport so that is always in relation with the team, then everything else comes from there, specifically think of women as individual players try to provide equal possibilities for those to aim as high as possible those who have chosen the top football and provide player pathways and equal opportunities to reach for the top. F7

Football is for all – opportunities and challenges for everyone! Nobody to be left out of football Regardless of their social or cultural background, gender, disability, age sexuality or other factor. Everyone who wishes to play football should according to their own wishes, needs and ambitions. N15

One important key for our philosophy, we now have the second and third generation of women who played football, successful football and we bring them into our football structure, if you see our coaches, they are ex national team players, former bundesliga player, we have Doris Fitschen former national team player, now working for World Cup organising committee, doing technical things, we have three ambassadors for the World Cup, former national team players at the same time doing their coaching education, so after the World Cup they are ready to do coaching. I think this is also one key point which was our philosophy since I'm working for the federation, how can we use their knowledge, their feelings, they know exactly what players need, what structure is needed, to develop, it is maybe something that other countries haven't done so far. G17

These shared philosophies demonstrate a change in the organisations and there are now clear and progressive strategies incorporating common values, norm and ideologies to achieve in the development of the game in their respective countries. The results and the strategic documents collated, show evidence of a general consensus as to the aim of their women's development programmes: to increase participation at grass roots level which in turn will feed their elite programmes to help the success within the international stage This development over the last twenty years is suggesting that the football organisations are committed long term to this sustainable approach in achieving their vision for women's football, (Williams, 2011).

3.10.4 Working Practices

The working practices of an organization tend to reflect how the overall strategy is operationalized, (Slack, and Parent, 2006). The following section aims to clarify how the football development processes (Working practices can be defined in areas as the working mechanism of the organization and structure of the football development departments), are formed in each country and highlight any potential areas that need developing further to fulfil the aims of the philosophies of the organisation. The themes identified by the data are clear and coherent player pathway which aligns to the theme of a positive development structure. themes are concerned with combining football and an education or work, forced migration and gaps within the player pathway aligning to the theme complex pathway.

When a player enters a systematic developmental process, the objective is to develop playing ability and nurture the individual towards realizing their potential (Reilly, Williams, Nevill & Franks, 2000). All of the participants within this study had a role in this development process. Their roles as earlier discussed varied, however the participants all had a role in developing processes for example implementing development programmes, deploying coaches and coaching duties

The general aim of the football development programme in each organisation was to create an appropriate environment to encourage more participants and to develop elite players. The following quotes highlight the aims of this development as described by the participants;

> *Development means grassroots to me and therefore getting more players. G20*
>
> *Football we believe is for all – to create opportunities and challenges for everyone. - N15*
>
> *The aim is to develop more players, the masses feed the elite. We need to increase participation to the feed elite. D24*

Figure 2.10, represents the player pathway that the organisations adopted to implement the player development process. All the nations apart from Finland use the tradition pyramid model which incorporates a grass root level at the base of the pyramid followed by a participation level, then a performance level and the elite level at the top. Hylton, (2013). Finland, however have adopted a different model as illustrated in the following quote.

> *The UK development is based on pyramid, Finland a little bit different, the philosophy again is a little bit different also, we don't want the triangle too sharp. We had a discussion 10 years ago because that affects the drop out, we want to look at it from the individuals and club's point of view, all the possibilities there are club structure, want everyone involved, those who are aiming high they maybe core of the top clubs, core maybe different club focused on everyone to play football, core probably wider all these elements are visible in all clubs. F9*

3.10.4.1 Clear coherent player pathway

As women's football becomes a higher priority with greater participation, national associations and nations as a whole, will find added value in having a successful women's national team. Development structures are key to this success, with a clear and coherent player pathway as essential to help counter this new pressure for success from the football governing bodies.

To further understand how these pathways have developed it is useful to provide some background to when these pathways were implemented. The present pathways in place have been implemented within the countries at different times, Norway implemented their

programme in 1993, Denmark's present programme was developed two years ago, and the

KTU for talent development was implemented in 2001. England developed their structures

in 2000 with the active sports programme and have amended this when that funding steam

ceased to exist with money coming directly from the FA. Finland have had their structure

in place since 2002/3, similar to Germany. The Netherlands developed their present

structure in 1983 with the Promotion Projects Girls Football at the same time they developed

the boys' structure. However, the following quote explains how the programme in Holland

has developed in recent years with the introduction of the Eredivisie in 2007.

> *Since the introduction of the Premier League we now have a full pyramid. The top of the pyramid was missed before (gap between highest league and National teams is closer- together with finalising the top talent development pyramid within the Youth Plan of the Netherlands. H14*

The development of football is the responsibility of the clubs in all of the countries and the

number of clubs in all countries has grown rapidly. In three countries there is no school

based structure. England, Germany and Finland have such a structure and believe the two

can benefit each other. Germany have recently started a structure for schools and England

have Charter standard school clubs and PE and school club links. The Finish representative

highlighted the importance of school in developing football in Finland.

> *It is very important to have the co-operation with the schools and education, only a few make it at the top all dev work and player pathway and take into consideration way we work at the moment. For those who want to aim for A national team important co-operation for activities in those clubs, important for player development. F10*

The football associations within this study believed a strong national league will garner that

success, has caused many federations to over-haul their national leagues. One example

is the Dutch Football Federation, (KNVB), who in 2006, moved to a closed league system

(only allowing 12 within it), explicitly to improve the national game, and thus the national

team's success.

Everyone called me crazy when I came up with the vision [to set up the women's league], but some people got behind me and said we need to go for it, and see if we manage. In the back of our heads, the semi-final in the Euro's has always been there. You must believe in the goals you set. If I'd said we would win the tournament, it wouldn't have been realistic as I knew the semi-finals would probably be a step too far – though with ten minutes of extra time left, it could have been different. England deserved to get through but it's been a project we will never forget. H8

In the 2009 European Championship, the Netherlands, a country without a strong history in women's football, advanced to the semi-finals and garnered national press. Similarly, those within the English FA, forming the Super League in England, have expressed their optimism that the new league will create a better platform for women's football development in the country, which will in turn improve the national team's performance. The following quotes discuss how the interviewees believes that their pathways are attributing to the aim of developing more players and developing a better standard of player.

we now have 7 national teams starting with under 15, under 16, under 17, under 19, under 20, under 23 women. We have our bundesliga running now, when I started 14 years ago we already had a bundesliga but they were playing group north, group south, the champions just met for a final that was our bundesliga, since 10 years we now have. G18

The German player pathway has a comprehensive international player pathway from under 15's to the senior National team. To complement this elite pathway, the club competition has been strengthened to allow players to play elite club football.

when I came in autumn of 89. I started in Europe 1999, we drew the guidelines of the girl's youth national teams, which we wanted to have in the regional activities and we also wanted to have a better dialogue with the district. I think that the structure, has been modified when UEFA started the under 17 tournaments, and we actually modified it so that we dropped the Nordic competition by one year, and then we modified our regional activities, but at this break has been for three or four years and the core of it has been seven or eight years. N7

The Norwegian football association has also concentrated on providing a comprehensive elite player pathway by concentrating on the regional activities to feed into the national

teams so they could provide players for an under 17 junior international structure. Finland similarly has developed better co-ordination within their regional structure to complement their junior international pathway. They have concentrated on the developing the standard of coaching in the regional structure working with the junior national team coaches to be able to progress regional players into the junior national teams.

I think that in general we have a good structure, but that's a good way to address it that there are certain phases that we need to... I think for instance the district activities they are good between 13 and 15, but then they end up just like that, and then we have our regional activities which we've developed, when I came to the girl's national team coaches we had just implemented the regional coaches who we managed to improve I think very much. It's starting to work and those parts of it that we need to address, I think we have identified them which we need to work on, but I think the structure in itself is good, and then we have to focus on the content. F12.

England recognize that their pathways were slow in developing compared to other countries such as Germany, but now feel this pathway is in place and aspirations to appear in the semi-finals of major tournaments has been achieved and their world ranking has risen.

So I think without trying to blow our own trumpet I think we've got a way, we've looked at what everybody else is doing, put a structure for our country and what we do, and I'm really comfortable that we're doing the best we can, with the resources that we have, with the support that we have, and I think we're doing the best that we can, and our aspiration is to be in the semi -finals because that would mean that we have, in the years that we've had for support and development that would be right, to get any further than that would be massive, because 10th in the world is still a long way away from USA, Germany, Brazil, Sweden, it's still a long way in terms of what support they've had, how old those girls are, the support that's been behind that group of girls, we're catching up. E14

Within the study the participants were asked to outline the success of their programmes and identify any concerns, gaps or weaknesses within their player pathway All the participants in the study believed the structures for the player pathway they had in place to develop women and girls' football was a step in the right direction.

Yes, the structures are working, in the past we set up all the opportunities and possibly did not have all the resources to support this. We wanted to go too big too soon, now all the pyramid is supported and yes we need to work with colleges and universities to develop the 16-23 level to a good level, but the pyramid is looking very strong. Every level of the pyramid I believe is having a massive effect on the National teams at all levels. E5

I think it's a quite smooth transition really. We've talked a lot about because previously we had the under 19 and then straight to the 18, because some of the best under 19 players were already on the A team and we didn't, but now we're getting more and more players through that are really talented on the youth national teams, so we started under 23 team for the first time this year. So that was a bit of a bump there before, but that's been smoothed out a bit I think. But it's of course a bit of a leap to go into the under 16, but then we've started under 15 as well, so they have a bit of a training there, but still if it was to be a perfectly smooth transition yes then we should start with the under 12s and do something regionally. D15

The data highlights that the participants believe that the structure in place for their player pathway was working. Although they still believed there were areas to further develop. These areas of development will be examined in the next section.

3.10.4.2 Gaps within the player pathway

It was evident that in Denmark, Norway, England, Finland and Germany concerns were expressed regarding the gaps in the development of players between the ages of 16-23 years of age. All have identified the problem of the lack of resources within this age group with regards to quality coaching and quality competition and are beginning to address this issue. England for example are discussing whether to increase the age of the centre of excellence to 18 and to develop better links with the further education colleges and Universities to develop the talented players. Denmark identified in developing the 16-19 age group. They have recently set up an under 23 team to help develop the under 19 group and have under 16 and under 18 leagues. Germany are looking to develop their under 19 teams so they do not lose potential talented player who may drop out of the system and the regions are piloting this programme.

We could increase the centre of excellence at 16 or put a new structure in 16-23 to work with colleges and Universities to develop talent – E5

There is a problem at u17 they have to move to a women's team, there are no u19 teams at the moment some of the regions are trying to develop this and are piloting a programme to secure girls at the age of 17 so they do not give up because they cannot get into the first team - G23

The player pathway at the elite level needs continuity they do not have the resources for this, we need to work on the gap from u19 to u23. There is no UEFA competition, we do not want to lose anybody, we want to make sure we have the continuity and make the players aware that once u19 has finished it is not over for them. – F10

The Danish representative identified that the 12-15 years of age group was also an area for concern because there were no national teams for this age group and required development so the elite players have access to appropriate coaching. Norway similarly wanted to develop further the grass roots level at 13-14 years of age and 7-11 years of age. Finland believed there were gaps in the age group 14-15 and they felt this was a crucial age where girls tend to "drop out" of football which has been evident in previous research in female drop out in sport, (Coakley & White, 1992).

The elite structure is working, in a perfect world it would be good to have the u16's playing and training and go to the same school. Quite smooth transition now We used to have an u19 players going to the A team, so we started last year an U23 team first time this year. There was a leap to U16 now we have U15 team. If it was a perfectly smooth transition, we need to look at the gap between the ages 12-15. For the U18 and U16 players we now have u18 league and u16 leagues. – D29

We have 2 challenges, to change 7-11, 13-14 development, need more activities, more training camps, more money for the 16, 17 age group. We lack junior teams at 16-19 too many 15/16 play in the senior teams – N18

The age group that is most vulnerable are u14/15 due to possible drop out, we want clear opportunities for them to play up to 35 – F10

The Netherland's representative believed that since the introduction the Eredivisie that the gap between highest league and National teams is closer together. As a result, they believe the A-squad, U19 and U17 reached the semi-finals of the European Championships within

a 1year time frame and the U17 team qualified for the U17 World Cup this year. Therefore, their structure is now working effectively according to their representative.

> *Since the Premier League is in place we have a full pyramid. The top of the pyramid was missing before. The A-squad, U19 and U17 reached the semi-finals European Championships within 1 year. U17 has the chance to qualify for the U17 World Cup this year. - H14*

3.10.4.3 Forced migration

Further examination from the data, highlighted that the club structure within the player pathway in some of the countries within the study, could not develop players to the elite level, in comparison to players from other countries that have professional or semi-professional leagues. This drew attention to an emerging theme of migration where players were forced to migrate due to the lack of playing opportunities at elite level in their respective country. Migration of athletes is a phenomena dating back to the earliest days of sport itself. (Williams, 2011). Countries such as Japan and USA had set up professional women's football leagues in the early 2000's. UEFA and FIFA began to be concerned by the Atlantic Drift of female European talent. (UEFA, 1985), which resulted in numerous players from Europe going to North America to play professional football. This saw a rise in semi-professional leagues in Sweden, Norway, Holland and Germany to keep Europe's elite from migrating to USA and Japan.

The Danish, English and Finish representatives of the associations interviewed, identified that due to the lack of a professional league in their country, elite players were moving country to play at a professional level. The Danish, English and Finish representatives were in favour of their players playing in another country, they understood the club structure in their country was not as strong as places such as Sweden, Germany, Norway and the USA, and believed it would benefit the player and as a result the National team.

> *And we have a lot of players that play abroad as well. Sweden and Norway, we have a lot of players who play full time professionally now, and that's good because it drives up the level of the national team and I think the level of the home league is*

still good because these youth players are getting so much better all the time, so we see that as a positive thing. D28

If we have tougher leagues somewhere else it also is part of the player development and player path that you move on, you move on to a different country to play in a different league, which gives you a different perspective also on the development and once you're playing career is over you come back to Finland, you have something to offer for the women's game, in one way or the other, maybe a coach, but if our players go to play in the Swedish league, which is tough, and they can combine studies and playing so that's good for them. And that's something that we, for instance at the moment most of our women players, women national players actually are playing either in Sweden or in Norway, or in Germany, which is good, F21

we're not offering them anything at the moment, other than a central contract, which is probably half, maybe even more than half the amount of money they'd be getting if they went to America, so none of us blame them for going because for them at this time and what they're offered it's probably the best thing for them. Obviously personally we're going to be disappointed because we want our best players here, but until we offer something better, which what you hope is that this league will set up, it will start to change the way the perception is of the women's game in this country at that level, in terms of the league. E18

For Germany, they had imposed a rule that no player at that time could move to another country to play football due to the upcoming world cup. (This has since been relaxed). The German representative in the following quote gives the justification for this.

I think it's special situation now for Germany because we have the World Cup and because the national team players they know that our coach wants to have them here in Germany for each and every national team match, for each and every training camp.

But what we learned from 2003 when we became world champion in USA we had three players coming back to the national team just two weeks before the World Cup started, where it was said okay is that possible to bring them back to the team, how is that for the team if just three players are coming back? They were 150% fit, much fitter than in the German league, much fitter than in the Swedish league, and I think much fitter than in English league, so because they were professional players and they were really focused on that, so from the individual physical point and mental point they were the strongest players in the team, but for us in 2011 when we want to have the team together for a couple of months it doesn't work if you have half of the team somewhere in the world. So that's more or less the reason why they don't go to other countries. G32

Williams, (2011), argues that new markets for female players were important factor 'pulling' players towards employment over increasingly wide geographical area, 'push' factors can be financial, a lack of prestige and a chance to experience new cultures. Being a female football player has not been an option for many players. The Norwegian representative

expressed their concern that many female footballers do not see football as a career and believes talented players are exiting from football this has been supported by Williams, (2011), who articulates that being a female footballer has not been an aspirational career path for many talented women players. It is unclear how many women and girls have been lost to the sport because no viable living could be made from it.

> *And still a lot of the players still don't see the professional football career as a possibility, they need of course, which in principle is good because I think maybe the professionals could also spend some time on doing something else, and still being professionals, but now it's too much, they still don't see that career, which means that probably many talents they get lost in the 15, 16, 17, because they are not so dedicated on that path. N20*

The following theme continues with the general of gaps within the player pathway and structure within the football organisations, and the data evaluates the impact of the lack of professional football in the women's game. This concept highlights how the amateur and professional club structure forces players to combine playing football and pursuing a career or continuing with an education to help with a future career outside of football.

3.10.4.4 Combining football & work/ education

The Danish representative explains how the DBU, Danish government helps the players gain an education whilst playing elite level football. The education systems allow players to extend their time in education so they have sufficient time to complete their studies and have adequate financial support to do so.

> *If you are in the women's A squad then you get a sort of scholarship, you get paid money from the FA each month, it's a small amount, but it's an amount to help them so they don't have to study and have a job on the side. So then the idea is that these people should only be studying and playing football. D23*

> *In Denmark you study and you get paid from the government to study, so most of these girl's study, from 16 to 19 is gymnasium, and then 20 to 23/24 is Bachelor, and then 24 to 26 or basically people are 28/29 when they're finishing studying in Denmark. That of course helps the footballer I think, it gives them more time, and also in Denmark we have the Elite Team Denmark it is called, with all the sports federations & Olympic committee, they help the girls to take their studies, if you're on the list in DBU while you're studying at university they'll give you more money and get more years so instead of giving you money to study for five years they might give you money to study for six or seven years, so that you still have an income and*

you can study for... so you can be away a lot from your studies, and you can study for many years. D12

In Germany, they have a system where national team players can join the military and this will fund them as a professional player in effect and once they finish playing internationally this system will fund them to complete an education in preparation for career outside of football.

Of course they all have contracts, but they are not professionals, so even if you see our national team players they are not contracted by German FA because they also get money from elsewhere if they are nominated for a national team and things like that, but they usually have two contracts, one with if they are with an employer, and second of course with a club, even Birgit Printz, is working and studying, we do have 10 players let's say, 12 players in the national team who can focus on their sport because we brought then into the structure of military so there is the possibility of sports development through the military which means they get money from military, but they don't have to be there, so they can focus, so they are more or less professional players. Which is also a good thing sometimes for girls just coming from high school having their exams there and then, I don't know what they would like to do, and then okay if you want to focus on football then let's do it like five or six years, and then we can see, and the military structure also gives them the chance if they are not any more part of the national teams they can go back to society with an education also paid by military, so it can bring them back to their normal life let's say like this. G16

However, the concept of a dual career is challenging to female players having to balance a playing career at club and international level and full time/part time education or a full time or part time vocation. The Norwegian, English and German representatives highlight the difficulties on balancing football and education or a vocation.

Team players now balance between competition and training this is not good enough, because some of them they have to be at work, and that is a challenge, they get exhausted because they train 8, 10, 12 times a week in parts of the year and that's challenging. N12

Well it's definitely been an issue otherwise we wouldn't have come up with central contracts, that has been the major reason why we've done it because the girls are too tired, you know, they're coming to training camps on the back of working extra hours because they don't want to let their companies down, then literally coming off the plane and walking into work, so we had to do that because at the top level that was what was happening to the girls, the hope of this is it will alleviate some of the problems for our very talented girls and they won't have to worry so much about the amount of hours they're doing, they can choose maybe part time roles that fit them rather than a full time, juggling full time and pretty much two full times really, full time

football, full time work, the hope is now they'll be able to do part time work with maybe full time football, which is better than what they were doing. E15

How do these girls develop playing the under 15, under 16, how do they handle the school education together with the sporting career, and they found out that these girls were in comparison to class members mentally much further because they had to organise themselves, , so they took care of themselves, they were able to organise themselves, for them it was not a problem to go around the country by train by themselves as a 15 year old girl, so they know how to handle. That doesn't mean that they are not any more kids, but for that age group they know what they want, they have a goal on the sporty side, but also for life. G13

Dual career literature is in its infancy, however Aquiline (2013); Brown, Fletcher, Henry, Borrie, Emmett, Buzza, Wombwell, (2015); Debois, Ledon, Wylleman, (2015); Gledhill and Harwood, 2015; Ryba, Stambulova, Ronkainen, Bundgaard, Selanne, 2015; Stambulova, Engstrom, Franck, Linner, Lindahl, (2015), has examined athletes and combining an education with a sporting career, however there is a lack of data examining athletes and pursuing a vocation. The notion of female football players balancing a football career and pursuing a vocation or continuing education is an area for further development and will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

3.11 Conclusions

In summary, it was evident that similarities existed in the formal organisational structures and subsequent presence, location and responsibility of the respective women's development representatives that existed amongst all of the national associations. These similarities existed independently of the country. Some structures appeared more mature than others such as Norway, Germany and Denmark. In the case of Germany their location within the strategic apex of the association suggest a national belief in the future of the women's game, offers the women's section a strong strategic position and subsequently increases the likelihood of influencing decisions and the allocation of resource. England, the Netherlands and Finland have shown that their structures are becoming more comparable with Norway, Germany and Denmark and the profile of women's football in those countries has increased as well as a growth in participation of female entering into

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the game. The success of England, the Netherlands and Finland in the 2009 and 2013 European championships infers that development, in some form, is taking place.

Despite the apparent similarity in their formal structures, the status, position and working practices of the respective national associations seemed to vary from organisation to organisation. Distinct roles and responsibilities were a consequence of both the nature and perception of the women's game but also a consequence of the different practitioners' responsibilities, skill base and specificity of each particular environment. All the participants responsible for developing the game interviewed in this study were situated within the middle line of the organisation, however their responsibilities were different and ranged from typical development roles (England, Germany and Norway), utilising the resources available to front line development and actual coaching duties (Denmark Finland and The Netherlands). However, each country expressed the intention in developing the female game and increase the participation and profile of women and girl's football, as a result of the directives from the strategies each football association has in place after the recommendations from FIFA and UEFA. The study has outlined the structures in each organization and looked at how this has impacted the development of women's football in each country. It has also identified gaps within the development structures within the player pathways and the resulting factors such as players having to migrate to play elite level club football and the lack of opportunities to play professionally has led to players combining football with a career of an education.

3.12 Future Directions

The findings highlight the gaps within the football association structures, the lack of a professional game, leading to players having to balance a playing career and either an education or a career or migrating to another country to have the opportunity to play professionally or semi- professionally. Study One has set the context of how women's

football is structured, therefore, there is a need to develop the research further and gain insight and understanding of the transitions female players experience within these football structures. The findings of this study highlight the real pathway challenges the female footballer faces. The work, thus far, does not provide any insight into how the players navigate their way (or not) through the respective complexities of these player pathways. This is an area for further investigation and the following study will aim to understand more about the relationship of the organisational structure of women's football and the individual player to gain insight into the complexity of experiences female players encounter through their playing career.

Chapter Four - Career Transition within Elite European women's football

Study One has identified how women's football is structured within the six European countries involved within this research. The results highlight the complex structure of women's football within the organisations and uncovers the gap within the structure. This produces significant challenges the players face and have to overcome, to become a successful elite footballer. The following study will extend the findings from Study One and address the gaps within the working practices within women's football.

4.0 Aims & Literature Review

Study Two incorporates the following aims:

1. To examine the developmental experiences of young female footballers from a Pan European perspective.

2. To better understand the complexity of performance and lifestyle issues affecting top level female European footballers.

Study Two aims to capture the complexity of development experiences female football players experience within their careers. Focusing on areas such as lifestyle balance, post 16 experiences, aspirations and support networks and player pathway structure through to discontinuation. These areas were thought to be appropriate areas to explore to add another dimension to the existing athlete transitional theory frameworks. The findings from Study One highlight the need to understand the transitions female players experience within their football structures and explore the relationship of the organisational structure of women's football and the individual player's journey within this.

The following section within this chapter explores the development pathways of women's football through application of transition theories, which have been developed through the

football association's strategies, to increase the number of women and girls participating in football and to develop a clear and coherent elite pathway.

4.1 Transitions in, within and out of sport

A sports career occupies up to a third of the lifespan and influences all aspects of athletic development, (Stambulova, 1994) with many sports performers experiencing a number of transitions throughout their sporting career (Wylleman, Alfermann & Lavallee, 2004). Transition research in sport has predominately centred on athlete retirement, (Mihovilovic,1968; Ogilvie and Taylor 1993; Erpic, Wylleman, Zupancic, 2004; Stambulova, Stephan, Japhag, 2007; Cosh, Crabb, Tully, 2015; Torregrossa, Ramis, Pallares, Azocar, Selva 2015), with some emerging studies examining the transition into elite sport (Bruner, Chandler and Spink, 2008).

Transition has been defined as "a change in assumptions about oneself and the world and requires a corresponding change in ones behaviour". (Schlossberg, 1981, p5). An athletic career can be defined as a multi- year sport activity, voluntarily chosen by the person and aimed at achieving his/her individual peak in athletic performance in one or several sport events. (Alfermann and Stambulova, 2007). The following chapter, will highlight how the existing literature contributes to athlete transition and examines the models developed to explain how and why transitions occur?

Transition theory was originally developed because of a need for a framework that would facilitate an understanding of adults in transition with a view to facilitating the help required in order to cope with the ordinary and extraordinary process of living (Evans, Forney and Guido- Di Brito, 1998). Schlossberg has been attributed to the development of this theory with its original purpose more aligned to counselling psychology. The 1990s saw this theory

developed further and applied to sport and more specifically the transitions into sport, within and out of sport.

Transitions have primary characteristics which is their degree of predictability. Transitions which are fairly predictable (normative) are generally organizational and /or structural in nature and may be related to changes in athlete's level of athletic achievement or age (e.g. initiation into competitive sport, the transition from high school to college level competitive sports, the transition from junior to senior level) (Stambulova,1994; Wyleman and Lavallee, 2004). Transitions that have a low degree of predictability (non- normative), on the other hand, may occur un-expectantly or not even at all. These latter transitions are called non-events and refer to those changes expected to take place, but which, due to circumstances, do not occur. (Petipas, Champagne, Chartrand, Danish and Murphy, 1997).

A secondary characteristic of a transition is their origin; while some transitions may originate intra-individually and be physical (e.g., growth spurts, injury) or psychological (e.g., a dip in achievement / motivation) in nature other changes may occur within the athlete's environment and be related to the athletic setting (e.g., retirement from competitive sport, conflicting athlete coach relationship) or to the athlete's psycho social (e.g., divorce of parents) educational (adjusting to college or university level), or professional (e.g., promotion to managerial level) life sphere.

Over the past thirty years' transition literature has evolved. The early theories of transition were embedded in psychology and (typically), dealt with end of career termination. The early theoretical frameworks derived from thanatology (i.e., the scientific study of death and the processes of dying) (Kubler- Ross, 2003), and gerontology (i.e., the study of the ageing process and the problems associated with ageing) (Wylleman, Lavallee and Alfermann, 1999). These models although instrumental in developing research in career termination and its issues, have limitations such as describing career termination as a negative event

and a singular event. Specifically related to this current research, the early work on transitions was not related to a sport population and did not take into account life-span development. Schlosberg's, (1981), model of human adaptation to transition looked at the end of career transition as a process rather than a singular event and included three major set of factors that interact during transition. Although the origin of this model was not related to sport, its concepts have been transferred into the sporting context using the defined characteristics, psycho social competence, gender, age, previous experience, perception of particular transitions (role change, occurrence of stress, and pre and post transition environments (e.g., evaluation of internal support systems, institutional support).

Swain, (1991); Ballie and Danish, (1992); Parker, (1994); Sinclair and Orlick, (1994), all have used this model and adapted to transitions within athletes. Sinclair and Orlick, (1994), developed the model further by shifting the focus and re-assigning specific characteristics to alternative categories which made factors related to athlete retirement and adjustment more specific. Greendorfer's, (1985), model was similar in nature to Sinclair and Orlick, (1994), and emphasized socialization perspectives highlighting the factors influencing involvement could also be related to those influencing withdrawal.

Career termination in this sense could be seen as a process showing continuity and transition. Stambulova, (1994), identified career transition as critical life events which have three levels. The general level, typical phases and principals. The specific level, differences between sports or athletes come into play. The individual level suggests differences in coping with transitions that exist, related to the athlete's personality and experiences. The result is either successful adjustment or crisis, resulting in the need for professional guidance. These recent approaches correspond to a sequence of transition phases each of which is a process and not a single event. However, they all concentrate on retirement or career termination.

Career termination has been defined and explored by several theorists, for example Taylor and Oglivie, (2001), and Patterson, (2008). Whereas the retirement process is viewed and defined differently as Career Transition by theorists such as Bailie and Danish, (1992); Stephan and Bilard, (2003); Wylleman and Lavallee, (2004). Athletic career transitions fall into two categories, those that are freely chosen, and those that are forced into retirement for reasons such as injury and de-selection (Wylleman et al., 2004). According to Bindle and Strata, (1992); Webb et al., (1998), termination is addressed as a result of situations that the athlete has no control over, and findings suggested that the athletes experienced the same difficulties when being forced into retirement. Transition out of elite sport is an extremely dynamic process, and according to Stephan and Bilard, (2003), several studies have shown that the transition out of sport is usually a 6 month to 1-year period. Factors which need to be taken into consideration when examining career termination are those such as control, it has been suggested by Patterson, (2008), to be a serious factor in affecting career termination and the retirement process, and whether or not the athlete has control over their decision out of sport as it facilitates psychological adjustment. These factors contribute to the difficulty or ease of the termination process for the elite athlete, and that it puts athletes at risk of experiencing post retirement psychological difficulties. From the social gerontology theoretical framework e.g. subcultures, Lavallee, (2000), suggested that the social interactions amongst athletes can lead to form a group consciousness, and that people can be well adjusted during retirement if the situation is different from social norms (Wylleman et al., 2004). Wylleman et al., (2004) suggest a positive view, that termination of the athletic career as a transition could serve as an opportunity for the socialisation into society, and transition models integrate a more diverse range of influence than Gerontology and Thanatological models which allows both positive and negative adjustments to occur (Wylleman et al., 2004).

Taylor and Ogilvie's, (2001), conceptual model of adaptation, alludes to the available resources for adaptation to career transition are coping strategies, social support and pre-

retirement planning. Folkman, Lazarus, Dunkel-Schetter, DeLongis, and Gruen, (1986), define coping as the changing of behaviour and cognitive efforts to deal with certain internal and or external demands which exceed the means of the individual (Grove, Lavallee and Gordon 1997). It is suggested there are two methods of coping; firstly, the changing of the sources of distress, and secondly the improvement of stressful emotions and the ability to acknowledge specific coping strategies (Grove et al., 1997). Grove et al., (1997), have proposed that the presence or absence of coping resources will influence the overall quality of adaptation to athletic retirement. Sinclair and Orlick, (1993), implies that there is only one study which they found in their research that has shown specific coping strategies correlate with adjustment to retirement from sport, strategies such as keeping busy, continuing to exercise and/or having other interests (cited in Grove et al., 1997). Werthner and Orlick, (1982), proposes that within their research the stages of recovery were identified as; shock, denial, anger, depression, understanding and acceptance. Their research also suggests if the athletes are aware of these stages they are more likely to be better prepared for the feelings they may experience in leaving elite sport (Bailie and Danish, 1992). There has been a shift from theoretical approaches on career termination to career transitions. The models include career transition models and career termination models proposed by Taylor and Ogilvie, (2001), Wylleman and Lavallee, have also integrated Taylor and Ogilvie's, (2001), conceptual model of adaptation to career termination into their research, which examines the entire course of the career transition process.

4.2 Transition into Sport

At the other end of the transition phase spectrum, Bloom, (1985), and Cote (1999), concentrated on the entry phase into elite sport and argued this was pivotal as a critical development phase, leading to an expansion of literature on talent development. Bloom, (1985), implies that the athlete may struggle with the adaptation of a whole new set of behaviours and beliefs. In his research, issues centred around personal and family sacrifices. Cote, (1999), suggested the transition of athletes into elite sport identified as the

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development period which athletes makes an investment into sport. This work led to a shift in the focus of identifying stages of development related to youth sports and how young athletes cope with the transitions.

Bloom, (1985), included 1. Initiation stage, where young athletes are introduced to organized sports and during which they are identified as a talented athlete. 2. The development stage during which athletes become more dedicated to their sport and where the amount of training and level of specialization is increased. 3. Mastery of performance stage in which athletes reach their highest level of athlete proficiency. Cote, (1999), identified stages of sampling, specializing, investment and mastery or performance, (Pummell et al., 2008).

Bloom, (1985), Cote, (1999), have identified transition into elite sport to be a potentially important period. Relatively little is known about the experience of the young athlete during this critical time. Only recently, have studies been conducted on the transition from the junior to senior phase in specific sports and in different cultural and contextual settings. Such studies range from the junior to senior transition of individuals and team sports in Russia, (Stambulova, 1994). The transition from club to regional level in British event equestrian, (Pummell et al., 2008). Transition from the academy to the first team in specific team sports (football), (Finn and McKenna, 2010; Morris, Tod, and Oliver. 2016; Morris, Tod, and Eubank 2016), and Canadian ice hockey player transition to elite level (Bruner, Munroe-Chandler and Spink 2008).

4.3 Career Transition within Sport – lifespan model
Wylleman and Lavallee, (2004), developed a holistic lifespan perspective that spans the athletic career and offers a framework outlining normative transitions athletes face within their career, these are predictable and anticipated transitions within their career such as

junior to senior transition. This beginning-to-end approach is shown in Figure 3.1. This approach illuminates further the interaction between developments in different spheres, (Pummell et al., 2008).

AGE	10	15	20	25	30	35
Athletic level	Initiation	Development		Mastery		Discontinuation
Psychological level	Childhood	Puberty Adolescence		Young adulthood		Adulthood
Psychosocial level	Parents Siblings Peers	Peers Coach Parents		Partner Coach Support staff Teammates Students		Family (Coach) Peers
Academic/ Vocational level	Primary education	Secondary education	(Semi-) professional athlete / Higher education	(Semi-) professional athlete		Post-athletic career
Financial level	Family	Family Sport governing body	Sport governing body Government/NOC Sponsor		Family	Employer

Figure 3.1 Wylleman and Lavallee (2013) Holistic Athletic career model

Wylleman and Lavallee's model (Figure 6) consists of five interacting layers i) athletic ii) psychological iii) psychosocial; iv) academic/vocational. and; v) financial. The top layer illustrates the four stages and transitions athletes face in their athletic development based on Bloom's (1985) work: a) initiation to about the age of 12 years; b) development from age 13 years to 19 years; c) mastery from 19 years to approximately 28 years of age and; d) discontinuation from about 28 years of age onwards. The age categories may differ between individuals depending on individual's abilities and development in and outside the sport. The second layer of Wylleman and Lavallee's model detailed the three stages and transitions occurring at a psychological level. These three stages and transitions mirror the age range of the first three stages and transitions of the top layer (athletic development).

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During adolescence the individuals mature and develop a stronger identity. Adulthood comes with more responsibility for the athlete both in and outside the sport. The third layer reflected changes in the athlete's social development relative to her or his athletic involvement. More specifically, this layer outlined the athlete's evolving interpersonal relationships with peers, coaches and parents. The fourth and final layer examined the transition at academic and vocational levels from primary education to secondary education to higher education and ultimately professional occupation. During the critical phase of the transition for example of a junior athlete to aspiring elite senior athlete. Wylleman and Lavallee's model suggested that the athlete may be in the developmental phase in the athletic layer, the psychological layer in adolescence, engaging in salient interpersonal relationships with peers, coaches and parents, and attending secondary school. The profile mirrored that of the most elite junior athlete who expected to progress to become successful at the senior level.

Reints and Wylleman, (2011), qualitatively tested Wylleman and Lavallee's, (2004), model and revealed specific need for more detail. For example, at the athletic layers, the transition into the mastery stage could be divided into two stages (into senior level and integration at senior level), and the discontinuation stage into four stages. At the psychological level, the stage of childhood and adolescence could be divided into two stages, (early/late childhood), and early/late adolescence), further, two new development layers were inductively derived: the physical and financial levels of development. Lavallee and Wylleman. further developed this and added semi- professional athlete in academic and vocational level. (Figure 1). This model focuses on the stages in the athlete's career development.

The Athletic Career Transition Model, (ACTM), developed by Stambulova, (1994), focusses on demands, resources, barriers, coping strategies and the outcome in the transition. This model may explain different transitions during the athletic career, one of which is the

transition from junior to senior sport. How effectively the athlete copes with the demands of the transition depends on the barriers faced and the resources available. Resources can be personal factors like motivation and knowledge while the environmental factors can be social support. Barriers can also be personal e.g. low –esteem and environmental e.g. difficulties combining sport with work/education. Athletes can prepare for the demands that a normative transition might require by developing or acquiring the resources before the transition so that they can use the resources to cope effectively with the transition demands. The model shows two main outcomes of the transition, each dependent on how the athlete copes with the demands of the transition. A successful transition indicates in most cases that the athlete coped with the demands of the transition on their own, although these athletes tend to have strong social support mechanisms. Alternatively, a crisis transition implies that the athlete has/had coping difficulties and required external support/intervention such as counselling. The consequences of an effective intervention are that the transitions are successful but delayed transition, whereas an ineffective intervention or no intervention results in "costs" such as depression, substance and alcohol abuse. (Stambulova, 2009).

The models have contextualized how athletes move through their careers, stages of career development (Wylleman and Lavallee's, 2004), or key transitional phases (Stambulova, 1994). The present research concentrates on athletes involved in individual sports, moving through these models. The existing research has not accounted for athletes who play in team sports, who have to deal with areas such as deselection and injury and the affect this has on the individual team player who has to compete for a position in the team. The literature does not differentiate between male and female athletes, and does not account for the challenges female athletes have to overcome to become an elite athlete, more specifically in women team sports. This will be explored within this study to add further understanding of female athletes involved in team sports navigating through their athletic career and highlight their critical transition phases.

4.4 Dual Career and transitions

Wylleman and Lavallee's, lifestyle perspective has played a key role in conceptualizing athlete dual career development and transitions and has led to a number of articles published recently in a special edition of Psychology of sport and exercise 2015.

The concept of a dual career, (DC), concerns the combination of an athletic career with education and/or occupation. (Stamulova and Wylleman, 2014). Stambulova and Wylleman, argue that the use of the holistic lifespan perspective is a natural positioning for research on dual careers and transitions because the transitions in terms of sport and education can be classified as normative for the majority of athletes as they occur regardless of their level of sport but fixed by the national education system. Dual careers therefore are inevitably associated with challenges and changes in all other domains of athlete development (psychological, psycho-social, physical and financial).

Previous research has centred on the United States collegiate system Petitpas, Brewer and Van Raalte, (2009). However, the European commission (2012) "The EU Guidelines on Dual Careers of Athletes, has provided national stakeholders with a minimal standard for athletes' dual career arrangements in the EU countries and encouraged to develop national dual career guidelines specific to their country and sports. This has contributed in an increase of national research exploring current dual career systems and ways for its further development. (Ryba, Stambulova, Ronkainen and Buudgaard 2015; Capranica, Foerster, Keldorf, Leseur, Vandewalle, Mojca, Abelkalns, Keskitalo, Kozsla; Figueiredo, Guidotti 2015).

Institutional policies and structural conditions in US universities have been examined previously (Bale 1991; Chepyator-Thompson, 2003; Love and Kim, 2011). This research explored the unique nature of the collegiate sports system in the USA facilitating dual

careers for athletes enabling these athletes to obtain scholarships and to study a university degree while at the same time participating in high level sport. Aquilina and Henry (2010) examined policy and practice in Higher education for dual careers and identified four positions 1, state-centric provision, 2, the state formally connecting educational and sport bodies, 3, national sports organisations directly contacting educational bodies, and 4, no formal structure. 25 EU member states were involved and identified several well-functioning dual career support structures in countries such as, Denmark, Germany, UK, the Netherlands and Italy. Caput-Jogunica et al. (2012), highlighted the role of universities in athletes' dual careers across the EU. Different practices were identified dependent on the country for example Talented Scholarship scheme (TASS) in the UK. Admission to any university of college for Olympic athletes without and entrance examination in Hungry. They found that there is flexibility within studies for a successful dual career, and that countries in the EU were at different levels in supporting the athletes.

Country specific research on structures on supporting a dual career has reported in France Honta, (2007), noted that different institutions have their own habitual ways of action, which are difficult to modify to serve the dual career purpose for example, tolerating student absence and creating extra teaching assistance. This created tension, but stakeholders admitted that there was a need for this co-ordination for the system to be successful. In England, Platts and Smith, (2009), summarised that the anti -academic attitudes of professional football may limit the efficiency of dual career strategies that have been implemented to enhance players' education and training.

The majority of the research on dual careers has centred upon athlete experiences of a dual career, (Aquiline 2013; Ryba, Stambulova, Ronkainen, Bundgaard, Selanne, 2015; Stambulova, Engstrom, Franck, Linner, Lindahl,2015; Debois, Ledon, Wylleman, 2015; Brown, Fletcher, Henry, Borrie, Emmett, Buzza, Wombwell, 2015; Gledhill and Harwood, 2015). Prominently the majority of the research examines the challenges associated with

combining high level sport pursuits alongside a formal education (Petipas, Van Raalte and Brewer 2013; Baron-Thiene and Alfermann; Torregrosa, Ramis, Pallares, Azocar and Selva; Lopez de Subjana, 2015; Brown Fletcher, Henry, Borrie, Emmett, Buzza and Wombwell, 2015; Debois, Ledon and Wylleman, 2015; Gledhill and Harwood 2015; Pink, Sander and Stynes, 2015; Tekavc, Wylleman and Cecic Erpic 2015). This area of research has been attributed to the significant number of talented and elite sport performers attending further and higher education institutions (Haley and Saghafi, 2012), and the increased awareness of the demands faced by athletes during these years (Stambulova, Alfermann, Statler and Cote, 2009). Aquilina, (2013), argued that universities are increasingly becoming hubs for athletes as they can provide the support and flexibility that best enable performers to continue their sporting career. Universities it can be argued do provide greater access to support networks, facilities and flexible academic programmes, (Aquiina, 2013). Wylleman and Lavallee, surmise that Universities are a facilitative environment that can aid in development. This is supported by Stambulova, (1994), who suggests that during the years of 18 to 21 athletes from most sports, experience a normative transition from youth to senior aged competitor and attempt to become a mastery level performer. However, Petitpas et al., (2013), argue a range of transitions occur when the student athletes move away from home to participate in collegiate sport, (away from family and friend network) and this in turn may create difficulties in athletes lives (isolation, loneliness). It is also argued that intercollegiate athletes who tend to devote much of their time and energy to sport, frequently prioritise athletic careers to the detriment of their academic achievements. (Ryan and Thorpe, 2013; Cosh and Tully, 2014).

Although there has been an increase of interest in dual careers through research, the challenges that arise is how athletes balance an athletic career and an academic/vocational career. There is a gap in the knowledge examining an athletic/playing career and a vocation. Athletic retirement literature has centred on preparation for retirement, however the existence of literature combining sport career and vocation is lacking. In the area of

women's football, Study One examined the organizational structures within women's football and the impact the development of these structures have on female players having to combine a football career and an education or a vocation even if they are playing professionally, the following sections will add insight into this area and better understand the complexity of the performance and lifestyle issues of female football players. It will also examine the developmental experiences of female footballers from a pan European perspective.

4.5 Methodology - Interviews

4.6 Framework

The theoretical framework this study adopts is an interactionist approach, the study aims to understand and explore the social life and social behavior of the players and this approach suggests that the players are actively engaged in the development of their own social lives (football career), they make their choices, they evaluate their opinions, they are reflexive (think about themselves, their situations and the other people involved in those situations) and they are motivated above all by a desire to do what is best for themselves. (Sparkes and Smith, 2014).

4.7 Ethics

Prior to the data collection ethical consent was sought and granted by Liverpool John Moores University's ethics board. Prior to each interview, each player signed consent forms and were given the opportunity to read a participant information sheet (refer to appendix).

4.8 Sample selection and composition

Patton, (2002), outlined general categories of sampling and 15 sub categories. For this study criterion based sampling and convenience sampling were chosen. Criterion based sampling allows the research a pre-determined set of criteria for selecting, sites or cases. Participants are chosen because they have a particular feature, attribute or characteristic

or have a specific experience. With convenience sampling researchers select those cases which are easiest to access under given conditions. Gibson, (2012a, 2012b), used both of these sampling types to select participants for semi structure interviews. This was because he wanted to include runners from a variety of background and with different networks, goals and experiences of running.

The six countries selected in this study were a continuation from a previous study with the top ten ranked European countries for women's football. Wylleman and Lavallee's life span model was adapted by using Age groups 18-23, (technically junior international), 24-28 (peak of career), 29-35 (discontinuation). Players were identified in the mastery and perfection stage and discontinuation stages according to Wylleman and Lavallee's model.

	Early Career		Mid -Career		Late Career
AGE.	18.	20.	25.	30.	35
Athletic Level.	Development		Mastery.		Discontinuation =
Psychological Level	(Young) Adulthood		Adulthood		
Psycho-Social Level	Peers. Coach. Parents Students		Partner. Coach. Support staff Team mates		Family (Coach) Peers
Academic. Vocational. Level	Further Education	Semi - Professional athlete			
		Higher Education	(Semi-) Professional athlete		Post athletic Career
Financial Level	Family Sport Governing body	Sport Governing body Government/NOC Sponsor		Employer	

Figure 3.2 Adapted Holistic Athletic career model

The sample (n=17) were placed into three age categories (18-23, 24-28, 29-35) from six countries (Denmark, England, Finland, Germany, Norway and The Netherlands) and were interviewed using semi structured interviews. The following section summarises the player profiles and a pseudonym (Joan, Frankie, Elaine), will be assigned to each player which will be used in the results section to ensure anonymity.

4.9 Player Profiles

Early Career 18-24 Years

 Joan

 8 September 1989 (age 27)

Place of Birth: Trier, West Germany

Position: Centre back

Current: Team Arsenal

Youth club career: MSG/FSG Zewen-Igel, MSG/FSG Schweich-Issel 2005

Senior club career 1. FC Saarbrücken 2005–2009, 2009–2011 VfL Wolfsburg 2011–2014 Paris Saint-Germain 2014–2016 Arsenal 2016 –

National squads 2007–2008 Germany U19, Germany U20 2008–2011 Germany 2010-present

Patricia

10 October 1990 (age 26)

Midfielder

Club 2010–2012 Umeå **Retired**

National Squad: 2011–2013, 22 caps.

Nordlund quit football for health reasons in April 2013, aged 22, three months before UEFA Women's Euro 2013

Katherine

19th January 1990 (age 27)

Midfielder

Clubs: Colorado Rapid 2012, **Skovbakken IK** 2014 -

Junior National Squad: Korsgaard has captained both the U-19 and U-23 Danish national teams, including the 2007 U-19 squad at the European Championships in Iceland.

National Squad 2011-2013

In total, Korsgaard has earned 46 caps for Denmark from the youth to senior ranks.

Elaine

9 May 1989 (age 28)

Aylesbury, England

Forward

Youth Clubs: Arsenal Ladies 1997–2005

Senior clubs: Chelsea Ladies 2005–2008, Leeds Carnegie Ladies 2008–2010, Arsenal Ladies 2010–2013 Notts County Ladies 2014–

Junior National Team: Under–17, 19, 20 and 23 levels

Senior National Team: England 2010- present, (56 caps) Great Britain 2012

Samantha

29 May 1990 (age 27)

Sneek, Netherlands

Midfielder

Clubs: 2007–2012 Heerenveen, FC Twente 2012–2014, LSK Kvinner FK 2014–

National team: 2006– Netherlands 109 caps

Mid- Career 24-28 years

Gail

2 March 1986 (age 29)

Place of Birth: Stavanger, Norway

Youth club career: Austrått IL

Senior club career: Klepp IL

National squad: Norway 2010 – present

Ims made her senior national team debut in January 2010, in a 1–0 friendly defeat by China at La Manga Stadium. She was called up to be part of the national team for the 2011 FIFA Women's World Cup and UEFA Women's Euro 2013.

Toni

10 March 1988 (age 27)

Defender

Clubs: HJK Helsinki 2005–2009, Florida State Seminoles 2010, Pali Blues 2010, Åland United 2010, Umeå IK 2011 – present

National Team: 2007– Finland

Alison

25 March 1985 (age 32)

Roelofarendsveen, Netherlands

Left back / Left winger

Clubs: RCL Leidendorp 2003–2005, Ter Leede 2005–2007, AZ 2007–2011, Telstar 2011–2013, Ajax 2013–2015, 2015 – Jena (Germany).

National team 2005– Netherlands 96 caps

Jade

14 September 1983 (age 34)

Rostock, Germany

Midfielder

Clubs: FFC Turbine Potsdam 1999–2015 **Retired**

National Team: Germany 2005–2015. UEFA Women's Championship: Winner 2009

Clare

2 July 1985 (age 30)

Defender

Clubs: Brøndby IF, 2008, LdB FC Malmö 2008–2012, Brøndby IF 2012 – present

National Team: 2005– Denmark, 67 caps

After four years at LdB FC Malmö – disrupted by the injuries – she returned to Brøndby IF in December 2012. In December 2013 she announced a break from football and moved into a youth coaching role with Brøndby due to her pregnancy.

Liz

2 August 1983 (age 33)

Nuneaton, England

Defender

Clubs: Coventry City Ladies 1997–2000, Birmingham City Ladies 2000–2008, New York Magic 2006, Arsenal Ladies 2008–2009, Leeds United Ladies 2009–2010, Birmingham City Ladies 2010–2013, Chelsea Ladies 2014, Notts County 2015–present

Nation Team England U19 world cup 2002 Senior team 2003–present

Late career 28-35 years

Linda

20 June 1981 (36)

Lørenskog Norway

Midfield

Clubs: LSK Kvinner FK, Athene Moss, Setskog/Høland FK and Kurland FK. **Retired**

National team: U19 1998, She played 45 games for the four Norwegian youth national teams.

Senior National Team: 2006 – 2013 65 caps

Carrie

16 November 1978 (age 38)

Halle, East Germany

Forward

Clubs: 1. FFC Turbine Potsdam 1994–1997, TuS Niederkirchen 1997, 1. FFC Turbine Potsdam 1997–2007, Atlanta Beat 2003 1. FFC Frankfurt 2007–2011 VfL Wolfsburg 2011–2014 **Retired**

- Bundesliga top goal scorer 2002, 2006, 2011
- German champions 2004, 2006, 2013
- DFB-Pokal winners 2004, 2005, 2006, 2013
- UEFA Women's Cup winners 2005, 2008, 2013

National Team: 2001–2011 Germany

- World champions 2003

- Olympic Bronze medal 2004 and 2008

- European champions 2005

Dot

10 August 1981 (age 35)

Place of Birth: Curaçao

Defender

Clubs: Heike Rheine 2004–2007, ADO Den Haag 2007–2008, AZ 2008–2011, Telstar 2011– present. National Team 2000– present Netherland 125 caps

Kim

22 November 1982 (age 35)

Kauhajoki, Finland

Midfielder

Clubs: United Pietarsaari 1998–2001, Florida Atlantic Owls 2002–2004, United Pietarsaari 2005–2006, Bälinge 2007–2008. Wolfsburg 2009–2011, Jitex 2012, LSK Kvinner FK 2013, PK-35 Vantaa 2014, FC Ilves 2015 **Retired**

National team: 1999–2015 Finland 100 caps

Kristen

13 April 1977 (age 40)

Centre   back

Defensive midfielder

Clubs: HEI 1994–2002, IK Skovbakken 2002, Fulham 2002-3, Fløya 2003–2005 Djurgården/Älvsjö 2006, Asker 2007-8, Stabæk 2009-13, Adelaide United 2014-15, Stabæk 2015 **retired**

National Team: 1994–2013 Denmark 210 Caps

Frankie

2 February 1978 (age 39)

Horley, England

Clubs Arsenal Ladies 1996–2013**, Retired** Ottawa Fury (loan) 2007

National Team: 1997–2012 England 90 caps

UEFA Women's Cup: 2006–07.

FA Women's Super League: 2011

FA Women's Premier League National Division: 1996–97, 2000–01, 2001–02, 2003–04, 2004–05, 2005–06, 2006–07, 2007–08, 2008–09, 2009–10.

FA Women's Cup: 1997–98, 1998–99, 2000–01, 2003–04, 2005–06, 2006–07, 2007–08, 2008–09, 2010–11.

FA Women's Premier League Cup: 1997–98, 1998–99, 1999–00, 2000–01, 2004–05, 2008–09

FA Women's Community Shield: 1999-00, 2001–02, 2004–05, 2005–06.

Table 3.1 Sample summary

Country	Early career	Mid- Career	Nearing End of Career
England	Elaine	Liz	Frankie
Denmark	Katherine	Clare	Kristen
Finland	Patricia	Toni	Kim
The Netherlands	Samantha	Alison	Dot
Germany	Joan	Jade	Carrie
Norway	**No participant**	Gail	Linda

4.10 Interviews

Chapter two discussed the rationale for using interviews within this study. Sparkes and Smith, (2014), defines a qualitative interview is a conversation with a purpose in which the interviewer aims to obtain the perspective; feelings and perceptions from the participant in the research. This was my intention, I wanted to listen to the player's accounts of their football experiences, I wanted them to tell their stories. This method of using Semi structured interviews, using a pre-planned interview guide to direct the player, relying on predominantly open-ended questions, allowed this to happen to a degree. It collected the important information about the topic while giving the participants the opportunity to report on their own thoughts and feelings, (Gratton and Jones, 2004). However, the first interviews with the Norwegian players who were interviewed together led me to acknowledge that a more flexible approach to the questions I had prepared would yield a greater depth and richness of data, as would interviewing players individually because I believed the players I

interviewed together did not open up fully about their experiences and kept looking at each other for reassurance.

4.11 Construction of Interviews

The semi structured interviews were used to try and create an informal conversation and environment where the players could feel at ease and share their experiences. (Biddle, Markland, Gilbourne, Chatzisarantis & Sparkes, 2001). The structure of the interviews incorporates aim two and three outlined at the beginning of this section. The interview schedule was deductively developed in accordance with the themes drawn from previous literature, (Ogilvie and Taylor 1993; Stambulova, 1994; Lavallee and Wylleman, 2002; Alfermann, & Lavallee, 2004; Pummell.et al., 2008; Relvas, Littlewood, Nesti, Gilbourne, and Richardson, 2010). Table 3.2 summarizes the content and structure of the interview schedule while the complete interview schedule can be seen in Appendix

Table 3.2. Interview Phases - Summary of the Interview schedule

Phase 1 – Introduction and outline structure of the interview, duration, interview schedule and aims. Reinforce confidentiality for the participant
Phase 2 - Aim to understand how the players started playing football, differences in countries due to structures and age of player   Pummell.et al., (2008); Relvas, Littlewood, Nesti, Gilbourne, and Richardson, (2010).
Phase 3- Aim to gain a better understanding of the complexities in transitioning through player pathways   Ogilvie and Taylor, (1993); Stambulova, (1994); Lavallee and Wylleman, (2002); Alfermann, & Lavallee, (2004); Pummell.et al., (2008); Relvas, Littlewood, Nesti, Gilbourne, and Richardson, (2010).

Phase 4- Aim to understand how players overcame any barriers to become an elite female football player Pfister (2003); Fasting (2004); Williams (2003, 2007,2011); Brus and Trangbaek (2004); Aoki; Crumbach; Creesen; Schmitter; Smith (2010).
Phase 5 Aim to identify whether the player is a professional footballer or do they have a dual career and how they balance this? Aquiline (2013); Ryba, Stambulova, Ronkainen, Bundgaard, Selanne (2015); Stambulova, Engstrom, Franck, Linner, Lindahl,(2015); Debois, Ledon, Wylleman (2015); Brown, Fletcher, Henry, Borrie, Emmett, Buzza, Wombwell (2015); Gledhill and Harwood (2015).
Phase 6 – End appreciation given to participant for giving up their time and sharing their experience

The interviews lasted between 30 minutes to 80 minutes and were recorded and later transcribed and yielded 157 pages (77,223 words) of interview transcript.

4.12 Data Analysis and Representation

To analyses the data, content analysis was considered an appropriate way to represent the date collected. This type of analysis will allow the identification of key themes by making connections across the participant's career and attempting to identify patterns and meanings as constructed by the player. (Smith and Sparkes, 2009). The data was coded and to help with this process, it was loaded into the nvivo software. The nvivo procedure coded large amounts of data into blocks that represented a common theme (Côté and Salmela, 1996). The process began with identifying a basic unit of analysis (a raw data theme), namely a quote that clearly identified a subjective experience. First order themes were then identified by clustering (Biddle et al., 2001) the quotes around underlying uniformity's (common threads), which in turn became the emergent themes. This process entailed comparing and contrasting each quote with all other quotes and emergent themes

to unite quotes with similar meanings and separate quotes with contrasting meanings (Biddle et al., 2001).

The above process created a series of Content Analysis Tables from Player Interviews' totaling 110 pages of data. Given its extensive nature, 1st and 2nd, order and general dimensions were then extracted and united in a series of summary content/ analysis tables (Biddle et al., 2001).

A combined process of inductive and deductive content analysis progressing from the initial quotes upward through each theme level was consensually validated (Scanlan et al., 1989a). Consensus validation was the agreement between the researcher and the supervisory team (comprising of experienced qualitative researchers), also known as the triangulation group, to reach agreement on the final form of each quote and theme (Scanlan et al., 1989b). In line with Côté et al. (1993), the researcher presented the final interpretational analysis to the triangulation group with rationales behind their structure. Any disagreement required a review of the transcript to agree upon repositioned or reworded themes. By providing more than one view of the data, the consensus validation (Scanlan et al., 1989b), or triangulation procedure (Côté et al., 1993), reduced the potential bias of the researcher, thus quotes identified and themes created were thought to be more accurate representations of the participant's experience.

4.13 - Study Two – Interviews - Results and Discussion

The following section comprises of content analysis tables and discussion. Table 3.0 makes up the 5 general dimensions (and 5 tables) resulting from content analysis procedures. The results and discussion of content analysis themes are discussed alongside relevant theoretical literature and presented together in order to present findings coherently and avoid repetition (Smith, 1997). As outlined within the preceding methodology, results relating to the transition phases in Lavallee and Wylleman's, (2014), holistic career

development model are discussed using each of the 5 tables / general dimensions and their corresponding, 2nd and 1st order themes. Raw data quotes are integrated into the following section to clarify categories and demonstrate the depth and richness of data (Scanlan, Stein & Ravizza, 1989). The section concludes with a broader discussion in relation to the data as a whole and the overall aim of the research.

Table 3.3 Study Two themes

1st order theme	2nd order theme	General Theme
Club Age groups National Team Age groups	Environment	**Athletic Level/ psychological**
Club National Team Age groups intensity	Adaptability	
Club National Team Age groups intensity	Adjustment	
De-selection	Unexpected time off	
Injury		

1st order theme	2nd order theme	General Theme
family	Advice Encouragement support	**Pscho-social**
coach	Information Sport federation Club support	
peers	Advice Encouragement support	

1st order theme	2nd order theme	General Theme
parents	Lodgings transport	**Financial**
Football Association	Scholarships	

1st order theme	2nd order theme	General Theme
Forced activity Planned activity Balancing workload	Combining football and a vocation	**Academic/vocation**
Forced	Combining football and an education	
Planned balance		

1st order theme	2nd order theme	General Theme
Lack of organisational Support	Barriers	**Complex transition**
Culture of the country		
Migration		

Football structures		

The content analysis produced 49 raw data themes. From these raw data themes, 29 first order themes, 20 second order themes and 5 general themes presented in table 3.3 Four of the five themes identified were deductively aligned to Lavallee and Wylleman's, (2014), holistic career development model which frames how the players navigated through their player pathway and the impact of the transitions to become an elite player. The fifth theme illuminates the complexity of transitioning through the pathway as a female elite football player who is a unique culture of athletes within generalized sport and highlights the areas which the players had to overcome to transition successfully to become an elite player.

4.13.1 Athletic and psychological level

The experiences of the players within this study followed a similar sequence of events with most of the players being involved in football from an early age. They were introduced into football by a male role model, sibling or father. They all followed the same pattern of starting their playing career in a local club which led to them being noticed by local scouts and then progressing to district teams/academies and then the national team.

> *when I was 14 my coach at my first club sent me to this practice. This was when I got into the regional team and we played against other teams in Denmark, and then after that I was playing in a tournament and I got selected for the U17 national team, and after that I got on the U19 national team, and now I'm in the senior national team. Katherine.*

It is within the distinct age groups, (1st order theme), of the players, 18-23, (Development/Mastery), 24-28, (Mastery), 29-35, (mastery/discontinuation), that differences in their football pathway experiences begin to be evident. To add context to these players' accounts and to understand their transitions through their career Wylleman's and Lavallee's model have been used to explain what was happening in each stage of transition. The purpose of Wylleman and Lavallee's model is a framework to situate and

reflect upon the development, interactive and interdependent nature of transitions and stages faced by the athlete.

The younger age groups in this study which were the 18 to 23 and 24-28 age groups were fortunate to experience a junior international structure (2nd order theme), which had an under 15, under 17, under 19 and under 21 teams. All the players played at junior national level. However, their experiences differed depending on age.

> *I was on the international team for u19 and then I got selected for the u 21 national team. Clare.*

> *I started in the national team on the under 15s. then I played under 17 and U20 national team. Samantha*

> *I got on the U17 national team, and after that I got on the U19, and now I'm with this national team. Katherine.*

> *I went through all the junior national teams, 17, 18, 19, then 21s, 23s, and then the women's senior team. I was invited to play with the senior national team when I was 15, and I was too young to play for like a world cup qualifier. Kim.*

> *I didn't get into any of the National team until I was older, so I didn't play for any youth national teams.*
> *I played three games in the highest league in Holland, and the national team coach came to me said you can come and play for us. Alison.*

Fourteen of the players experienced playing in the advanced junior national teams (15,17,19), and this age group had experience of competing in major tournaments as junior internationals with the U17 World cup and U17 European championship inauguration in 2008. The under 19 European Championship were introduced in 1998, and the U20 world cup in 2002. This junior elite pathway can allow transition to the perfection/mastery stage and ease the junior to senior transition to the senior international squads. (Wylleman, and Lavallee 2004). However, it can be argued that the athletic level accounts for fairly predictable events within an athlete's career such as transition from junior internationals to senior internationals but does not fully explain the characteristics in terms of adapting to a new playing environment highlighted by the players in this study. The following section

identifies the challenges faced by the players with regards to secondary characteristics within events in their careers at the athletic and psychological level.

Although development pathways have been introduced to aid in the transition from development to mastery the players within this study expressed how they had to adapt to a change in playing environment and adjust to the intensity (2nd order themes) of this level of mastery.

> *It was the physical aspect of the game…we were just 'developing' players in the women's team, so it went pretty smoothly. Before I joined the team we went to the practices once a week... then we had more practices and it was harder, and then I was in both national teams; I then had a lot of football but I don't remember thinking that it was a problem. I think I just enjoyed it. Toni.*

The younger players that experienced playing in the u15, u17, u19, u21, u23 squads and then the senior squad, felt that their transition through the development stage was relatively smooth due to having a junior international structure which allowed them to play in the junior tournaments such as the European championship and World Cup. The opportunity to play in junior tournaments appeared to ease the pressure when they moved into the senior teams because they had already played in major tournaments and were used to the intensity of training at that level:

> *I think the transition has been pretty good. For me it was a step by step approach, the district [team] then [subsequent representative teams] and then the national team with Finland, I went through every step and yes I think it went smoothly and I felt good because I got to the end and I never stayed in the lower levels, so I think it went well. Toni.*

However even through the junior player pathway structure (1st order theme) was in place, some of the players experienced difficulties in transitioning to the senior team. Joan found it really hard because she did not play at the under 15 level and Germany has a set system of play in terms of formation and tactics and having to experience a new formation when other team mates had previous experience of this through the junior national teams, was something Joan found difficult to adjust to;

> *it's really hard if you don't go through the under 15s, under 16s, because Germany has a really straight system and if you don't fit in it you struggle and can't play, but you have to fit in the system, and I did not learn that as fast in the training camp.* Joan.

This highlights the constraints of the system for this player and identifies limits within this system for the player to progress at this level due to her not having the experience at junior level. It intimates that it is a one size fit all system and only allows for the player to play a certain way, which can be argued that is taking the ability to adapt away from the player. On the other hand, it may be seen as a system that identifies the talent the coach required for their team and the players have to adapt, however it is easier to adapt when you have had more years' experience of the system. Joan went on to explain how she had played in the U20 world cup but the thought of playing at senior level made her nervous. She also found it difficult to adapt to the training camps at senior level, she felt it was like a prison training four to five times plus a game in a few day period. The more established players, she felt had priority over her position and it was hard to convince the coach she deserved a chance especially for the senior world cup squad.

Alison was told by the coach to lose weight and become stronger and she began to realise that the senior team was more physical than club football, she decided to move clubs to play at a higher level, with this she found it difficult because she had to train more and that had an impact on her work. She also did not get a lot of playing time once in the senior squad and felt it knocked her confidence by being sat on the bench.

> *I lost 10 kilos in weight, and became stronger, I recognised that I was more physical than the other players in my club, so I played there for another season and then I moved clubs, a better standard club, I had to train more and find the time to do this because of my job. That is when I started getting picked regularly for the national team. Alison*
>
> *Playing at a higher standard gives you confidence, but there are moments it's hard because when you're on the bench you're feeling am I good enough to be in the first XI? So that sometimes is hard, I just try and train harder and do my best. Alison*

For Patricia and Jade, they thought it was a big step to move up the senior team, having to learn a new system, training and playing more games.

> *Being in the u21 team and then becoming a senior player I found the gap was big. In the u21's you only played in the Nordic cup once a year and that was it, so when I played my first senior game at 23 it was hard. Jade.*

> *From the junior national team to the senior team I think it's a big step, I don't know if it is because we have a new trainer, we had a new system and he wants us to play differently, but it is harder than the junior team. So I think that was a big step. Patricia*

Elaine felt she did not cope very well, because it was a change in environment, new players, everything was out of her control, it was completely different from what she was used to. She did not enjoy it to begin with, it was a weird environment for her to be in initially, everything was faster, had sports science support to get used to, fitness testing, ice baths. It was what she wanted to do, but needed the support from her family to keep going. She loves it now, but it was scary at that age when she didn't know the people and the environment that well.

> *I don't think I coped with it very well actually. You go from being in an environment where you know everything to being in an environment where it's out of your control, I didn't really enjoy it to begin with, not because I didn't want to be there, it was just completely different everyone is moving faster than you, it's a very weird environment to be in initially, something that you have to get used to, for example, ice baths in a bucket I wasn't really used to that! Being fitness tested randomly, so it was quite scary to begin with. Elaine.*

The Older group 28-35 did not have the opportunity of having a U15, U17, U19 structure, these players only had an under 16 and under 21 international structure. The players felt their transition to the senior squad was more difficult because the gap was too big from u16, to u21 to the senior squad and suggested some of their development was hindered by being sat on the bench waiting for establish players to retire and them given their chance.

Frankie described how she found it hard to adapt (2nd order theme) to the senior level straight from playing U16 junior internationals. She would train with her club twice a week then when she was with the England seniors they trained twice a day so it was really demanding and having to play with players a lot older than her and it was a massive jump for her then going back to training twice a week and then back to another camp it was exhausting. She also spent a lot of her time initially sat on the bench as a substitute waiting her time. If there was a junior level at U17 or 19 she could have gained more experience.

> *I got my first senior cap at 18, but didn't get a regular start until I was 22; probably because the captain was in my position and was more experienced and older. The time before that for three, four, five years, I was always on the bench. So I would always be thinking I'm not good enough. Then I realised that I have to wait my time; you don't realise it then and think it's because you're not good enough but you realise the gap between club football and international football is huge... Now you see that the gap is small because there are junior international teams from 15-23 and the younger ones get the experience at international level now. Frankie.*

Frankie feels that if she had the opportunities the players have now, she would have adapted better because the junior players now play with their own age range and have more things in common and interact better with the older players and do not feel intimidated. The younger players coming into the senior squad she feels adapt better because they know what is expected of them

> *it is very hard for me to talk or identify the older players when I joined the senior national team, now the younger girls that come up to the seniors know exactly what is demanded of them, they know the whole structure, they know that at this time they wake up and then go training, come back, so they get used to it and they do that in a group where they are all at the same level experiencing the same things, so they come into our seniors without even a flicker of an eyelid and they chat to you... I was scared to talk to one of the older ones when I started, they come in with so much more confidence and understanding about the positions. Frankie.*

For Carrie, she explained how at the age of 17 going into the senior squad she felt intimidated by the older experienced players and how she had to adapt to a faster game. She also shared her experience off how German Unification impacted her playing in the new German national team and how she found it hard to integrate with players from the west.

> *I think my first senior game was when I was, 17. And this was hard because you don't know those older players, they were big women and I was very young and small, and very shy and the game was very fast and I had only one or two hours in the practice and it was very hard,*
>
> *It was hard to play there, I was from East Germany and the wall was down and, it was difficult to become a member of the team that was predominately girls from West Germany. Carrie*

Kim shared her experience of being put into the senior squad too early at 15/16 years of age and how the gap from playing club football to the senior national team was too large of a gap.

> *I first got picked for the team when I was 15, and I think that actually was too early, well I wasn't allowed to play in any games, but then next year when I was 16 I went to the Algarve camp in 99, and playing against Michelle Akers, and the USA team and I was playing at a club in Finland in the women's second division and then I was playing against the world champions I felt so out of my depth. Kim.*

The transition from junior to senior is crucial for the athletes who want to reach the elite level in sport. Bloom, (1995), Cote, (1999), have identified transition into elite sport to be a potentially important period. This transition relies not only in a sporting context; new challenges in practice and competition, the athlete's experiences new demands in psychological, psychosocial and in academic/vocational development. As a result, the athletes find themselves under high life stress. This supports the data collected where the players have found this transition from junior international to senior international challenging.

The structures of these pathways appear to be relatively smooth for the early age groups because of the junior international player pathway in place and more problematic for the older age group due to the lack of refined age groups at different levels. However, all players regardless of age and country did experience some complexities moving through their transitions having to adapt to a new environment, new team mates, higher intensity of training and playing. It can be argued through the experience of the players that the

International football pathway implemented by the football associations did allow successfully transitions into senior level.

The club structure, (1st order theme), was found to be of significance and where the transitions through the players' careers were challenging to some of the players. Whereas age can be argued as a significant factor within the international pathway structure, it was the country that had more significance within the club pathway structure. Within four of the six countries which consisted of 12 players in total, it was highlighted that the players had to move away from home either in- country or migrate to another country to perform at the highest level. A possible explanation for the difficulties experienced by the players is the post academy development phase and first team mastery phased developed by Richardson, Relvas and Littlewood, (2012). They argue when the players transition from the development phase (academy development) that they are not the finished article and typically lack the key attributes and experience to evidence the mastery stage. (First team mastery). Therefore, they suggest there is another transition stage Post academy developing mastery which fits with the players in this study. The players have alluded to not being able to get into the first team because there were more established players in their position so they either had to move to another club to get experience or wait their turn and sit on the bench. Therefore, while Lavallee and Wylleman's model acts as a useful framework to appreciate the development, interactive and interdependent nature of transitions and stages faced by players, the model lacks the contextual detail and specify that is critical in understanding of the experience of these players.

An area highlighted within the data was unexpected off time events such as injuries and being de-selected, (1st order themes), from teams. These events are known as non-normative transitions. Grove, Lavallee, Gordon and Harvey, (1998), have addressed the process of athletic disengagement from top level sport and highlights the difficulties when athletes retire from sport. These transitional difficulties are particularly problematic for

athletes who have been forced to retire from sport through injury or de-selection. Experiences such as low self- respect, low self –confidence, feelings of anger anxiety and depression. (Alfermann and Stambulova 2012; Sinclair and Orlick, 1993).

Injuries are not reflected in the lifespan model of transition, although included in career termination/ discontinuation literature, 16 players in study suffered long term injuries which brought concerns, missing out participating in major tournaments, some players had self-doubts about getting back to this level. Katherine and Kim both shared their experience of the fear and frustrations they had that they would never reach the playing standard they had before their injury.

> *I had surgery on my ankle, so I've been out for a long time. I've found it, very difficult for me to get back on the same level as before my injury, I have so many frustrations because I don't feel like I'm fit enough, I don't think I'm thinking enough, I don't think I'm at the right place at the right time. when I moved up with the age groups I improved now I find it's hard to get up to that level, I'm back from injuries for one and a half years, I find it very hard now to get back on the field and play back to the level I was before.* Katherine.

> "I *tore my ACL last year at Algarve cup and I questioned whether I would be fit enough to play again, because you never know, obviously I'm here back again thank God, and everything has worked out well".* Kim.

Katherine shared her experience and thoughts on career termination due to a long term injury, she is a player in her mid-20's, however due to her injury this made her consider life without football and she felt she learnt a lot about herself, and made her plan her future without football and that her health is important to her and there are other things in her life than football.

> *it's kind of funny because I have been back training for one year, and two years ago I thought I would be playing soccer, for a long time and I will have kids, but after my surgery and being out of football a long time due to injury and trying to get back so many times, it's taken 18 months, and I see if everything is fine and I want to continue, but I need to think about a life after soccer and I cannot pressure myself so much that I cannot be a mum for my kids, I want to be a mum who wants to run with my kids . So it's been very hard for me because I feel I have built my whole life around soccer, and suddenly it wasn't there for me at all, and I didn't think I could come back, and I was trying to come back for four times, it didn't go my way, and suddenly i got back and I'm so happy for it. Katherine.*

Kristen explained how she picked up her injury a week before she was due to go to the Olympics and how all her friends were either at the tournament or away on holiday and she was alone with her parents and sulked for four months.

> I was injured a week before we went to the Olympics in 96, and I was out nearly a year. I was devastated, all my friends, football friends, had arranged to be away all summer on holiday or at the Olympics and I hadn't planned anything because I was going to the Olympics, I sat there with my mum and my dad at home for months after and sulked because I was missing out on a major tournament and all my friends were away. Kristen.

She eventually realized it was a good time to catch up and spend time with friends, have more time to study and began to see this experience in a positive light.

> I found that I was going to do some of the things that I hadn't had time for. I had more time for my study, friends that I was in the college with, I could after the school on Friday and have beers in town with them, I could go out, I could go to the cinema, I could live that life that I hadn't lived because I wanted to play football. Kristen

Elaine missed out on the U20 world cup and believed her support network helped her though her injury and the experience made her want to come back stronger and play at other major tournaments.

> It was horrible I did it away with England, I thought, I'll be fine, I'll be back in about six weeks and had out eight or nine months, so that was pretty heartbreaking to be honest. but I think the support network I had around me, and the fact that I really wanted to be back so badly that I just focused everything on rehab, and didn't socialise hardly when I was doing that, but I had brilliant surgeon, and when I was at University I was fortunate to have a strength and conditioning physio every day, which is crazy how good it was. But what was heartbreaking being that I did it and then three months later the under 20s went to the World Cup and I missed out due to injury. But I think that pushed me even more come back stronger, and fitter. Elaine.

The majority of the literature assessing the impact of injury on transitions have concentrated on end of careers. Rotella, (1984), Werthner and Orlick, (1982), and Ogilvie and Howe, have described numerous cases of athletes who have suffered acute depression, abused alcohol or committed suicide as a result of an injury that ended their career. Therefore, the full impact of athletic injuries is difficult to gauge due to the complexity of the situational, interpersonal and intrapsychic variables present, (Pearson and Petipas,1990). However, it

may depend on the severity of the injury, the quality and quantity of the social support which was evident within some of the players in this study and also the level of ego involvement within sport. With the players involved the injury was seen as a negative occurrence in their transition, they experienced separation and loneliness, identity loss, loss of confidence and performance decrements in the short term. However, the players still continued to develop and transition through their careers. One possible explanation is that the break from football made them stronger psychologically and physically, be being able to have a "normal life", have a rest from the demands of elite football and pursue other activities, (college, friends etc.). The holistic lifespan model does not account for this and is an area that may be attributed to the player's personality to overcome such adversity.

Further examination of the data has highlighted how players can be de-selected from team sports (non-normative transition). One of the early studies of transitions Mihovilovic, (1968), found that professional soccer players were forced to retire from sport against their will and cited areas such as displacement by younger players or more talented players, (de-selection). Team selection for footballers is the primary goal and many players will encounter disappointment through their career if they are not selected for the team and finding themselves having to fit into the mold of the coaches' expectations (Pearson and Petipas, 1990). This selection process is difficult for athletes and de-selection can result in athletes dropping out of sport altogether (Gledhill and Harwood, 2015) or in the case of the players interviewed they were de-selected from the national team but continued to play at elite level for their club.

Carrie explained how she was de-selected from the National team when a new coach was appointed, even though she was disappointed she had an established international career winning major tournaments with her country.

they changed the national coach, and after this it was not easy for me with the new coach. With the old coach, I played every, tournament. Then I got dropped, that was hard. She did pick me for the Olympics. I had a good season and she had to pick me for the team. Now, no. I'm out, It's okay for me i have won all the big tournaments and I'm happy for this and that I played for the previous coach. Carrie

Joan however was relatively new to the national team and experienced being with the team in training camps and was expecting to be selected for the World cup, however she was not selected and did not know why.

I played against Spain two weeks before. I found out I wasn't in the world cup squad. I did all the training we were together for three months with one day at home and then we had another camp, and in the last camp she threw me out, it was really sad. Joan

we played in London, with Potsdam, it was Champions League, and then in the morning she called me and she said here's the call you didn't want, and I'm sorry but you're not in the team... no reason given just the call. Joan.

On reflection Joan felt maybe she was not ready to take that step up from junior to senior international in a major tournament. She did not have much experience in the lower levels of international tournaments for her country although played the European champions league final with her club. She believes that she was not confident enough to make that transition even though she wanted to.

Now I can see I wasn't ready I hadn't played many games for the senior team, I hadn't been part of the under 15 and under 16 and wasn't experienced enough in the system they played, but I know that I'm good enough now, but I wasn't then. I was very shy and I didn't want to make the step then, so I think it wasn't the right moment. Joan.

Therefore, the transition for players through their pathway cannot be argued as being smooth, Nesti, Littlewood, O'Halloran, Eubank and Richardson, (2012) have suggested, transition could easily be interpreted as signifying something that is rather smooth, steady and relatively easy to negotiate. However, it can be argued that the evidence from these players does not support Lavallee and Wylleman's model as a concurrent fluid transition within the athletic and psychological domains and these findings are more akin to Nesti et

al. (2012), who presented that a perhaps more challenging and changeable perspective exists for these players. The accounts from the players have evidenced that they have to adapt to new environments, adjust to higher intensities, overcome injuries and the disappointment of de-selection from the team, which supports the work of Richardson et al. 2012.

There is evidence from existing research which support the transition phases, however it does not explain the complexity of the female players to adapt to the environment may it be a new club, international team, or a new country. No other professional/ semi- professional women's sport has a club and country transition pathway running parallel to their career. The model does not explain what the career transitions mean to the players, it is assumed the players have a coherent, linear journey through these stages. Not all the players experience the different transitions occurring at the same time, for example, some did not have junior international pathways, the gap between junior to senior was too big, a dual career running alongside development, a mastery and discontinuation phase.

Within the athletic & psychological level players expressed feelings of high anxiety, level of adjustment, expectations from friends, parents, coaches, governing body, peers, increase in intensity, change in environment all these can increase the complexity of transitioning through the phases.

4.13.2 Psycho – social level

Bloom, (1985), has highlighted previously the role of the family within a player's development, this has been extended in Wylleman and Lavallee's model within the Psycho-social level. The shows that the significant support agents within the development of the players varied according to age with was evident within the players interviewed. The family were significant in the early years Wuerth, Lee and Alfermann, (2004), with many of the players stating their father, mother or siblings were instrumental in the early football careers.

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However, this role although significant throughout their career shifted from a leading role to a supporting role Pummell, Harwood, Lavallee, (2008). This shift saw a focus on coaches and peers as the significant supporting role, the parent focus was more of an emotional supporting role as well as tangible support in the form of finance, transport, time. Wuerth, Lee and Alfermann, (2004); Reints, and Wylleman, (2011).

The players in the study shared their experiences of how their parents supported them throughout their football career. Liz explained how her father drove her everywhere and how her family regularly watched her games as well as encouraging her to play football. This supports Sheriden, Halverson, Litts, Brahams, Jacobs- Priebe and Owens, (2014), review of social support networks and in this instance the emotional (showing concern for the athlete), esteem (bolstering a person's feeling of competence or self -esteem) and tangible (assisting travelling to and from events) aspects of support are evident within parental support

> *I had a great support network because my dad took me to every kind of training session, mum and Dad have travelled the world to watch me, my brother and sister are so supportive, so I have had a great background and network to, keep pushing me. Liz*

Kristen explained how her family made sacrifices to watch her play by using their summer holidays to watch her play in tournaments. This again supports existing literature on parental support proving tangible and emotional support to the player. (Pummell et al., 2008; Sheridan et al., 2014).

> *My parents have been very supportive; they have spent their summer holidays going to watch my tournaments across the world. My sister isn't into football but she still watches my games. Kristen.*

Richardson, Littlewood, Nesti and Benstead, (2012), evidence further that within the age range of 15-19 the coach becomes more of a significant figure in the player's life. They

argue the role of family members is still important, but their influence is less as the coaches' influence becomes greater. With the players who were interviewed in this study, the coach had become more significant in their development. Patricia explained how her coach had helped her develop and that is was an easier transition for her to the national team because the coach had been the coach at her club previously. This supports Harwood and Knight (2015) and Sheriden et al., (2014), that the coach provides informational support in the form of tactical and technical advice.

> *The trainer we have now, has helped me, even before he was the national trainer here, I knew him before, he was the trainer for the club I played at .... He is always encouraging me and pushing me to get better, ... he has done a lot for me and he is the reason why I can play at this level. Patricia.*

Clare's experience shows how supportive her family were by coming to her games providing the emotional support. However, she also explains how she would not discuss football with them and preferred to discuss football with her coach and team mates who was providing the informational support.

> *At home it had always been you do what you want to, and you can go there if you want to, and they have always supported me, they have been to the games and seen me playing, but they also know if they comment on the game, I wouldn't listen to them, because I will only discuss the soccer with the team and the trainer. Clare.*

According to Wylleman, and Lavallee, as athletes move through the transition stages peer support becomes more prominent in the mastery stage, peer relationships have been linked with positive motivation-related outcome (Smith, 2003; Weiss and Struntz, 2004). Sheridon, (2014), highlighted variables associated with athlete- peer relationships which included athlete motivation, elite sport participation and friendship quality which has been evidenced through the results of this study. Toni explains how she felt the team were very close and she could talk to anyone within the club.

> *As a team we are really close, I can talk to anybody. I can talk to the coaches, to the players we are there for each other, I would say they are my closest friends. Toni.*

The players who were interviewed in this study within all the age group have experienced this shift in their social support mechanism within their junior transition phase where they were more reliant on parents, peers. This movement away from the junior to senior phase and the players relying on parents, siblings and peers has developed into encouragement and motivation and accepting of the self- sacrifice of the players in missing social events and birthdays

> *You have to say to your friends and your family no I can't, I have a game on Sunday, I can't drink on Saturday, or no mum I can't go to your birthday because we have a game, so you miss a lot in life, but it's worth it. Joan.*

Kim shares here experience how important her team mates are especially when moving clubs, or as what she had to do, to move to another country to play elite level football. This supports Relvas et al., (2010), work on the culture of clubs and the difficulty in transitions without strong support networks.

> *you know when I moved to another country I automatically got 20 new friends, , it's such a difference, if you move abroad, you know you are surrounded by these people so many hours a week, no matter what, you automatically create new networks and new friendships, I think it's priceless. Kim.*

4.13.3 Financial Level

The financial level in Wylleman's model was introduced at a later stage and outlines that the athlete is reliant on the family for financial help in the initiation and development stages. In addition, the family may also be required to provide further financial support through the mastery stage. Such a protracted level of financial support was also evidenced by Tekavc, Wylleman, and Erpič, (2015), work with elite swimmers and basketball players. However, as the athletes move further into the mastery stage they tend to be more reliant on national governing body/sports federation support and later employers for financial support.

Clare's experience of financial difficulties was she did not get paid to play soccer so she relied on her parents to finance her career by providing transport and accommodation and her education was provided by her sports federation. This was consistent with all the players who relied on parental financial support which is consistent with the existing literature (pummel et al 2014).

> *16 until I was 21 I didn't get paid to play soccer, I only got money for my education, I had to live at home because I didn't have much money, I couldn't afford to live closer to the club. Clare.*

National governing body sport/sports federations feature in the financial level of Wylleman, and Lavallee model. The financial contribution given to the players in the study varied by country. Clare, Kristen and Katherine explained how there is a scholarship in their country which support them as an elite player in terms of money to live on and being able to complete their education. They have flexibility to extend the time they need to complete their education so they can do it in conjunction with their football career without having to juggle to two. Elaine and Liz went to a national playing centre based at a university which allowed them to have quality coaching alongside their degree. It was funded by the football association and all players were junior internationals.

> *We have this system in Denmark, we study for three years in high school, if you're good enough we have Team Denmark, and they support you if you're good enough and you're on the national team, you can take your education in four years. So I picked that, so I took my education in four years and it made more time for homework, friends, boyfriends'. I was a good way to do my education. Katherine*

> *It was funded by the FA, they paid for fees and living arrangements and we trained every day, weights, strength, football based activities, and then studied at the same time. Liz.*

4.13.4 Academic/vocational level

Wylleman and Lavallee's, (2004), model addresses the issues surrounding the player's transition at the academic and vocational level which includes the transition into primary/secondary education, the transition into higher education and finally the transition

into vocational training or a professional career. More recently a semi –professional stage has been added to recognize the developments in some sports which have provided semi-professional routes for example women's football. Within the findings there is a casual relationship with the social support layer and the financial layer. It suggests there is a further support mechanism, such as schools and universities and the football associations which allow the player's time to compete at the highest level. The results below, illustrate the complexity of the players having to balance a dual career either combining football and education or football and a vocation.

12 of the players interviewed in this study, had finished or were studying a degree with the remaining 6 players considering continuing their education at some point either during or after their football career.

> *I am taking a year off where I'm working, until the summer and then I will begin to study again and take the Master's course. Clare*

> *one of the reasons I went to the US was because I wanted to get an education and play soccer, now in Sweden where I play now there is good university, so first I have to learn Swedish, so I'm going to work on that for the first year I play in Sweden then hopefully the second year I will get into the university. Toni*

The players who were studying presently had mechanisms in place to aid in this process so they could combine an education and play either semi -professionally or professionally. Only two of the countries had support from either country sponsorship or sport federation sponsorship. However, in the other countries they were given concessions and could take longer to complete their education. Kristen and Samantha explained that they both took longer to complete their education

> *my study was four years', the first two years I took normally, I took one year off, and then I started again after that year, but I moved to Norway I haven't lived in Denmark since then, I started to study again, I was supposed to start in 2003, I finished in 2009. So, I've taken some subjects at a time, and I've mostly studied on my own. Kristen.*

> *but then it got quite hard, so I took the last two years in three years instead. So that helped me to do a lot. Samantha.*

Clare confessed even though she had a lot of support from her school and federation in terms of finance and the ability to extend her education the practicality of balancing playing football and to gain an education was hard.

> *I have an education, but you have to plan it well, it's definitely not easy when you're going to school, and you're playing soccer and I can't read all the stuff we have to before the next lecture, so I have to plan it. it's harder when I am away with the national team and have to read all this, in the first year it was very, very hard, but then after it got easier when I adjusted my time commitments. Clare.*

Some of the literature which addresses the balance of this has found that athletes drop out of their studies and concentrate on their sport, others drop out due to financial reasons. (Pepitas et al., 2013). However, with these players the motivation to continue with their education was due to football being a short career and that they would never earn as much money as their male counterparts and that they tended to plan for retirement sooner.

Kim explained that she knew she was never going to make a lot of money playing professional football, compared to male footballers, and added that an education was important and studied her master's when she moved to Germany. However once that was completed she was bored in her times between training, so she got a part time job with a company which is associated with her club so her working hours could fit around training

> *I would be fine with just my soccer salary, I think experience in the business world is important, it's really important to work here. I have a Master's degree in international business management, so I definitely want to work for good company, an international company, for at least for a while, then maybe come back to soccer or somehow be involved with soccer. Kim.*

The abundance of literature (Mihovilovic 1968; Ogilvie and Taylor 1993; Grove et al 1997 and Gordon; Cecic Erpic, Wylleman and Zupancic 2004), which focuses on the end of the athlete career is supported to a degree by the players in the current study. However, while

the literature has suggested the end of career discontinuation as a negative concept, (Werthner and Orlick, (1982). 16 of the players had planned or started to plan what they would do after retiring from football. (12 players had a university education or planned to finish education, 7 players were in part time careers that will move to full time when their football career finishes). This supports literature pertaining to that if the end of career is planned then successful transitions occur.

Patricia confessed she did not have a back- up plan for when she finished playing football and Linda has a part time career as a teacher but had not really thought about retirement, both of these were early career players who were at the beginning of their playing careers

> *I have got this opportunity to play professional football and I want to see how far I can get, but only as long as it is fun and I love to play and when it is over I can just look back on it and see it as a good time.* I don't have any back up plan if it ended tomorrow. Patricia.

> *I haven't thought a lot, but I'm a teacher and when football is over I can work, 100% Linda.*

The players who were in their mid- football careers or coming to the end had thought about what they would do once their career was over. Joan explained that football wasn't her whole life, she was enjoying football and wanted to play as long as she enjoyed it, but recognized there were others things she wanted do, study health management, maybe design, she wanted to start a family, enjoy a life with family and friends, which was restricted through her commitment to football. Do normal things with her friends and go out drinking on a Saturday without having to play football on a Sunday and not miss her mum's birthday because she was playing football

> *I'm almost 30 and want to have kids, spend time with my friends and family which is a whole different life, and that's the life you want but you have to say to your friends and your family no I can't, no I can't have, I have a game on Sunday, I can't drink on Saturday, or no mum I can't go home to your birthday because we have a game, so you miss that life, but it's worth it, to play football. Joan.*

England, The Netherlands, and Germany have only developed semi -professional leagues recently and the remaining five players interviewed played football and had a career running alongside their football. These careers ranged from policing, teaching, coaching to administration. Katherine and Dot explained how they coped with a dual career.

> *I'm working in an office and doing some administration for a tournament we have in my club this summer, and then I'm a supply teacher, if one teacher in school get sick they need somebody to take the class. Katherine.*
>
> *In Holland we have an arrangement for football players or other sports people. And I have a contract of 36 hours a week and I only have to work 50% of that, the other 50% I can Train, play football and work. Alison.*
>
> *With me it could be better, because I need to work 24 hours in a week, and with the training alongside this, it's really difficult and if in Holland there was a better structure (professional) then I would love that just concentrating on one career. Dot.*

Alison explained that she pursued a career in the police part time so she could continue full time once her playing career was over. She didn't think she could find a career that she would enjoy as much as football but now she has a career she can replace football with.

> *This is why I have a job on the police force they allow us to work, and play football, and after I retire from football i can work full time. So before It was trying to find a job to combine with soccer, that was hard because I didn't know where it would end, when I would quit football would there be a job I wanted to do for the rest of my life, and now I have a job that I really like and I can grow there, so I'm pretty set right now. Alison.*

Frankie described how she was thinking of retirement and was undecided what to do. People have asked her if she wanted to go into coaching, but she doesn't know until she stops. She did know how she will feel about not playing and whether she would still have the same passion for coaching. She has a passion for promoting the sport as an ambassador and try and get women's football more recognition and profile. She felt that women's football was not developed enough in her country and would probably have to take on different roles within women's football rather than concentrate on one area. She was doing her coaching badges and had experience working within a club so it would be a

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suitable area to go into. She also was concern about the financial security due to women's football not being professional in her country.

> *What is the plan, well it is in my head a lot at the moment, I don't know until I stop? I don't know how I am going to feel about what I really want to do because I do want it all and then I know you have to plan some people ask am I going to go into coaching and I am like maybe, but I don't know if a) I will be good at it or if I will have the same passion as I do for playing. Frankie.*

> *you don't earn a lot of money, you do sacrifice a lot and I now probably what am I going to do after I retire, how much security will I have because I don't really have, apart from within the game, a lot to fall back on because I didn't go to university, yes I know I can always do it but supporting yourself through that is really tough. Frankie.*

Kristen shared her experience that she did not expect to be playing football in her 30s, so decided on an education and qualified as a teacher, she explained that she didn't know if she would always stay in football or do something totally different, and confessed that maybe football was not the most important thing in her life and focusing on herself, spending time with friends, work colleagues was important. She enjoys football and thinks it's the best job in the world and trains four or five times a week and continues to learn from the game and thinks she will miss something when she stops playing. She feels she has learnt a lot from football and wants to take that experience and see her country improving in women's football, so would like to work in football in some way. She explained her teaching career is 40% of her time and couldn't do it full time and play football and also alluded to the argument that female football players cannot sustain a living from a professional football career.

> *I haven't worked full time in teaching, if I'd worked full time it would be harder, I think I worked maybe 40%, I haven't worked that long as a teacher, so I wouldn't really know what it takes*
> *…I also don't work 100%, I would be able to with the training times, if I'm playing one or two more years that's what I'm thinking.*

> *I'm 33 now and I've not had a full time job and if I want to have children I don't have any pension, I don't have anything really because I've had payment from football, I've had payment from the part time job, and that altogether has been alright, but it's been nothing that I can save for when I get to I'm 60. But still it's been alright, or maybe a bit better than if I just been a teacher, but still I don't have any security because I've wanted to keep playing. Kristen.*

Even though the results indicate the majority of players planned for retirement the literature suggests (Werthner and Orlick, 1986; Cecic Erpic et al., 2004), that these athletes would have a smoother transition because they are planning for it. One aspect to take it account is, the player has no choice, and is forced to do so because of the money they do not earn compared to other professional athletes. The players also confess that the workload of combining an education and playing football or having a career running alongside is challenging and they are continually at odds of what is their priority supporting Pepitas et al., (1997), work that sport tends to take more of a focus in their football career.

Within the academic/vocational level this highlighted the level of commitment of the players in the study and creates difficult decisions the players have to face. Prioritising football over education or their chosen career. The players have the challenge of competing at the elite level for their club and country, as well as being a professional player. However, the nature of the sport has a short career lifespan and players are forced to plan for retirement, an education or a career, therefore, the concept of a dual career is important to these players. Some sports have better structures in place for education and sports careers and have sufficient funding in place. The players in this study cannot afford not to pursue a dual career, regardless of their age and the country they live in. Wylleman and Lavallee's model does not account for female football players having a dual career. The next section highlights further how female footballers do not conform to existing career development and transition models.

4.14 Complexity of transition phases

The previous findings have been framed around Lavallee and Wylleman's holistic career model. However not all the areas found within the player's accounts fit within this model. Relvas, et al., (2010), critiqued the model within their research on professional football academies and added a socio culture dimension. This dimension has some validity to this

study however the male and female game have stark differences within countries and cultures such as combining a career or education due to the lack of professional leagues.

Women's football has gathered popularity over the last 15 years and the countries involved in this study have different positioning of women's football within their country with regards to status and resource. The research in Study One highlights the status and location of women's football in each country's football associations and examines the resources issues depending on how women's football is viewed within the country and association. The players from Denmark in particular, identified that women's football was not advancing in their country with it still seen as a dominant male sport and the football association was run by men who were not interested in women's football. The Finish players recognised that they are slower in their development than other European countries and this can be reflected in the fact that their players were having to move to other countries to play a higher standard of club football. The two countries within this study having a professional league structure were Germany and Norway and the players in this study were positive about their countries and being able to play football.

> *If I was working in women's football and I didn't see it going anywhere… that would be why I wouldn't want to work with football in Denmark because things are slower and the men in the DBU there are too many old men who don't want women's football to develop as much as they want men's football to develop. Clare.*

> *We've got more support now, but I also see what happens in Germany with my team mates, so we're still quite far behind countries such as Sweden. Kim.*

The earlier chapters have examined the difficulties that the players faced transitioning through their player pathway within their football career. It was identified that the younger age groups had a more coherent international player pathway in place, whereas the older age group did not benefit from this coherent pathway and had to overcome the gaps within it to play at the elite level. One solution to this was to move to a club that could provide a better standard of football either in their respective country or as a lot of players from Finland and Denmark had to do was to move to another country which brought a different set of

complex issues such as moving away from home and having to adapt to another country's culture and language.

Within the migration literature it has been suggested that the motivation for players to migrate primarily is for monetary reasons, (Magee and Sugden, 2002). This can be argued with some of the players who wanted a professional football career as well as trying to develop into a better player. However, there are very few women's professional leagues and the opportunities are restricted to Sweden, Germany and the USA. For those fortunate (13 of the players interviewed) they can dedicate their time to football.

Migration of players has been, in one way or another, present throughout the whole development of women's football. Indeed, a historic review reveals that, even between the 1920s and 1970s when the game was banned, some players did manage to play abroad. More broadly speaking, the development of female migration parallels that of the game itself. Little attention has been paid to understanding elite female football migration (Botelho and Agergaard, 2011). However elite male football migration has gained popularity since the early 2000's. Migration involves the movement of players both within and between nations and continents. (Magee and Sugden, 2002). The predominance of literature has examined the influences and factors behind the migration patterns of elite players (Maguire and Pearton, 2000; Magee and Sugden, 2002; Elliot and Weedon, 2010; McGovern; Richardson, Littlewood, Nesti and Benstead 2013). In Germany and England, it was identified as in-country migration to move to better clubs within their own country. In Finland and Denmark, the players had to move to different countries. Norway and Holland saw no movement although the players may consider moving countries in the future. Although Germany can be described as having in country migration with regards to the older age group it can be seen as both in country and out of country migration because at the time of some of the players the country was split into East and west Germany and the player had to move from the East to west to play the highest level of football.

> *It was hard to play there? I was from East Germany and the wall was down and the West German girls all knew each other so it was difficult for me to become a member of the team. Carrie.*

Jade explained the moment she did not want to move from Germany because she believed she was playing in the best league but will consider moving in the future.

> *Some of my friends are going to Sweden because they think it is a better there, others say we have in Germany the best European league, national league, not the best team maybe, but the best league in European, because of the structure, the fans, the stadiums. I think I will stay here for four, five, eight years and after this maybe I want to go in another club, in Europe. Jade.*

With in- country migration the players described their experience of having to move to the best clubs to get the best coaching and to improve which meant they had to leave home at 15 or16 and stay in a new place which brought challenges and highlighted the support structures needed to help these players progress through their football journey. Elaine also described how she moved clubs because, as a young player she could not get first team football at the top club because an experienced international was playing in her position, so she had to move to another premier league club to have premier league experience

> *I realized, I wasn't going to get into the 1st team or it wasn't guaranteed, but I wanted to play regular first team football, so the team agreed to let me go and said I will always be welcome back so I went to play for another team in the premier league for 3 years, then moved to another club for 2 years before coming back to this club. Elaine.*

With countries such as Denmark and Finland migration was a necessity for the players to be able to compete at the highest level. The Finish players explained that the Finish league is not a good standard in comparison to other leagues in countries such as Sweden. They describe they need to play in a better league to develop as a player. Toni explained that problem is with the club structure and feels it is an important barrier for the development of Finish Women's football because not all players will have the opportunity to move abroad and may not be suitable for all players.

As a Finnish soccer player, to be able to reach a really high level, you have to go abroad, and some personalities are not really set up for that, some people are more out-going, some people they won't be able to make it abroad, maybe not just because of soccer but just because the way they are, and I think that probably would have been a barrier because then I would never have left Finland and got to experience that type of challenge, and be able to develop as a player. Toni.

Patricia supported that migration was the only way to improve as a female footballer in Finland and she had to move to Sweden top play the standard of football that was required

It's not a good standard, if you want to be a good player... if a Finish football player wants to be good you have to move
When I moved to Sweden I played for a club and I think it is what made me ready for the national team, I don't think I could get that in Finland. Patricia.

The Danish players told a similar story as the Finish players, that they thought the club structure wasn't challenging and to them boring, so they moved to Sweden to play in a more competitive league and play professionally.

I play in Sweden it is a better league, the Danish league is quite boring, and I get more competition so I can get better. Kristen.

I was playing in Scolen where I played for five years until I was 21, playing in the Danish league is quite boring, it was always the same, we were playing against the same teams, and I thought maybe I should try something new then I was asked if I wanted to play in Sweden in Malmo. Clare.

Frankie shared how she was asked to play in the American professional league but didn't think at that stage of her career when she was considering retiring, that it would be of much benefit for her to move. Although it would be a good experience she wanted to develop football in her own country and the new super league would give her experience as a professional player even though she could have earned money in the USA.

I would rather stick around this country to try and develop the game in this country rather than go somewhere else for a bit more money or just for the experience for myself. I thought about playing in Sweden, I have played in Canada because I needed to get fit for the World Cup and I have had a couple of offers... because I have family over there and I know that the league is quite strong, but I haven't yet been tempted to move permanently. Frankie

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The results have shown that female football has a unique culture of athletes, some with the same experiences, difficulties and challenges independent of age and country. The players have had to navigate through these transitions and many have faced barriers regardless of their ages and country and this has been intertwined through the transition phases set out in the holistic career model. Migration can be seen as a consequence of the country's structure and creates challenges faced by the athlete to pursue an elite sport career.

4.15 Conclusion

The current study has highlighted the different experiences of the players from six European countries' and how they have navigated through their country's player pathway. The study adopted Wylleman and Lavallee's (2004) holistic career model as a framework. The model was considered an appropriate model to explain the complex issues faced by female players. The research has captured the players' transition phases and alludes to the critical areas the players faced when transitioning through their football career. The content analysis approach added rich data through the themes of athletic, psychological, psycho-social, financial, academic/vocation and the complexity of these transition phases which are unique to these female football players through their experiences of their football careers. One area which was particularly evident was the junior to senior area of transition. The international junior elite pathway has been established by the football associations in each country to help the transitions between this stage identified in Wylleman and Lavallee's, (2004), as the developmental to perfection/mastery stage or junior to senior stage. This area was seen as the problematic stage. The reasons identified in this study concur with Finn and McKenna, (2010), who suggest the footballers may have to face four simultaneous transitions, athletic, individual (psychological), psycho social and academic/vocational changes.

For the players to move from junior to senior level, the players in the current study suggested that the demands at senior level were more intense, physically and mentally, and that they had to train more times a week and play more games. The younger players did recognize that the junior international experience did help to bridge this gap. The players also conveyed their concerns that to compete at the highest level in football, they had to move clubs and even countries. Such transitions are complex at a young age. The area of migration of players highlighted other areas within the transition process such as support mechanisms for these players within the psycho social level of Wylleman & Lavallee's, (2004), model but also the exposure to a change of environment, Richardson, Littlewood, Nesti and Benstead, (2012). This provided challenges and barriers such as change of country, culture and living arrangements, relationships, new coaches, team mates and friends and the club philosophy of expected behaviour, playing and training style.

During the developmental to mastery stage, it was found that the players start to commit to their football careers and attempt to balance football and an education or football and a vocation. This commitment is the key to their success in their football career supporting Pummel et al., (2008), findings. It is at this stage (i.e., development to mastery) they immerse themselves into football, which above all promotes self- sacrifice, denying time with family, friends and partners. This commitment is unique in elite football, in comparison to the male game, female players do not earn the money that is in the male game therefore, to be able to continue in their pursuit of this football career, they have to combine football with an education, or vocation which denies them time with family, friends, peers and the results have highlighted the sacrifice these players have to make.

The players highlighted, they had to develop new relationships with team mates, coaches, support staff. Within this area of identity, the notion of a dual career, (the combination of an athletic career with education and/or occupation, Stamulova and Wylleman, (2014), is established. Players have to continue with an education to secure a career after their

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football career is over or with some players having to balance a football career with a supporting career to supplement their income and to help the transition after discontinuation of their football career. This balancing of a dual career was experienced by some of the players, although some players did pursue a professional career but recognized they needed a vocation for when their football career came to an end.

Another area that does not translate sufficiently in transition models is the historical social cultural acceptance of female football players within their respective country's traditions and culture. It is dependent on the country's positioning of women's football within this culture and has led to lack of resources being available to develop women's football in certain countries, as eluded to in Study One. The Danish and Finish players voice their opinions that their FA's are further behind some of the other European FA's, in creating an inclusive football environment in particular, the standard of the football leagues and the resources allocated to elite women's football. This has led these players to migrate to other countries to play a higher standard of football.

This lack of resource is evident with the players having to plan sufficiently what they will do after their playing career has finished. The players do not earn anything close to their male counterparts and many of the players have to balance a part time job or education alongside their playing careers and adopting dual careers to enable them to have financial security in the future once their playing career is over.

4.16 Future Direction

Study Two has highlighted the different experiences of the players due to the structure of their country's player pathway and their football association's support to adopt the elite structures introduced by UEFA, such as the UEFA Champions League, and European competitions. However, there is a gap in the current literature to expand the knowledge of female athlete progression in football in general. No research has articulated the challenges

in elite football, and the female player's perspective and their developmental transitions; this is an area of growing interest and needs further exploration. The next study will look to address some unanswered questions which this study has highlighted, these include: An understanding of the player, and their motivation to continue playing despite structures not being place for the players. Further examination of the dual career and their preparation for retirement and how this affects the player's identity as footballers.

Chapter Five – The Female Footballer Void!
5.0 Study Three

The previous study examined the developmental experiences of female footballers within three age groups and from six different countries. Study Two highlighted that the players had challenges transitioning through their player pathway and revealed the complexities of pursuing a football career within the female game such as lack of opportunities to play at the highest level in their country and having to pursue a dual career. However, Study Two identified that to gain a richer insight into why the players continue to pursue a career in football despite the challenges, an understanding of the player's voice is required. Study Three will aim:

To capture the player's personal and unique transitional experiences throughout their career pathway.

Study Three examines the players' journey over a five- year period. Study Two, suggests that there is much we do not know about the intricacies and challenges of the player's journey. Wylleman and Lavallee's, (2004), model as discussed in Study Two, does not capture the players voice sufficiently. Study Three aims to capture aspects of this journey over time. This study will demonstrate a shift in focus of women's football to the players and how they continue to pursue their career in football, despite the complexity of the football structures in their own country. It will highlight the challenges they have faced along their career. This study will focus on the personal narrative of the players capturing the dilemma's they faced in career decisions in the unique environment of women's football. The study will capture the player's voice and explore their personal and unique journey through their football career. By adopting a case study approach with two players, Study Three, seeks to examine the players' career trajectory as they moved from early career to mid-career and end of career to retirement examining the in-depth transitional moments within their careers.

The challenges faced by the players within their career and the subsequent requirement to be able to navigate within this challenging space suggests that further research is required to recognize the psychological character traits that may be required by these female football players to overcome such challenges. Therefore, the following literature will examine the personal attributes such as resilience and identity that may contribute to the players navigating successfully or unsuccessfully through the transition phases within their football career.

5.1 Resilience

Within the last decade an emerging area of research has looked at how resilience operates within the sporting environment, (Galli and Gonzalez, 2015). Fletcher and Sarker, (2012) offered the definition based on sports performance when it was suggested resilience is "the role of mental processes and behaviour in promoting personal assets and protecting an individual from the potential negative affect of stressors" (p.675).

Being in the sporting arena brings intense scrutiny and pressure and those players who can manage the stress, which accompanies football at this level, will be successful, (Scanlan, Stein and Ravizza, 1991; Jackson and Finch, 1993; Gould, Fletcher and Hanton, 2003; Fletcher and Sarkar, 2012), have investigated and identified numerous demands, or stressors encountered by athletes. These demands include preparations, expectations and opponents within competitive sport, the sport organisation within which athletes operate (e.g., finance, selection and officials), and personal "non-sporting" life events (e.g., family responsibilities, moving house and serious illness). Fletcher and Sarkar, (2012), believe the study of psychological resilience may offer the solution to the understanding of such demands in sport. Although, Atkinson, Martin and Rankin, (2009); Windle, (2011); Galli and Vealey, (2008), have noted the difficulty associated with operationalising and measuring resilience in sport. Resilience may be conflated with other related construct of interest in

sport such as mental toughness (Gucciardi and Gordon, 2009), coping (Campbell-Sills, Cohen and Stein, 2006; Leipold and Greve, 2009; Rutter, 2012), hardiness (Howe, Smajdor and Stokl, 2012; Windle, 2012).   Sport is a particularly unique venue from which to examine resilience, because in addition to unexpected adversities such as serious injuries, athletes often knowingly and willingly subject themselves to highly evaluative environments where the consequences of winning and losing are clear.

With regards to research into resilience in the sporting environment two approaches have commonly been adopted.   The first approach involves examining the psychosocial factors that predict performance in a task following an initial failure in the same task (e.g. time for a run after having run a particularly slow time on that same distance; Mummery et al., 2004). In studies, such as this resilience is operationalised as the behaviour of performing successfully despite having first performed poorly.   The second approach to the study of resilience in sport focuses on understanding the thoughts, beliefs, emotions and behaviours of athletes who have shown a capacity for successfully adapting to adversity in sport (e.g. Galli and Vealey, 2008).

Galli and Vealey, (2008), argue that sport psychology researchers have spent considerable time studying what Richardson, (2002), calls first wave resiliency.   First wave resiliency is the study of the internal and external qualities of individuals related to positive outcomes despite the presence of risk or adversity.   Using coping strategies (Thellwell, Weston, and Greenless, 2007), displaying mental toughness (Bull, Shambrook, and James, 2005), and having appropriate social support (Rees and Hardy, 2000), are examples of important first wave qualities for athletes.

Richardson (2002), suggests that resilience researchers move past the mere identification of resilient qualities, and toward a study of how such qualities are acquired. Danish, Petipas and Hale, 1993), have recognised sport as a site for the development of resilient qualities.

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They describe how critical events such as injury and transition are not seen as problems, but as opportunities for athlete's growth and development both in and outside sport. The second wave of resilience studies show how individuals acquire qualities that allow them to successfully adapt to adverse circumstances. Flach, (1988,1997), suggests, that these experiences of adversity serve to strengthen resilient qualities such as self-esteem and self-efficacy through a law of disruption and reintegration, this aspect of resilience can offer further exploration and understanding of how female football players acquire qualities to successfully adapt to adverse circumstances.

5.2 Athlete identity

Athlete identity has been discussed in athlete transition literature around areas of athlete retirement and loss of identity and within the developmental phase of transition which highlights the athlete's commitment to their sport and their self-sacrifice to succeed in their chosen sport.

Macall and Simmons, (1978, p65), describes role identity as "the character and the role that an individual devise for him/herself as an occupant of a particular social position" Hewitt, (1989) has characterized this as a combination of social identity and a personal identity from this perspective, then individuals choose to try to develop or continue to maintain particular role identities basketball player, or age group swimmer, because of the value to themselves which they see in that role.

Identity is the social, material emotional benefits which they can see themselves deriving from their involvement in that role identity. All of the decisions and choices they make in the pursuit of those careers, those specific athlete role identities, can be seen as attempts to maximize the potential rewards from those involvements, as well as minimizing the potential costs. Athletes make self-conscious and self-reflexive decisions deliberately to choose the athlete role identity and career in which they saw the best possibilities for both

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athlete success and as an association with people they liked or whose support they valued. (Coakley and Dunning,1999). Though an individual's identity may contain numerous dimensions, it is possible for one in particular to become more dominant or preferred and a lens through which others are viewed. (Lally, 2007).

Within transition literature identity has been researched in association with the end of the athlete's career or retirement. Retirement suggests that athlete career transition affects patterns and levels of an individual's identity. (Pummell et al., 2008). Pummell et al. (2008), found athletes in the development stage of their study were highly committed to their sport. These are characteristics of athletes in the development stage, (Bloom, 1981). They devoted significant time to their sport, sacrificing social activities and showed evidence of an identity defined by their sport. Pummell, (2008) found a developing athlete identity was evidenced in the study through the increasing importance which the riders placed on their sport and the priority given to athlete development over their academic development. Whilst athletic identity was not assessed in the study it is possible that those athletes with strong athletic identity may also perceive greater stress during normative transition, since their performance is more closely tied with their identity and thus poor performance is more threatening to self-esteem than it is for those less identified with the athletic role.

Carless and Douglas, (2009), view is that focusing on the ways in which identity is narratively shaped over time by psychological and socio-cultural factors promises valuable insight into the processes of career transition in sport. Research suggests that withdrawal from sport can have a powerful and profound effects on identity, sense of self and psychological well-being (Sparkes, 1998; Webb et al.,1998; Kerr and Dacyshyn, 2001). McKenne and Thomas, (2007), suggest withdrawal be understood as a transitional process as opposed to a one off event, and from this perspective, the ways career transition affects an individual is best understood in light of earlier events in his/her life, the personal meaning

of sport, and the potential impact of co-occurring transitions. Grove, Lavallee and Gordon, (1997), suggests previous research has demonstrated that athletic identity (i.e. the degree to which an individual defines herself/himself in terms of athletic role; Brewer, Van Raalte, and Peptitpas, 2000), can influence the psychological aspects of adaptation to retirement from sport.

Grove, Lavallee and Gordon, (1997), examined the relationship between sport role identification and the quality of adjustment to retirement. Identity constructs are viewed as important correlates of athlete behavior by both sociologists and psychologists (Hughes and Coakley, 1991; Curry, 1993; Hale, 1995; Brewer et al., 2000) and they have been explicitly linked to retirement behavior by several theorists (e.g. Baillie and Danish, 1992; Messner 1992; Brewer, Van Roalte and Linder, 1993). The construct of athlete identity (i.e. the degree to which one defines his/herself in terms of the athlete role has not been hypothesized to be particularly important in this regard. Individuals with a strong and exclusive athlete identity may be prone to experience a variety of emotional and social adjustment difficulties upon career termination (Baillie and Danish, 1992; Brewer et al., 1993). Furthermore, those who strongly commit themselves to the athlete role may be less likely to plan for post athlete career opportunities prior to their retirement from sport (Thomas and Ermler, 1988; Pearson and Petipas, 1990; Gordon, 1995). It follows, then that anxiety about career exploration and decision making (Krumboltz. 1992). may also be present among athletes with a strong and exclusive athlete identity.

Nesti and Littlewood, (2011), argue that transitions such as retirement and potential crisis and athlete identity confusion that follows can contain both positive and negative elements. This view would seem to be a useful and realistic account of transitions in sport where often moving on to the next phase, level or stage is rarely easy or fully completed. The focus on retirement does present challenges to athletes, however it has the capacity to bring positive benefits later on and can lead to improvements and further achievements.

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Transition literature, however, does not explain the personal attributes of how players cope with single transitions which are classed as non-normative events (injury, de-selection, moving clubs).   Coping models are designed for the end of career transitions and do not explain the personal qualities players, especially female players have, that has helped them navigate through their careers.   Models are devoid of the player voice and the models are not applicable to women, dual careers and football. The models exclude significant periods of time, in this case five years and this study aims to examine retrospectively the success, turmoil and challenges which are not captured anywhere else therefore making this unique body of research in women's football.

5.3 Methodology

Study Three, adopts a case study approach to examine the career of two players (both of whom were involved in Study Two) over a five- year period (i.e., after Study Two). The time lapse between Study Two and Three, was due to the researcher being seconded from work to another country, which did not allow for the data collection for Study Three to start until the secondment had finished in 2016.

 The case studies will focus on the experience of transitions the players have faced. A narrative enquiry method is used to focus on the stories told by the players of how they have lived through their experiences, within their playing career and according to Gubrium & Holstein, (2009), this can be used for a number of analytical purposes.

From a methodological point of view, the life-story narrative approach was chosen specifically, to give 'voice' to the athletes as the focus of the study is shifted to the athletes themselves. As Douglas and Carless, (2006a: p11), argued that previous research has tended to overlook the need to generate rich biographical accounts of elite athletes primarily "…as a result of the research methods used and the way research findings are often

represented." Study Three, will capture more fully the athletes' own life experiences in order to present the research findings and implications in a more relevant manner.

Smith and Sparkes, (2009), argue that narrative enquiry provides a powerful means of understanding human beings in new and different and exciting ways. While there is no singular definition of what narrative research is, a common thread is the assumption that our own lives are 'storied' and that the self is narratively constructed. People give meaning to their experiences within the flow and continuously changing contexts of life … All this is done not only in narratives about the past and the present, but also about future times and places, (Medved and Brockmeier, 2004).

Sparkes and Smith, (2014), offer some characteristics of narrative enquiry; they outline that meaning is created through the narrative, and is a storied effort and achievement. Humans they argue, are relational beings and narratives and meanings are achieved within relationships. They explain that narratives are both personal and social and selves and identities are constituted through narratives, with people relationally doing and performing their storied selves and narrative identities. Finally, they highlight that being human is to live in and through time and narrative is a primary way of organizing our experience of temporality and the body is a story teller and narrative embodied.

Gubrium and Holstein, (1998), point out that narrative analysis on one side may focus on how a story is being told whilst on the other side, we may have a concern for the various aspects that are involved. For example, the substance, structure, or plot of the story. This dual focus, they suggest, is one feature that distinguishes narrative research from many other forms of qualitative research. The analysis of narratives and biography, therefore adds a new dimension to qualitative research by forming not just on what people say and the things and the events they describe but on how they say it, why they say it and what they feel and experienced.

Smith and Sparkes, (2009), offer two standpoints towards analyzing narratives. These are termed a story analyst and story teller. The story analyst thinks about stories, for example stories can be treated as data and uses analysis to arrive at, for instance, themes that hold across stories or delineate types of stories. (Carless and Douglas, 2008). Story analysts step outside or back from the story, employ analytical procedures, strategies and techniques in order to explore features of the story for example the content or the structure. A story analyst will carefully engage in abstract theorization about the story from a sociological, psychological or other disciplinary perspective. (Smith and Sparkes, 2009). The story teller in contrast, "performs a narrative analysis and thinks with stories" (Smith and Sparkes, p185). These standpoints in analyzing narratives can be explained in figure 4.0.

NARRATIVE ANALYSIS

Story Analysts ⟷ Storytellers

| Whats | Hows | | Whats | Hows |

Structural analysis	Performance analysis		Creative analytical practices
Content analysis	Interactive analysis		e.g. poetry, autoethnography
Holistic-content	Rhetorical analysis		ethnodrama and fiction
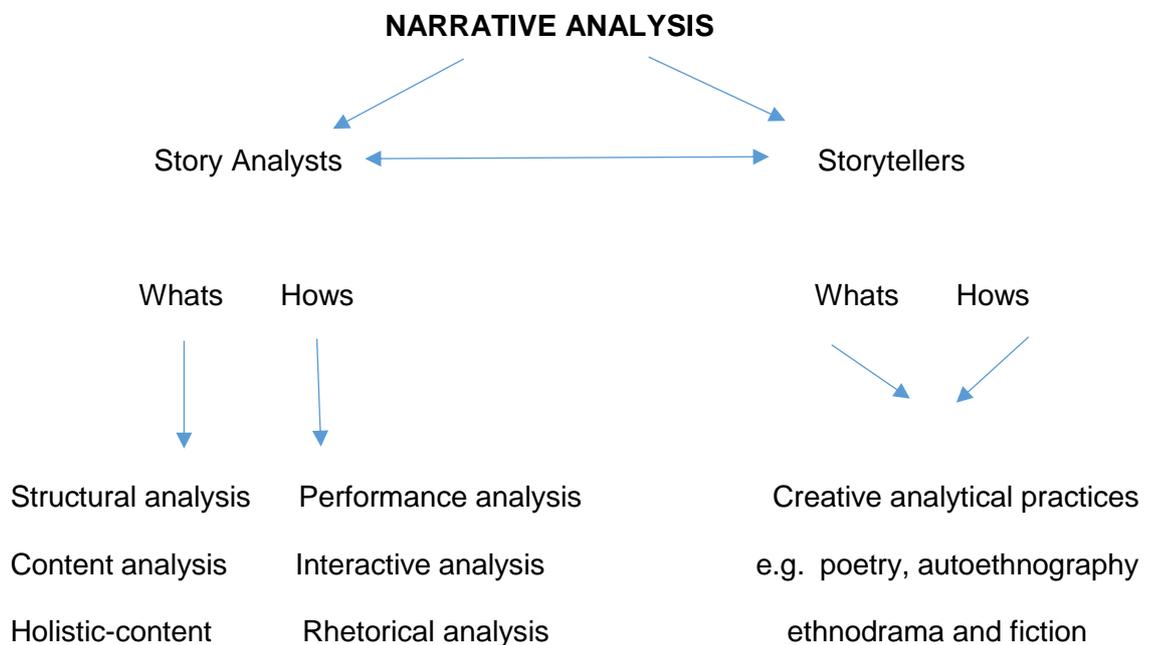
Figure 4.0. A typology of narrative analysis Smith and Sparkes, (2009).

5.3.1 Narratives in Elite women's sport

Douglass and Carless, (2006a) suggest in elite sport one particular narrative type is dominant, a performance narrative. This narrative type revolves around achieving performance outcomes (winning/being the best). Carless and Douglass, (2013), argue that performance stories are orientated towards a singular outcome and can be understood, in Ezzy's, (2002) terms, as a linear narrative, which assumes people can control their lives, tending to "down play the significance of other people and of environmental constraints on their actions" (p.616). In relation to female sport this performance narrative is often associated with masculine ideology based on masculine traits strength, courage, competition and aggression. However, (Frank, 1995; Sparkes and Smith, 2002; Douglass and Carless, 2006) have offered alternative narratives to the dominant performance narrative due to female narratives often being multidimensional, layered and complex, with simultaneous factors such as relationships, and having a family, alongside their careers, whereas in comparison male narratives tend to be one dimensional focusing on a single axis; usually their playing career. Douglass and Carless, (2006), suggest that athlete life stories can focus on discovering, experiencing and exploring life in a full and multidimensional sense rather than focusing primarily on performance within their sport career. They offer this narrative type as a discovery narrative. In addition, they also introduce the relational narrative which prioritises interconnectedness, relationships and living or being with and for another. These alternative narratives directly challenge the performance narrative and create narrative tension or conflicts which female narratives often portray, (Tedlock, 2000).

5.4. Pilot Interview & Ethics

As advocated by Janesick, (1994), before committing the interview for data collection, a pilot was conducted with one player from the original sample used in Study Two. This process helped to modify over-elaborate wording, and appreciate the maturing shape and

timing of the interview. Minor adjustments were made to the delivery and order of the topics to be discussed and I felt more at ease with the interview.

Prior to the data collection ethical consent was sought and granted by Liverpool John Moores University's ethics board. Prior to each interview, each player signed consent forms and were given the opportunity to read a participant information sheet (refer to appendix 7).

5.5 Sample selection and composition

Two players from the 17 players interviewed in the previous study agreed to be re-interviewed. The interviews were conducted five years after the original interviews and with the intention of examining, retrospectively, the players' journey moving through their career and capturing their critical transitions within that five-year period and how they navigated their way through their career. One player was in the original early career sample and was now in the mid-career category. The other player was originally in the end of career sample and had now retired from playing football. Two players allow the researcher to examine the players' career more in depth.

5.6 Construction of the Interviews

Two interviews were conducted for each player; (each had been interviewed previously 2011). The first interview was an introductory interview which lasted between 30-45 minutes. The purpose was to re-connect with the player and let the player explain what they had been doing over the last five years using topics from the original interviews five years earlier. (Tod, Anderson, Marchant 2011). The second interview lasted between 60-90 minutes and explored how the players experienced critical transitions expanding on the data from the previous interviews, (2012 & 2017). This interview aimed to explore the complexities these players had experienced and how they navigated through their careers told through their personal narrative. This gave the players the opportunity to have their

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voices heard and empower them to tell their story. The interview schedule is represented in Appendix 9.

5.7 Data Analysis & Representation

To fully understand the data from the interviews, it was appropriate to adopt a narrative approach using the story analyst standpoint to capture the experience the players had throughout their football careers and illuminate critical transitional moments or events within the players' career journey.

The analysis of the data was conducted in two ways; content analysis and structural analysis, (Carless and Douglass, 2008, 2009). The content analysis identified central themes, and similarities between the players that were organized around the identified themes. Structural analysis then allowed a focus on the life story of each participant to identify the narrative type. The narrative types identified from the content analysis are the firstly, the female footballer, 'how they decided to choose football and the person they are', secondly, 'the love of the game', 'why they continued to play despite the challenges they faced and the decisions they made', and thirdly, 'filling the void' (inc; planning for retirement, dual careers). These narratives will re-count key transitional moments within the players' careers.

The numerous quotes that will be used to tell the story of the players will align to Smith and Caddick, (2012), term of width. This study proposes to give width through the comprehensiveness of the evidence. This dimension of width, refers to the quality of the interviews as well as the proposed analysis and interpretation of the data. The numerous quotations in reporting this narrative study will provide support to the reader's judgement of the evidence presented and the interpretation of the researcher, (Lieblich, Tuval- Mashich, and Zilber, 1998).

For this analysis, the focus will be on two players, Elaine and Kristen. They are elite female football players. Elaine is currently playing professional football at her club and plays for her national team. Kristen has retired from football and played for several clubs and for her national team.

5.8 Study Three – Case study - Results and Discussion

The followings results have been organized into three narratives to capture the personal and unique transitional experiences of two players', (Elaine and Kristen) (pseudonyms), career pathway. Intertwined in these narratives are the themes of decision –making, resilience, and identity which adds a further understanding of how these players have navigated through their career despite the complexities they have faced as a female football player. The stories aim to highlight the dominant performance narrative (Douglas and Carless, 2006), evidenced in elite sport and will illuminate alternative narratives that align to the complexity of female footballers' playing career, identifying tensions and conflicts such as a dual career, identity, family and retirement. These areas will be interwoven with analysis and relevant theory.

5.8.1 The female footballer

This narrative outlines the career of each player explaining in their words how they became football players, why they choose football and the ambitions for their football career. Kristen is 40 years of age and a retired football player. She now works part time with her national women's senior team (Denmark), and coach's girls football part time in a school. Kristen has two young children. To understand her football career, it was pertinent to find out how her career started:

> Kristen: I was playing handball in a club and I was with a group of neighbourhood kids playing football/handball outside, and then there was a thing in the paper that they started women's football or girls football in this club near where I lived. I was eight years old and I started at the dirt pitch one evening in March, and there was this guy and he is the guy who actually started women's football in my area so I owe him thanks for that.

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Elaine is 28 and currently playing professional football in the top league in her country. She also plays for the senior national team (England). She has played for the junior national teams at the under 15, 17, 19 and 21 age groups.   She explains how she started to play football:

> I started initially watching my brother play, I've got an older brother and older sister, and my dad ran my brother's team. I got taken along to that as a baby and as a young child and watched and kicked a football around…then my dad noticed that there wasn't anything about for younger people, or girls, where I lived, so he set up a mini soccer Centre. So there were boys and girls that attended, and I went when I was about five. So I played in that and... he coached my brother, so I started joining the boys team.

Both players elaborate to why they chose football despite being exposed to other sports as children, such as handball and netball, which were traditional female sports at that time in their respective countries.

> Kristen: I don't think that I knew [that I wanted to be a footballer] when I was 8, 10, 12 years old I don't think that I had a dream at that time, that football was going to be my way of living. I enjoyed playing both handball and football and actually the thing that made me decide to play football, was the way that it was structured, even though we had a better national team in handball, our country has been top in the world for a long time for handball; the structure seemed better with football, with all the younger national teams and how you got selected.   I suppose it was just a bit better, I thought at that time.   Then I just continued playing football and not handball.

> Elaine: I got taken a lot to watch my brother play so I was always exposed to football, but I enjoyed all other sports as well it wasn't just football I loved just being out and playing; I did athletics for a while, I played county netball. When I went to secondary school I played netball because they didn't have a football team. At primary school, I joined the boy's football team, I couldn't do that in secondary school so I played netball and had to make the decision netball or football. I really enjoyed netball I had good friends there, but it was always football. I don't know why I just loved it, I enjoyed netball it was something different. But I think I always wanted the ball at my feet and not in my hands. I think I loved being in a team environment the friends I made there, I loved the competitiveness. I loved running around scoring goals. It wasn't any one thing; I think it was because I was exposed to football at a very young age I always had a ball around, my mum and dad loved it. I was never pushed to play, I just loved it.

The experiences of both the players give an insight into why they chose to play football. Both stories, share their early involvement within football.   Elaine describes how she

attended football sessions because of her father's and brother's involvement in football and draws on what Douglas and Carless, (2006), describes as a relational narrative. Kristen, however follows the dominant performance narrative, (Douglass and Carless, 2006; 2009; Carless and Douglass, 2013a; 2013b), by explaining how she chose football due to its structure being better developed in its international competitions compared to other female sports available to her such as handball. This demonstrates how Kristen's options to pursue a sport was limited in her country and that she choose a sport that she believed would be able to develop her further as player (football) and represent her country, rather than being a handball player that may be more competitive for her to break into the national squad. These reasons for choosing football will give a further insight into the two players by examining their ambition to play.

Elaine: The national team is the ultimate aim but I want to win trophies at club level as well but ultimately playing for your national team and you have to be playing well for your club and we have some fantastic players at this club and the coach has a great philosophy he has completely changed and developed this club, ultimately I want to develop as a player and win things for the club and ultimately do well at national level

I started taking football seriously when I realised people could get picked for the national team and I wasn't getting picked within our Centre of excellence and I was kind of like what can I do to get picked and then I was fortunate then at 15 to then get picked but a lot of my team mates were getting picked at 12/13 so I was quite later than a lot of my friends.

I had ambitions in football, when I was 10, I went to America and I witnessed the pro league when I was there, when Kath was there and I got to meet Kath. I think then it dawned on me it could be a professional sport and you can earn money from it but I didn't think it was ever my main ambition to get paid to play. I just enjoyed playing football. Going to America really opened my eyes because I did look at getting a scholarship out there and living out there and playing soccer but I enjoyed being here and I was a home bird as well for me it was about playing football, winning games and being competitive and winning leagues. I never thought about it being any bigger than that. I did my A 'levels, went to university I had all that behind me and I'm fortunate I had made it a career.

Interviewer: You have talked a lot about your achievements and ambitions, what do you think it is about you to how you got here in your career?

Elaine: I think I have been successful because I am stubborn, I don't give up, even in an argument. I am very lucky I guess. I have had the opportunities I have been given, I was fortunate to be scouted for the Centre of excellence. I have just worked

hard I wasn't the best footballer I just worked hard. I have a good mentality, a drive, like a passion for football and hopefully a lot of people say I am a good person. I want to do everything at 100 miles an hour that is why I have to have reins on me which is probably stupid at 28 my physios are having to rein me in, it's because I want to do everything I want to be better I want to run everywhere, do that extra set and they are stop you want to be fresh and rested I do but I want to be up there. So its constantly a balancing act for me. I want to do some much which I have learnt over the years that rest and recovery is more important than everything but I want to do everything.

Elaine recounts her aims and ambitions in football which explains how she wants to win trophies and develop as a player, but ultimately, she wants to play for her national team. This aligns with the dominant performance narrative around achieving performance outcomes (winning/being the best), (Carless and Douglass, 2006). Elaine gives us an understanding of why she has this ambition and eludes to her stubbornness as attributing to her success and that she works hard and believes she has the right mentality to be successful in her sport. Elaine's characteristics align with Caddick and Ryall, (2012); Gucciardi, Hanton, & Mallett, (2013), that there is a consensus that mental toughness is multi-dimensional, consisting of a constellation of positive psychological attributes. Certain common components of mental toughness have been reported consistently including, confidence, focus, intrinsic motivation resilience and perseverance. (Coulter, Mallett, Gucciardi, 2010; Weinburg, Butt, Culp, 2011). Elaine's ambitions correspond with Cook, Crust, Littlewood, Nesti and Allen-Collinson, (2014), findings of academy football players who demonstrate the characteristics of mental toughness (motivation, resilience, focus, confidence).

> Kristen**:** I don't think it was in my head at all that I was going to make a career out of football, and I don't think when I was a kid that I knew there were a lot of things that I didn't know but when I did know the things I did know, that the things weren't good, when things weren't the same as the men even though it's men's football that we watch on TV, I didn't know the consequences when I was a kid. So, I continue to have the satisfaction to succeed to be good at something to keep developing and main reason is why I have continued is because of the joy of the game,

> Kristen: I think I have changed as my career has progressed, I think I've got more ambitious actually, I think, as I said before It came quite easy for me to be a starter in a national team, and I was playing for fun and I still played because it's the most

fun game in the whole world. But I've found that not doing well in any world cup, any European championship, it takes something more than just training with the club and I've become more aware of how much training it actually takes if you want to be able to play, to have the ball just a little bit when you play against the US. So, I think yes, I'm even more ambitious, I never dreamt of being a national team player, so I didn't know anything about any of the clubs in the first division, and I didn't know anything about women's football, I just played because it was fun.

Kristen: How I have ended up where I am, might be coincidences, because at the time I went to another country to play. I had been playing for 8 years in my country and my motivation for playing in my country was not as big anymore I didn't have anything that held me back at that time when I moved to that country. I have tried to make the right decisions for myself.   I think that I am good at settling or getting comfortable with the people with a club or with an environment. I think that is both ways, so I guess that is something about my personality I am structured. I work hard. I am probably selfish, but I am not selfish in the way around my team players or people around me I am probably selfish because I have chosen all the way and I have prioritised through my whole life.

Kristen, however tells a slightly different story from Elaine. Elaine knew from an early age what she wanted to achieve however, Kristen explains she did not have the ambition when she was younger and suggests this was due to women's football being overshadowed by men's football in her country. She explains that her ambition grew as she got older when the opportunity arose to move to another country which she saw as a new challenge. She found football at that time in her country easy and became bored. For her to improve she had to move to another country to develop as a player. With Kristen, a conflict narrative is evident her strive to perform at the highest level is apparent but not at all costs and winning wasn't everything which conforms to the performance narrative (Douglas and Carless, 2006), however her main motivation to play initially was she enjoyed playing and didn't believe she could have a career out of playing football. The accounts from both Elaine and Kristen, show an insight into them as players. Both had ambitions to achieve in football and believed to succeed they had to work hard, adapt to the environment. Douglas and Carless, (2006), support these finding in that in order to be successful, a woman, must be single minded in her drive and resist other facets of life.

The accounts of both players draws on the previous studies which highlights the angst and turmoil they experience as a consequence of the football structures available to both players in their early careers and how they had to move clubs and in Kristen's case to find a better standard of football to achieve her ambitions.

Although both players have ambitions to play football at the highest level, the narratives from the players suggests the performance narrative creates conflict with their stories and lives and how they identify themselves. Coakley and Dunning, (1999), argue athletes make self-conscious and self-reflexive decisions deliberately to choose the athlete role identity and career in which they saw the best possibilities for both athlete success and as an association with people they liked or whose support they valued. In the case of Kristen, she alludes to having a dual identity. However, football tends to the dominant theme and everything else 'fits' around it, creating tensions in her identity as a footballer or teacher or student. Lally, (2007), suggests that an individual's identity may contain numerous dimensions, and it is possible for one in particular to become more dominant or preferred and a lens through which others are viewed.

> Kristen: I think that I have always thought of myself as a footballer and a teacher; or a footballer and a student. So football was always number one and that didn't mean that I didn't prioritise my study or my work it was just that everything was about planning around the football programme. Sometimes it crashed a bit, but mostly I have been able to manage the planning.

Elaine recounts two stories (one when interviewed in 2012 and the other more recently in 2017), of how she does not like to be identified as a footballer and prefers to be recognized for just being herself. In the five years between Elaine's first and second interview her view on who she is did not appear to change despite her now being a full time professional player:

> I went to the hairdresser with my mum yesterday and the woman there was like, 'oh you're the footballer', and I was yeah that's what my name is. It is quite frustrating to be kind of 'oh you're the footballer'. Obviously I am a footballer but I'm Elaine; I do other things as well. So, it is quite hard when you meet new people or you go around sometimes to family and you get, 'oh you're a footballer'. I say can I switch off a little bit from talking about it all the time. (Interview 2012)

Elaine: I hate it when people do this to me, I get frustrated when people introduce me as a footballer and I'm like I am a normal person as well. I will always say I am a professional footballer but I don't know why but I always think it's a bit cringy for some reason I don't know why? My grandma used to embarrass me when we went shopping we would be at the cashier and she blurts out you know she plays for football for her country and I would be like what are you doing she hasn't even asked anything about our lives and you tell her this. I'm not embarrassed by it. I don't like the attention on me. I don't enjoy it I just like to go about my business. It still shocks me that people do know who I am and it is weird for me. I am very honoured to be a role model but it is also crazy to think of myself as a professional footballer and play for my country it's just madness. (Interview 2017)

Douglas and Carless, (2006), suggest that in order to understand identity, from a narrative perspective, it is necessary to listen and take seriously the player's stories and their lives within football. From the early memories of their football experience, it is these stories that will explain the identity development of the players. Nesti, (2011), describes how male footballers in his study describe their identity as something of an unfinished nature, this may be true of both Kristen and Elaine because of their dual career and the prospect of a new career or role (mother) in the future. Nesti, also argues that the description the player provides of who they are, what that means to them guides their future choices, which is evident with Elaine and Kristen. This narrative of the female footballer has identified the beginning of the two players' career journey. It has given insight to their early experiences and why they choose to play football, ambitions and how they have formed their identity. This has caused some conflict with both players believing that they have a dual identity. Kristen's identity is formed by her dual career of playing football and being a teacher, and Elaine by her non-acceptance that football is not the whole of her life and she has other facets to it. This will be further explored in the following narrative.

5.8.2 The love of the game

The following stories shared by Elaine and Kristen, explain why they continued to pursue a career in football despite the complexities associated with women's football that was

highlighted in Study Two. Both players tell stories of how the love of the game is the ultimate

motivation to continue playing.

> Kristen: Despite the challenges along the way. I enjoyed playing, I don't think my dream was very clear when I was younger, I think my dream or the dream has come along as I have succeeded, from the youth national team, I went to another club and the road to success was just there and I didn't have a hard time choosing. It was a bit hard to choose between handball and football, as I enjoyed playing both. I have been quite lucky with the choices that I have made. It has been hard to choose which club to go to, then it just seems to fit the way that I wanted it to play football and to live, or I made it fit. Of course you make big sacrifices at that level, and you prioritise and you say no to a lot of things but it was not hard to do that, because this is what I wanted – even though I didn't have the big dream from when I was a girl I wanted to play in the national team, I wanted to play professional I think the dream came along as I succeeded. I don't know if you understand that?

> Kristen: I continue to have the satisfaction to succeed to be good at something to keep developing and main reason is why I have continued is because of the joy of the game, the satisfaction I think that it gave me, the results and probably also in my 20s I may have already told you that I didn't see the development that I saw after I turned 30.   Then I knew I couldn't make a living of it, I couldn't earn enough money to have enough money to buy a house, not the house that I wanted to live in, so why did I still feel motivated. I think that it was mainly the joy of the game, the love of the game, and because I made a life of it. I didn't have to put my other life on hold, my career. I did my education I got a teaching degree and I had a job that was developing football players, so hand in hand those two things were good for me. I believe all long I have had opportunities to do actually what I want to do.

> Elaine: I love it. I don't think I would want to do something I don't love doing to be honest. I have never really thought about the money side or the fact it is a short career I just have always thought I really enjoy playing football and it's something I love doing and I get to play for my country which not a lot of people get to do. I get to play in big stadiums that is exciting for me. My little nieces get to see me play so that's exciting so I've never really thought why do it if you don't earn a lot of money but sometimes you have to do things you love and enjoy and look at it in the end and work out what to do when it is finished.

Both players show their passion for football, their love of the game has been their motivation

to continue in football. Both allude to the fact they will not earn sufficient money to have a

sustainable income for life. Despite this lack of financial security/stability, they continue to

commit to football. Kristen emphasizes her commitment to her football career in her

interviews in 2012 and 2017 and recounts that she has had to make sacrifices to continue

playing football. This was at a stage in her early career when she had been selected into

the senior squad, she had already missed out being selected for the Olympics in 1996, due to injury and this was going to be her first major international tournament.

> I wanted to play football on a high level even if I hadn't gone to the national team, I would have still said no to other things anyway, holidays with my family or birthdays, my grandma's birthday these were things that I didn't go to. For the national team the only reason you could get out of training or the only approved reason was funerals. (interview 2012).

> I didn't go to my grandad's funeral in the June 97. It the last [training] camp before the team for the Euros was selected and I remember writing a letter to my Grandma. I told her that I was I sorry I wouldn't there… I don't have any regrets, but I could see, some people would have regrets but that was a sacrifice and that was one of the things where, I was, probably, selfish. But my parents supported my decision. (2017).

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> I was supposed to go to Australia to play and that would have been a good experience, it wouldn't have made me a better player, but I haven't done it because it didn't fit in with my relationship with my partner. (Interview 2017).

The account by Kristen captures a degree of narrative tension. The dominant performance narrative type is influencing her decision to put football first over her family. Alder and Alder, (1989), suggest it becomes impossible for athletes to resist putting sport before other life domains. With this example Kristen has a degree of conflict between her need to be a dedicated athlete and her need to value family orientated roles (Douglass and Carless, 2009). This conforms to her narrative as a female footballer which in this case became her dominant identity.

Elaine's account of her football career tend to focus on her passion to play and her dream to play for her country, her desire to be a better player and the continual desire to become a professional player:

> Elaine; The motivation to play football was to play for my country. I love being in a club environment. I love the clubs I have played for. I just love playing football and playing well for my club which could potentially mean playing for my country that's a massive thing for any footballer. You dream to play for your country. I'm sure other people will have different answers, but I just love playing football all the time and I was fortunate to get a scholarship to play football at University so I could still study and do the thing I loved. I got to travel around the world and play for my

country. It was exciting and proud moments for me and I wanted that to continue even when I had injuries and still play football and my mum and dad and family were very supportive of that and I was able to earn money at the same time.

Elaine's story highlights the importance of football to her and the pride of playing for her country which is her drive to succeed and continue with football. In this account Elaine is not attributing her desire to play to win trophies etc. For her it is about playing at the highest level, for her country, the pride she has to do this. However, to enable this to happen, Elaine has moved clubs seven times. This area was explored to understand the reasons why and the implications of changing clubs.

Elaine: There were many reasons really. I hadn't been enjoying it as much as I had been. I have to be enjoying football. I wasn't enjoying it as much as I hoped I would in the last season or 6 months. It was a chance to be a complete professional footballer. It was a chance to not work and dedicate my life to being a footballer and that was such a massive thing for me. It is a big honour for me to be a professional footballer so I jumped at the chance. I also got to work with the coaches who I had worked with before. I have known them for a few years and know what they are about and really like them as people. I think it was a whole new challenge for me, something different, my old club will always be my club. I love them to pieces so it was a chance to dedicate my time to being a professional footballer.

Elaine: It was difficult to leave a club I had played at since I was 9 years old. It was horrible, having to make that decision. It was a lot of back and forwards. I was writing down the pros and cons of each club and ultimately what did I want to achieve. It was horrible having to make that decision. I cried my eyes out when I told the club I was leaving. I couldn't actually get any words out. I just sat and cried. I think they knew how much I love them and I will always love them but for me it was time to change time to move on and be a professional player. A lot of people asked why was I leaving the club. I think it was for so many various reasons, it wasn't because other players were leaving as well the management or anything like that. It was for the chance to be a professional footballer and I got a chance to play with different people, some who I had played with before in the national team. I get to play with players I really respect and I think it was a big challenge as well. I think it was also an out of my comfort zone, I was living in SA, then I was having to commute so it was a big decision it wasn't a nice one to make at the time because obviously I loved my former club but I made the decision to be a professional football and I would never regret that decision.

Elaine: The reason I moved clubs again was the last 6 months at the club were tough a lot of things behind the scenes. I did not feel valued as a member of the team. I helped the team through a lot of things. I had been there for 3 years. I was passionate about the club. I loved the club, but as a player to not feel valued is not a nice thing, and I adore every player who plays for the club and I have a lot of respect for the coaches but I think the club was not in a good place and for me to progress as a player. That is my ultimate aim to develop as a player. I want to

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improve as a player. I want to be fighting for a starting place for my country and I want to learn and develop and I just felt the coaches at my new club when I met them instilled that in me. They really put in place things I could work on and develop and again it was another challenge and I think for the first time in a number of years I did it selfishly for my own ability to develop as a player. It was a really hard decision it came as a shock for a lot of people, a lot of people thought I would re-sign, a lot of us were out of contract and it took them along time to sit us down and say right this is the contract there was a lot of things behind the scenes but it's nothing to do with any of the players it was selfishly I want to improve as a player and develop as a player and here I can do that.

Elaine: It is difficult to decide to change clubs. I didn't have an agent at the time, I do have one now, but at the time, I had a lot of talks with my family and my husband, it was a big transition to move to New town but in fact, I didn't actually move up to New town. I travelled and commuted up there staying at my mother-in-law's and sister-in-law's house. That was a big transition having to travel.

Elaine: The decision to change clubs depends on the environment, the people, the coaching staff, the feel of being valued, they are probably the main one for me and ultimately am I going to improve, am I going to get better, and is it going to make me happy? That's the main one, that's the main reason for me coming to the new club, is it going to make me happy and am I going to improve? I have ticked those boxes. It's about the right people and right environment. Also, are we going to win trophies and can I get to play in the Champions league but some of those clubs who are up there at the moment I don't want to play for those clubs. I wanted a club with a good team environment and good team ethic who work hard together to achieve those things.

Elaine: When I moved from Ackerman FC to Canberry FC at 16 and played senior women's football that was a critical point in my football career. I think that was a big one for me I made the decision along with my family and spoke to the coach at Ackerman FC. I wasn't going to get regular 1st team football. I didn't just want to play for the reserves I wanted to play senior football and made the decision to go to Canberry FC to get that experience and develop myself as a player the door was always left open for me at Ackerman FC but at the same time I moved schools and did my A 'levels at a different school so I made a big transition in my school life and football life. I think that was a big decision and out of my comfort zone. A moment which I think helped me a lot along the way and I look back at that and see I made a big decision at 16 to change schools where I didn't know anyone and to go to a completely new club again not knowing anyone there and I think that is kind of a big deal to do that at 16 and I think it helped me so I probably think that was a big one for me.

Elaine shares why she moved from the club that she loved and had played at for 14 years to become a professional player. This was an opportunity that had only arisen in the last 5 years in her country. Her decision to move clubs shows her making an emotional decision to leave a club she was loyal to and to undertake the opportunity to play professionally in

the sport she loves. This demonstrates a narrative tension, Elaine at that time in her career, didn't want to leave the club she loves, but it was not a professional club and she had the opportunity to be a professional footballer at another club which brought challenges and uncertainty by moving locations. Elaine explains further to why she chose to move clubs recently and explains that she wasn't feeling valued at the previous club and that contract negotiations had not been resolved. She also wanted to develop further as a player and felt a new club would do this. This desire to develop as a player reinforces her performance narrative to play for her country. She further expands to what factors help her decide to choose a club to play for and wants to be happy and enjoy playing football which has been a strong narrative throughout her story. However, there are some conflicts within this narrative with the performance narrative again showing prominence with her desire to move to a club so she can win trophies and play in the champion's league.

Kristen shares different reasons to why she chooses the clubs she has played for and who she consults on those decisions. She emphasizes that she likes to know someone at the club who can give her insight into that club which is important to her.

> Kristen: I choose the clubs I have played for by what facilities they offer, how good the team is, what kind of players are there, what kind of program does this club offer, that's the main thing, the other thing for me is relationships, knowing someone in that club where you are going to is important, it's not been random choice, I have said no to a few clubs, I have mostly known information about the clubs I have played for from players, except for a team in Sweden and Norway, I knew about my team in E the year before I played there, so I had a bit of inside knowledge.

> Kristen: Well I was not young when I first went to abroad to play, I was probably 25, so of course it was my decision, but of course I talked to my family about it, mostly my mum and dad, so I didn't have anything that held me back. I didn't have a boyfriend or girlfriend, that might have held me back it was my decision. I wanted to, at 25, I had played 8 years in the best league in my country, I had been there, done that, went to all the arenas around the country, I knew what I was going to have every single weekend. I needed a new challenge, and it was a new challenge when I went overseas. It was a challenge to just settle, and get accepted and to get friends and to get to hang out and be comfortable there.

Kristen shares the decision to move clubs was to find a new challenge, the club and country she was playing in was not providing sufficient challenges and she did not have any commitments at that time that would stop her from pursuing her career. For Kristen to find the standard of play she desired she had to move to another country which supports the findings in both Study One and Study Two, that some women's football structures were not sufficient to support the development of elite players. The followings stories recount Kristen's journey to develop as a player by migrating to other countries to fulfil her passion to play and continue her enjoyment of the game.

> Kristen: it was maybe a bit of a coincidence because the former captain played there, and I went to visit her to see how it was, and she recommended it. I felt like I have played eight years in the best league in my country, I was aiming for something more challenging.

> Kristen: I knew that the league was not a lot better than the league I was playing in, but I knew that the team was better and me moving to a new country and being on my own, I wanted this new challenge. I was a bit lonely there, I could speak reasonable English, but I didn't understand the accent? I didn't understand them very well. And the other foreign players didn't understand them either. I remember a lot of the players were away with the national team and some foreign players was away with the national team, and I was living with one national team player, and I was just on my own reading a six-day old newspaper from my country, didn't know what else to do.

> Kristen: settling into a new country has never really bothered me, when I last moved countries it was not a huge culture gap between a Scandinavian country and England and Australia. Actually, I found especially in Australia, it's was very European in a way. But the football culture is different in England, it goes over a bigger part of the year – all winter, which we don't do in Scandinavia. And then the culture, the biggest gap was England was fully professional, we had Scandinavian coaches and managers so the way of training was more Scandinavian. I think, because at that time in the beginning, like 2002 Norway and probably also Denmark had been ahead of England with the way of training and the programmes and the national team, so the coaches brought a lot of Norwegian culture into the team. The football was just a big part of my life because I didn't do anything else.

> Kristen: England was the only fully processional team, I have played for, where no one else did anything but play football. I played professionally in Norway, after England. I played fully professional in Sweden, but there were players that worked part -time and studied part –time. to complete my teaching degree, I took a semester at the university of Stockholm, only part time but we trained at night and afternoons. So, everyone had the opportunity to study. Most of the Swedish players studied or had a job – that fitted in with the football. When I went to Oslo and played, I had a part time job on the side. The way I have played football most of my career

is double work. Like working and playing, or studying and playing.   In Australia I was full time, but there was a lot of young players who went to school.

Little attention has been paid to the understanding elite female football migration, especially the challenges facing migrating female footballers to adjust to their new country (culture), club and players. Nesti, (2011), draws on his experience with male players and found that new players from different countries encounter many challenges that could cause difficulty for them in terms of performance, such as language, new living arrangements and different ways of playing the game. This was evident in Kristen's experience of moving to another country to play football. Botelho and Agergaard, (2011), study concurs with Kristen's experience of migrating to play a better standard of football and found the primary motivation for players to migrate is for monetary reasons, (Magee and Sugden, 2002; Botelho and Agergaard, (2011).The existing literature has examined the influences and factors behind the migration patterns of elite male players (Maguire and Pearton, 2000; Magee and Sugden, 2002; Elliot and Weedon, 2010; McGovern; Richardson, Littlewood, Nesti and Benstead 2013).

Elaine however, has spent her playing career in her country of origin and she explains why she has not considered moving to play football abroad.

> Elaine: I would never say never say never to be honest America is a very long way away but I actually think our league no disrespect to the American league is better than the American league now, it probably shows that a lot of American players are coming over here to play me and my husband are watching a lot of German football Bundesliga football and they have some very good teams in Germany and the league is very good the Swedish league is very good as well and the French league is very good so Europe is an interesting place to consider but for now I am very happy in England but I will go where my football takes me so to develop as a player and win trophies I would love to play in champions league again so I would never say never to be honest.

Kristen's narrative, highlights her pursuit of a new challenge, which aligns to the performance outcomes of the performance narrative, however interlinked with this is the theory of migration in football which has been discussed in Study Two and highlights the

complexities female players face to pursue their football career. Migration is not reflected in the transition or career models. (Stambulova,2000; Wylleman and Lavallee, 2004), although, singular events such as moving clubs feature in Stambulova's, (2000), model which offers insight into athletes in crisis transitions if they do not successfully transition in this instance moving clubs or moving club and to another country. Kristen, found some difficulties with her first transition to another country with the language and not being able to fulfil her time effectively outside of her professional football career. This led to an aspect of feeling lonely, although this did not lead to crisis transition because Kristen did not seek any interventions to help her cope with the transition. However, when she moved to other clubs in another country she had other areas to fill her time such as study and a part time job.

Elaine and Kristen share their stories of a non-normative event in their career which is not accounted for in Wylleman and Lavallee's, (2004), career development model. However, Stambolva's (2000), model identifies such non-normative events as a potential crisis transition depending how the player copes with such transitions. Both players have had serious injuries within their career and their stories tell how they overcame these injuries to continue playing elite football.

> Elaine: Obviously it's frustrating being injured. I felt like I was flying in pre-season. I had a really good pre-season, really good relationship with the players on the field, off the field. it was a hard transition being injured and having to go back home. I was at home for 3 months. I went to games and travelled but I was out of that team banter and that team togetherness so I missed that a lot. I rehabbed a lot at home and just travelled for games it was hard and once I could go back and train with the girls it was good. Getting a injury like an ACL is difficult but you know if it's an ACL then you know your season is over so then its focusing on the little milestones you get with an ACL of course it's frustrating having to sit there and watch at a new club you want to be out there fighting and you want to be out there scoring goals and helping your team win. For me it was building for the next season for England and then the world cup. I just had little goals in my head to focus on rather than crying every day, it is what it is. I've been through it before and I came back from it so it was just hard work.

> Interviewer: Can we go back tom your first injury you had and in your interview 5 years ago you talked about how that injury stopped you from going to the U20 world cup. Can you tell me how you coped with that?

Elaine: My first injury I met my husband so that was pretty good. That injury was horrible to be honest. I was at University and all of the people I was at University with, all went to the world cup so was left there alone which wasn't fun. I just think I embraced it, I had a really good strength and conditioning coach there and good physios, it was a pretty lonely time but thankfully all my friends who were at the world cup skyped me so I was still part of it a little bit and I watched every game that was a pretty horrible feeling to miss out on the world cup but I was made to be a part of it the manager was lovely about it and I had great coaching staff back at university that wasn't nice fort me missing out on a big championship for a youngster to experience.

Elaine: I think for the first 3 months I would call my mum up and like say this is horrific I couldn't do anything I couldn't bend my leg I would say the first 3 months are not nice you are fighting to improve but it's kind of slow. I think you start to see after that the little things in those 3 months come to fruition, after that its right I want to play now and you fight for that and to be better than I was before, but the first 3 months is hard especially if everyone is away and you are by yourself and its hard once you see everyone playing on a pitch then you say that's what I want to do and your friends come back and they are pushing you as well. The first 3 months are not particularly fun.

Elaine: It was hard coming back from my collar bone injury. That was harder than my ACL just because it is a stupid injury it was a ridiculous challenge to start with. It was such a frustrating injury I literally could not move for 3 or 4 weeks. That was a really hard one to take I was really diligent in my rehab I wanted to come back the same player I didn't want to be jumping out of a challenge I didn't want to look like I wasn't the same player I would be throwing myself on a mat, getting my husband to rugby tackle me so I could come back mentally and physically from it.

Elaine: Being injured was hard on my parents, obviously they don't want to see their daughter injured my mum and dad love watching me play football, they come to every game, my brother and sister watch a lot of my games. I do think it is hard on them. My last injury with my shoulder it was hard on my husband seeing me in pain and having to do everything for me it's difficult not be able to see me do what I love they are just supportive its hard on them when they enjoy you playing they can't help you because you are injured.

Elaine: My support networks have been amazing while I have been injured. We didn't really have any psychologists for my first injury and I wasn't really interested back then in talking about it and I'm not good about talking about my feelings. I think the coaches helped by sitting down with the physios and strength and conditioning to devise a plan writing goals down and steps. I basically need reins on me I want to do everything so we would be sat in a room saying no you can't do this until you have done this or this so it's good for me to have a plan set and the coaches are backing you pushing you to get back out on the pitch doing technical drills with you when no one is around even the other girls would come out and help me with the running stuff so that was really nice. It was nice to back into a team environment when you been really lonely being injured. My coach was a big influence in helping me get back on the pitch. I think there was a communication with everyone to make

sure we are all on the same page. They always put an arm around you to make sure you were alright.

According to Brewer, (2007); Quinn & Fallon, (1999); Tracey, (2003), injuries typically represent an abrupt change in the athletic career associated with negative emotional response, loss of confidence, and performance decrements, however Elaine's story shows resilience to come back from three serious injuries. Previous studies on athletic injury have concentrated on the rehabilitation process (Brewer 2007; Santi & Pietrantoni 2013). recently, studies have focused on the injury's cognitive and emotional responses within the athletic career transition and suggests injury affects athlete motivation, identity and associated decision making. However, Elaine demonstrates the drive, resilience, passion to overcome the injuries and had a good support network around her, and supports Smith, Smoll, and Ptacek's, (1990), findings where they moderated the effects of social support and psychological coping skills on the total number of days of non-participation due to sport-related injury in a sample of adolescent athletes. The results indicated that individuals who had low levels of social support combined with low coping skills took longer to recover from injury compared to other combinations of variables. Similar results were found by Patterson et al., (1990) in a study on injury in ballet dancers. Results of their study demonstrated that psychosocial factors, including life stress events and social support, can affect injury vulnerability in the population studied.

 Stambulova's (2000), research into transitions has highlighted that such critical events in an athlete's life can often turn into a crisis if they do not have support mechanisms in place to deal with such an event. Elaine's story clearly shows the support available to her from her national team and her family and husband. The story shows angst from her in having to initially deal with the injury and how it made her feel lonely which without the support in place as research has suggested could lead to very different outcomes such as drop out,

substance abuse. From Elaine's story her love of the game, her resilience and her ambition to play for her national team contributed to her recovering from the injuries.

Kristen: In 1996, before the Olympics I had a ACL reconstruction, I had a meniscus injury in 1999 before world cup 1999, and that was a 4-week recovery and got ready for the world cup. I then suffered with arthritis and had a few injections, and that didn't keep me out for a long time, it just changed my way of training. That became better after I was 30.   I found out a way that worked for me when I was 30 and I went out of training because of a smaller injury, that was not good for me – it was much better for me to keep training and just be careful. I had something in my right groin, I would be careful sprinting I would be careful with my longer passes, I would do a bit more with the other foot.   But if I stopped training for like 4 days, when I started up again, I would get other things I was much worse it was much better for me to keep the machinery going rather than playing less than 100 percent. Keeping my body working and probably from then on for the last 4 or 5 years I haven't had any breaks because of smaller injuries and it took years, most people would have stopped earlier – I had much more trouble in my twenties than my thirties, but I became better at training and became fitter and my body handled it better.

Kristen; I was devastated when I missed the Olympics, because it was a week before, I had all my new kit, and was all packed and someone else came to pick it up and luckily, she fitted into my new kit, and the team went off to the US, Atlanta, for the Olympics.   I sat there with my mum and my dad and maybe four months after I sulked I did have thoughts, about what if I never recover from this, the first thought was, oh my god I am not going to the Olympics, this is what I have been working for and training for it was quite early in my career and this opportunity was there and luckily, back then, I didn't know that was the only Olympics that Denmark was going to be in my career, I can't remember my thoughts but I do have training diary of everything and of course I was afraid of not being able to come back, and I remember when I came back I had a few incidents where I though oh my god this is not good, my knee is not going to hold, or just had this feeling of being over sensitive. I don't think I trained as well I didn't have a good recovery, when I see the player's rehabilitation now it is much better, but of course the game was different then as well.

Kristen: Being injured I actually found out stuff by myself what was best for me, but I had both in my club and in the national team, good people to have a dialogue with, how it would be best for me and being the oldest player with the most caps, I would always be the first one on the massage bench.   Every day after dinner, I was the first one there – that's the way it was in the national team.   When I was younger I wasn't the first one, but they were ready to help me whatever, when I was the oldest and most experienced I was always the first one getting treatment.   It was good, because when we were with the national team I had much more time to get treatment and repair my body, because we had time.   Back in the club I had a job and going to training but not any extra time to treat my body as well when I was away with the national team.

Kristen: Being injured at a young age, I was 19 and just before the Olympics that was one of the hardest because I was not at all fit as a footballer and I was not

certain, I was going to be selected in time for the national team even though I played that year, I didn't feel secure and I didn't feel like everything went my way. apart from that I say had ups and down in my career, my downs, I have just tried to just turn them around. I think that I am good at adapting to the way things are at the moment. Which explains why I don't have big conflicts with football or with work. That is because I have been navigating and adapting to how things were and kept working for the way I wanted things to be.

Kristen similarly to Elaine missed out going to an important tournament which it turned out the only time her country qualified for the Olympics. Kristen interestingly used her injury in a positive way. She felt that the break from football which was forced upon her due to her injury gave her the opportunity to pursue activities she had scarified during her playing career.

Kristen: I had time for things that I hadn't had time for, I had surgery a month after the injury. I started to slowly to work my way back, but I had more time for my study, friends that I was in the college with, I could go and have beers on a Friday in town with them, I could go to the cinema, I could live that life that I hadn't lived because I wanted to play football. It was a good time because then I got used to being in that life, I got used to the friends at the pub, I got used to that life, but at some point when I could start playing a bit again I felt that it was a good break from the serious football that I'd been a part of since I started with the under 16s, and it was maybe the break I needed, on reflection I went back to football after the nine months. I actually had another break which was a self-chosen break in December 1999 to May 2000 I decided not to play football, I went to France for that year, I went skiing at the mountain where they do the tour de France, there is a ski hotel, I was in the bar, just doing dishes, just worked there, went skiing for four months.

Interviwer: What was the reason for that break?

Kristen: That was, 2000, I had been playing for six years in the best league and I had a break of 9 months – it took me 9 months to get back from my ACL and I have probably said it before, I wasn't as good at training when I was younger and I probably wasn't as motivated as I was when I was older. I felt like I am here. I am in the national team. I didn't feel lucky. When I became older and reflected on the life that I was living, it was not early on in my career so I didn't have that boost of 'oh my god! I'm in the national team' I was there, I was in the best league and I didn't have to do a lot extra to be where I was, things came easy to me, and I kind of felt that I needed a break. I think some people need that, and some people don't. I didn't need it at all in my later career, but I needed it then and I chose to take time off where there was no championship. I didn't go to the Algarve cup, there were a few national team games that I didn't play, and then I got back in May and had games, and put on probably 8kg, didn't really fit the shorts that my club had, that summer I was back in the national team, not in the best shape but I was back and started to train better.

Kristen's story has given an insight into her playing career, it alludes to how she felt that her early years were relatively easy playing in her country and how she played in the national team since she was 19 and as she developed she wanted further challenges. She believes her injuries has helped her sustain a long career by understanding how to train and prevent the injuries. As she became older she became more ambitious and the love of the game became stronger. She attributes this to having a rest period from football to experience a life outside of football which she believes helped her have the successful career she had. Kristen's playing career highlights how a female footballer has overcome challenges such as migrating to other countries to play a level of football appropriate to the standard she needed to fulfil her ambitions and to challenge her ability. She shows resilience to overcome a long-term injury and has the courage to take a break from football to reflect on her career and understand what she needed to have a long and sustainable football career.

Kristen and Elaine's injuries have shown to be problematic periods in their career and athletes tend to struggle to reconcile or make sense of this change in their athletic career according to Kerr and Dacyshyn; 2001; Sparkes, 1998). The reliance on the performance narrative (Douglass and Carless 2006), which has been evidenced within both Elaine's and Kristen playing career could be problematic if the player's experiences no longer fits into this narrative type. (Frank 1995; Smith and Sparkes 2005). Frank, (1995) explains this as narrative wreckage, when a person's experience no longer fits the dominant narrative type. Both players experience a disruption in their career and this stops them from fulfilling their performance narrative. However, the players do appear to cope with this delayed transition without major interventions which could have led to narrative wreckage or crisis transition (Stambulova, 2000). Neither players appear to lose their self –identity or suffer any mental health issues. (Douglass and Carless 2006). In Kristen's case she welcomed the break to have a 'normal life'.

In contrast, Elaine, appears to have football as central to her life. She works hard to develop into the player she believes will be successful she doesn't think she has the talent but attributes her success to working hard and being a good person. Kristen appears in her story to find it easier to get selected for her national team compared to Elaine. Elaine shares her experience of not being selected for the squad for a tournament.

Elaine: When I wasn't selected it made me want to be in it even more, made me want to prove I am a good player and a good striker and I want the no 9 shirt. I want to be in the starting 11. I had a good conversation with our coach. I believed what he said, it made me fight a little harder, get my head down and work a bit harder. I still watched every game. I still texted the coach and all my friends to say good luck, it was horrible watching. It was the first she believes cup and they were having a wicked time out there but ultimately it was my own doing I wasn't performing the way he wanted a striker to perform so I think it made me puff my chest out more and go right ok that's a punch in the stomach and I want to fight harder now. It was never like oh my god I'm going to cry because I've not got picked it was right what can I do now?

Elaine: I wasn't performing well because I think I was just fatigued, tired. I wasn't putting myself on the pitch where I should be, not scoring goals and other strikers were performing and it was evident and I wasn't going no he is lying because it was actually true, it was a sucker punch and everything he said was true. Coming back from the world cup it was draining, it was tiring and maybe I just needed to stop and have a bit of a rest and go back at it.

Elaine: If I did not get selected now I would think about it more logically and not just jump to the conclusion I haven't been picked. I am more logical and I would listen to what the manager is saying and I think I'm old enough and more experienced enough to question it not in a rude way at all and ask the question, what can I do better? Your saying this and I think this. I think I can take things on board better. I am better at criticism. I can question and ask questions to how to get selected again and prove I'm doing this or that. I think when I was younger if I didn't get pick I would be oh my god why didn't I get picked what do I do now? I am lot better at asking questions and taking feedback on board and ultimately helping me to improve.

Elaine: I think my understanding of the manager's decision to select me comes with maturity and experience. I think now I'm more like a senior player. I have had to learn it as I have gone along with my national team. I have had to learn I have got to be more vocal I've got to say a lot more. I have got to lead meetings show my experience my knowledge of the game. My knowledge of the game has vastly improved so that has helped with the experience of being able to question and take criticism and feedback on board and not take everything to heart. I definitely have grown up as a person and learnt from setbacks

Elaine I think my mentality has changed as I have got older, I get my head down and work hard and I don't talk back and disrespect players or coaches, not that I'm saying people do that, but I think it's about just being a good person, being a good team mate not making anything about you, which sounds pretty simple but when you get to that level you have to be a bit arrogant and have confidence in your ability but ultimately it's a team game and you can't win a game without the 11 players on the pitch or squad of 23. I think it's about working hard getting your head down, be willing to go above and beyond because there are so many talented players now. I have played with and been in England in the other age groups and players have fallen along the wayside they haven't had that mentality or their mental strength to really want it. They are so talented. I would love some of their talent and technical ability but I want to shake them and say do they want to play for their country do they really want it? Do you want to get up early and do those sessions or lie in bed it's those people who go above and beyond that 2 or 3 % who make it?

Elaine's story highlights her resilience, her drive and determination, she is totally focused on having a successful career in football with the main aim to play for her country and to do this she turned professional to play full time and this she believes has given her the opportunity to develop as a player. She has had many setbacks, injuries and not being selected for tournaments, despite this she has continued to develop as a player and take the advice given and applied it. These findings concur with the recent research investigating the construct of psychological resilience and mental toughness in athletes, (Peterson and Couture, 2006; Galli and Vealy, 2008; Gucciardi, Jackson, Coulter and Mallett, 2011, Nesti 2011). Galli and Vealy, (2008), found that adversity, (injury), social cultural influences (social support), and personal resources, (determination, competiveness and love of the sport) were factors at the centre of the resilience process (agitation), which consequently led to positive outcomes. Elaine's story has demonstrated many of these findings within resilience research.

This narrative demonstrates how complex and challenging the female football journey is and highlights the gap in the existing transition literature. The players have shown their motivation, passion and resilience to continue to play football at the highest level, despite the challenges they have faced in their country with the way football has been structured which has been evidenced in the previous two studies. These structures have forced the

players to make sacrifices and move clubs to find a better standard of football and ultimately to become a professional player. In Kristen's case, she has had to move to a different country to fulfil her ambition to play at the highest level. Despite the barriers that have been evidenced, the players have overcome them and their stories embody their resilience and passion for the sport they love. The following narrative further highlights the complex nature of female football and examines the implications of how female players have to pursue a dual career.

5.8.3 Filling the void

The following stories shared by Elaine and Kristen will illuminate the complexities unique to female football players. The players will recount the challenges of pursuing a dual career and how this impacts their retirement from football. The players describe the conflict of playing football and wanting to start a family.

> Elaine: I found balancing training and working difficult, it's tiring but you need the money so you have to do it. I love playing football so that was my ultimate thing, now obviously I didn't dedicate my time to my recovery strategy and everything that comes around being a footballer it's hard because we are training quite a lot trying to get that down time can be quite difficult.
>
> Elaine: I've never really thought why do it if you don't earn a lot of money but sometimes you have to do things you love and enjoy and look at it in the end and work out what do when it is finished but for the moment I'm really happy in what I am doing and I have potentially a few ideas to what to do when I stop playing especially like having kids and that's something to look forward to.

Elaine recounts how she initially had to balance playing football with a job as a sport development officer and how that was difficult when working all day and then having to train in the evening for her football. Dual career research ((Aquiline 2013; Ryba, Stambulova, Ronkainen, Bundgaard, Selanne, 2015; Stambulova, Engstrom, Franck, Linner, Lindahl,2015; Debois, Ledon, Wylleman, 2015; Brown, Fletcher, Henry, Borrie, Emmett, Buzza, Wombwell, 2015; Gledhill and Harwood, 2015), has explored the challenges of

balancing sport and education, however there is a dearth in the literature that has explored a career and playing elite sport therefore it is difficult to compare the experience of female elite football players to any athlete group with similar experiences. Kristen shares her story of how she has had to balance playing elite football and having to study and then to pursue another career in parallel to her football career.

> Kristen: That is how women's football has been for a long time and it is what I grew up with, it was fantastic playing professionally for that time, only concentrating on football, I think it has given me something, being able to gain an education and having a job on the side. It was also negative in that way that you never get the recovery that you need to become an even better player. it's just quite a squeeze to fit everything in. I had good job for nearly 10 years, it was right next to the club, went to work at 8.30am and could leave at 3.30pm and be at training at 4.15pm – but everything is squeezed in.

> Kristen: I knew I couldn't make a living of it, I couldn't earn enough money to buy a house, not the house that I wanted to live in, so why did I still feel motivated to play? I think that it was mainly the love of the game and because I made a life, I didn't have to put my other life on hold, my career. I did may education, teaching degree and I had a job that was developing, and it was developing football players, so hand in hand those two things were good for me. I believe all long I have had opportunities to do actually what I want to do. I have been lucky a new job offer has come up whenever I have needed one.

The stories by Elaine and Kristen highlight that both players have had to pursue a dual career. Both obtained University degrees to enable them to pursue another career whilst playing football. They share how trying to balance a dual career had an effect on their ability to play football. Kristen however, sees the concept of a dual career as positive because it allowed her to gain a qualification and work experience which will help her secure employment once her playing career finishes. Narrative tension (Douglass and Carless, 2008), is evident where they both want to concentrate on playing football however, they have to spend their studying or working to secure enough money to buy houses and live comfortably. This is a stark contrast to male elite football. There is some evidence of identity confusion which was discussed earlier. By having to pursue a dual career their football identity may not be as strong as it would be if they were full time professionals

earning enough money to secure their futures. This is evidence by Kristen; she knew she needed to have a career outside of football to have the financial security she needed.

Dual careers have been highlighted in Study One and Two and demonstrates the complexity female players endure to play football at the elite level. Their education also helped to facilitate a plan to what they can do when their career from football finishes. This area may be significant for when the player retires, research by Werthner and Orlick, (1986); Cecic Erpic, Wylleman, Zupancic, (2004), suggest, that these athletes would have a smoother transition in retiring from football because they are planning for it. The following story illuminates how Elaine has started planning for retirement within football and explains she will have to find something to fill the void of not competing in a sporting context.

> Elaine: I have thought about life after football. I did a role like a sports development officer for a year with my club so I have experience of that so I have that to fall back on and work with an FA to grow and develop the game. I also really like the agency side. I don't think a female or a footballer has gone that way to fight for the players or to have an experience or a role model where they understand from being on the other side and being like a role model in that sense. I think that is an interesting route to take it's a bit of a niche area so I have had a little bit of a delve into that but there is more to research and look at. I really like the media work I have done with BT so there are different avenues to be honest and obviously I still have my sports science degree to fall back on. I have a number of things in my head that I would like to delve more into and see if I do enjoy that. For now, it's just football but I do definitely have my mind on when I do stop playing.

> Elaine: I want to have a good career of playing but I also want to have children before I stop playing and I have thought what is going to fill the void of the competitive nature of playing. I love doing exercise. I like strength training and I have thought whether I go into triathlons or do marathon running. I love the organisation and structure of football. I will need something that fills the gap football will leave because I think I would probably go crazy. I read Chrissy wellington's book and that inspired me and I was right I'm doing a triathlon but I don't think it would work with football but I do think there is a void I have to fill because I have to be doing some kind of exercise. I have to have some mental stimulus to drive me. I really like the charity work so aspects of that and whether I can fulfil something in that aspect and exercise with it I could have two separate things I could focus on.

Career termination or retirement has been explored by several theorists, for example Taylor and Oglivie, (2001); Kerr, and Dacyshyn, (2001), and Patterson, (2008). Whereas the

retirement process is viewed and defined differently as Career Transition by theorists such as Bailie and Danish, (1992); Stephan and Bilard, (2003), and Wylleman and Lavallee, (2004). Athletic career transitions fall into two categories, those that are freely chosen, and those that are forced into retirement for reasons such as injury and de-selection (Wylleman et al., 2004). According to Bindle and Strata, (1992); and Webb et al., (1998) termination is addressed as a result of situations that the athlete has no control over, and findings suggested that the athletes experienced the same difficulties when being forced into retirement. Transition out of elite sport is an extremely dynamic process, and according to Stephan and Bilard, (2003), several studies have shown that the transition out of sport is usually a 6 month to 1-year period. Factors which need to be taken into consideration when examining career termination are those such as control, it has been suggested by Patterson, (2008), to be a serious factor in affecting career termination and the retirement process, and whether or not the athlete has control over their decision out of sport as it facilitates psychological adjustment. These factors contribute to the difficulty or ease of the termination process for the elite athlete, and that it puts athletes at risk of experiencing post retirement psychological difficulties Kristen's story gives an insight into female football and the retirement phase within transition models

> Kristen: I am 40 now, and I stopped playing when I was 37, If I hadn't been able to study or if I hadn't been able to work, develop myself in other ways I would probably would not be playing that long. Because then I would be 40 and if I hadn't earned more money to live for and a bit extra, then I would be sitting here as a 40-year-old without any education without any experience other than my football. When the pay has not been better I am actually glad that I had the opportunity to do both. Because it has developed me and given me the experience that I have now.

> Interviewer: When you retired, did you retire from the national team and club football?

> Kristen: I retired from international football because I was pregnant. I didn't tell anyone because it was early on. We had a game against Serbia and we had a training game before the world cup qualification. I faked a neck injury – I had a previous neck injury from the Euros – I told the coach I was pregnant but we told them it was a neck injury. That was how I stopped playing, for me it was the best way to stop playing. I didn't want to stop playing. I just felt I had to stop playing because I was getting older. I wanted to have kids as well.

Kristen: If I had not wanted kids. I would not have stopped at that time, of course I was 37, and anyone from the outside would say it would be time to stop playing, but actually I think I was at my best – it is also a good way to stop playing – being on top.   If I could have done things differently, or if I could pick and choose, I would probably would have had kids a bit earlier, and then started playing again.   Not as quick as I did after my daughter. Then I wouldn't have been kind of forced to retire. I felt its now I have to try and get pregnant as we don't know if it will work, and didn't know if I would need a year or two or if it would ever work.

Kristen explains that her dual career has helped her prepare for retirement, however she did not want to retire when she did, she was forced to do so because she wanted to start a family. This area is devoid from any retirement literature and adds a different insight into female athlete retirement. Wylleman and Lavallee's, (2004), model only accounts for injury and de-selection as forced retirement.   Kristen wishes she had children earlier however, she explains that once she had children she was not the same player as she was before.

Kristen: After that I got pregnant and started playing later in the fall, October, I had a girl in May. During that period. I spoke to a new club in Australia, I had been talking to them a few times, but it had never really fit into the National Team plans, or the club plans playing champions league. After having my daughter, I thought maybe it's possible to go there. I signed a contract before I gave birth, and then unfortunately the league in Australia moved forwards it started in September instead of November which gave me a little less than four months to get ready and be fit to play. I kind of made it, I played in the September. I played the 12 games for them. I wasn't the same player. I was clever enough, but my body was not fit as I was before, my movements and my football wasn't at the same level. I struggled. I played a few games from the start and other games came on for 30 minutes and to try to settle the game but my football wasn't, as It was before I had kids. That was 6 months before the world cup started in 2015. I stopped playing. I got pregnant again later that year, gave birth to a boy in June.   I haven't played since.

Elaine: I'm really happy in what I am doing at the moment and I have a few ideas to what to do when I stop playing especially having kids and that's something to look forward to.

Elaine: If I was to have kids now, how do you plan it? When I did my last ACL my mum was encouraging me to have a baby, obviously it's hard you don't want to plan having a baby and if you plan these things sometimes it just doesn't work out. For me at the moment I just want to be injury free for a sustained amount of time and you know see where I end up. Having a child is not on the horizon for the next year or so it's scary because you would have to have that level of planning between the world cup and European championship cycles. It is a big risk to take and how is your body going to react you might have to have a c section and how is everything going to knit back together you can have all the will in the world to get back within a year but if your body isn't wanting to do it you are not going to be able to do it. I would

be talking to friends who have had babies, to know what stages you could do everything like exercising up to an appropriate point. I think I would have a big plan in place.

Elaine too wants to have a family and she explains her dilemma as to when to have children and how to recover from her pregnancy to perform to the level she desires. Kristen's story explains she was not the same footballer as she was before, therefore the stories share experiences of the sacrifice female athletes face when deciding whether to have a child during their playing career. Research on female athletes starting families is limited in transitional literature. Douglas and Carless (2009), explore this concept of female athletes starting a family and suggest it is "wholly incompatible with the demands of the performance narrative that necessitates an exclusive focus on one's self and achievements in sport." p222. General sport literature on this area has been reported by Lenskyj, (1986), and suggests dominant cultural and societal values concerning what it is to be a "woman" are in tension with the role of being an athlete. The main literature that compares sacrificing careers for starting a family lies in education and general career literature. (Fowlkes 1987; Barnett & Marshall, 1992; Finkel & Olswang, 1996; Ward and Wolf-Wendel, 2004). The concept of starting a family whilst continuing a playing career highlights a narrative tension, (Douglass and Carless 2006), for Kristen and Elaine they appear to put football first and children second. This aligns to elite team sport not facilitating female athletes as mothers.

Kristen's retirement was as a result of starting a family and this has helped to fill the void of not playing, she still continues to have a career in football as a coach with the national team and teaches football to school children. By planning for retirement i.e. gaining an education and pursuing a dual career, has to a degree created a successful transition out of football for Kristen. She alludes to missing playing and would have preferred to have children earlier so the decision to retire would have been her decision not forced due to the need to have children at the age of 37.

Kristen: I have a lot in my life, and I wouldn't change that for anything, but I do miss playing, as I said before, I think sometimes I would like to do it differently because I wouldn't have been forced to stop, maybe then again it was good to stop on the top of the game and you never know if it would have been as good every time as when I was on top, but I loved what I was doing, I appreciated it even more after when I was 30. I kind of appreciated it more the older I got. I appreciated the life I had. Football, when we were travelling with the national team, I loved the way we went out to training, doing the thing you loved the most – I was on top, I had good football years.

Kristen: Even though now I am in a different situation that I have stopped playing, it has been a little bit harder than I thought, also being on maternity leave has been like being on standby mode. I haven't been able to follow the football properly, I have just been around the kids but still I have had job offers. I have said yes to one of them, I haven't needed to search for anything. I think that's because of the sports person that I have been, but I haven't earned a lot of money, I have got a reputation and it is more attractive than I thought it would be. May be its because my goals are not too high and I am happy with the job offers that I get, that is one way of looking at it. Or I have been lucky to have the doors open to people that see some opportunity in me.

Kristen: It is probably easier to retire as a female footballer, because the gap is huge for the men's players, the gap for me was there, even though my life after playing continued to be in football and giving birth to our daughter, that took all the time that I had. I felt like it filled the gaps a lot, but in a very different way, I felt important or respected as a player that stopped the day I stopped playing. That's how I feel, I can't even imagine what it is like for a male footballer that has only played football and have been looked up to, they are still respected because men's football players are more respected.

Kristen: If I could have done things differently. I would have. I would have had kids before. Then I wouldn't have been pressured to stop, and I think it would have been a good life for my kids, being kids of a sports person. My parents, were younger when they had me and they played handball and football with me. We are quite old parents, both of us. I have to start playing then again.

Kristen's experience of retirement supports athlete identity literature and transitional literature in that she had a dual identity throughout her career, she was an elite footballer and had a career as a teacher in parallel to this. This has been positive in aiding her transition out of football, she had a plan, a career to move into. This argument of successful planning for a dual career aligns with Carless and Douglas, (2009); Douglas (2009) findings that if athlete experiences does not solely fit with the performance narrative and performance stories are not central to Kristen's career then her dual career experiences have counter balanced the performance story to help Kristen experience her career in its

fullest sense and making the most of her opportunities. This helped her resist and reject the dominant performance narrative within her career. Therefore, it can be argued in Kristen's story, her career planning, balancing life style, stress/time/energy management and effective recovery, facilitate Kristen coping with the transition into retirement, (Stambulova et al., 2009). A counter argument to this is female footballers have to plan a dual career in order to have financial security in their lives. Both Kristen and Elaine have had to plan their future after football. The five-step career planning strategy (5-SCP) Stambulova, (2003) and life development interventions, Lavallee, (2005), have been used with athletes for over a decade. These have tended to focus on preparing athletes for retirement and plan life after sport. These models have been used to help athlete prepare for significant transitions within their career and in the case of Lavallee's (2005), it is to prepare athletes from their retirement from their sport. The models do not account for how the player themselves copes with such transitions, the assumption from the previous studies is that athletes transition successfully due to external coping strategies such as support mechanisms (family, psychologists, career planning). Kristen is living this presently and it is working well for her Elaine has this to deal with in the future.

5.9 Conclusion

This study has added further insight into the complex nature of female football careers and their key transitional moments within their career. The results emphasised the significant challenges the players faced in transitioning through their career. Both players had to move clubs to aid in their development as players and to be able to play at the highest level. This transition brought challenges with Kristen especially, who had to move to different countries to pursue her career. It highlighted the difficult decisions the players had to make to pursue the sport they loved. The study stressed the resilience the players have and how they had to overcome key transitional moments such as injury and changing clubs. According to Stambulova, (2011); Alfermann & Stamulova, (2007), successfully coping with such

transitions leads to the athlete having a successful sporting career. However, if the athlete fails to cope with such transition this could lead to a crisis often termed as "crisis transition", (Stambulova, Alfermann, Statler and Cote, 2009). This could lead to long term consequences such as dropout of sport, alcohol and drug abuse and neurosis. Career planning therefore, has been used to raise awareness of forthcoming transitional demands that athletes may face in their career.

The concept of undertaking a dual career features strongly within the player's stories and how female football players have to plan for retiring from football so they can have a second career after retirement. With this their identity as players came into conflict. Another concept which arose was the planning to start a family which is not accounted for in transitional models and this has an impact on female football career decisions and if often put off until retirement, in the fear that the player will not play as they did previously and may not regain their position back in the team.

Chapter Six

6.0 Discussion

The following chapter explores the prominent themes of this thesis. It includes a theoretical synthesis and attempts to consolidate and critically reflect on findings from all three data sets. The discussion starts by addressing each specific research aim. Some research aims are discussed together in light of their similar aspirations. Methodological developments and reflections on the research journey are debated and a synthesis of the studies complete this section. The comments emerging from the data develop a series of applied perspectives and propose a number of implications for academic communities, in the areas of athlete transition, dual careers, migration, identity and organizational structures.

6.1 - A Summary of Literature & Clarification of Aims

The overall aim of this research is;

The research aims to examine the development structures of women and girls' football from a Pan European perspective, in order to identify and illuminate the critical transition phases experienced by top- level female football players prior to, during and after their football career.

Reviewing the literature created a series of complimentary and more specific aims. These specific aims are clarified in the summary section below. The aims that emerge specifically relate to early sections of reviewed literature, but also to later discussions within the review. One aim may have therefore emerged early within the literature review, only to be re-emphasised by further literature within a later section.

The introduction to the literature review outlined the change in direction in the development of women's football. It suggested that women's football faced considerable opposition and when FIFA and UEFA, changed its focus to embrace the development this saw an interest in the research of women's football. This research focused primarily on the historical development and inequality of opportunities for females to play football. Essentially, little research appears to exist to outline exactly where women's football is situated within football organisations and whether the status of women's football within the organisation has an

impact on women's football development. The first specific aim emerging from the literature review is therefore,

A. To ascertain the organisational structure(s) and culture(s) that exist within women's football and how these impact the development of women's football

The literature review, then moved on to critically explore the evolution of women's football development within the countries participating in this research and the barriers they faced to gain acceptance within football organisations. This was followed by examining the dearth of literature on women's positioning of power in sports organisations. White and Kay illuminate that this positioning of power is shifting in the UK, although Burton, (2015), provides sceptical conclusions that this trend is not consistent in most countries. This led to reviewing organisational structures and adopting Mintzberg's, (1979), model to frame how football organisations are structured. This was followed by providing an overview of how women's football has been developed in each country from their strategy documents. This review provided an understanding of how women's football is organised and how women's football operates but does not give the player perspective on how they transition through the football development structures. This highlighted the second and third specific aim of this research.

B. To better understand the developmental experiences of young female footballers from a Pan European perspective.

C. To gain a better understanding of the complexity of performance and lifestyle issues affecting top level female European footballers.

The literature review, then moved on to focus on transitional research and its association with dual careers. A review of major developments in relation to career transitions, models of transitions (Bloom 1985; Côté, 1999; Stambulova; 2000), and the emergence of holistic and life span perspectives, (Wylleman, Alfermann and Lavallee, 2004), highlighted some of the associated complexities that appeared to accompany an athlete's development and life in sport. This literature also offered further support for **aim (D)**, by stressing the need to look at, but also beyond, the athletic experience and into athletes more complete and ever

changing experiences as people. However, it appeared that the (contextual) voices of athletes as they matured were rarely heard, nor were the realities or potential influence of environmental and cultural contexts described within transitional research and models. In this sense, transitional research had yet to employ methodologies that could highlight what athlete's contextual lifestyle experiences were really like throughout and during their development. The author therefore advocated further reconnaissance, which resonates with **aim (B)** and **aim (C)**, to better understand the transitions, lifestyle experiences and existence of female footballers, within the contexts, cultures and environments of women's football, and their potential influence on players' lifestyle experiences and any accompanying support. Greater understanding from these aims might then inform existing transitional research in the absence of literature specifically on female football and even female team sports offers further justification for aim (B) and (C).

Whilst transitional research offered further understanding in relation to the developmental experiences of athletes, the review continued to build on this understanding by exploring the concept of dual careers and the challenges faced by female football players combining the two areas. This literature base compliments and re-emphasises the importance of **aim (C)**, in exploring the challenges faced by female players.

The latter stages of the literature review (very briefly) reviewed, athlete identity and resilience in understanding the athlete and how they perceive themselves as an athlete (footballer) and the associated difficulties faced when retiring from sport or other challenges they may face. This leads to the final specific **aim (D)** of this research, which also relates to aim (B) and aim (C);

D. To capture the player's personal and unique transitional experiences throughout their career pathway**.**

The concept of resilience is addressed which relates to athletes being able to cope with setbacks in their athletic career and how the athletes cope with such setbacks. This area of research is relatively new in sport and has not addressed female athletes who are involved in team sports. The literature is focused on male sport particularly professional sport. (Morgan, Fletcher & Sarker, 2013, 2015, 2017).

Athletic identity has however been research extensively and relates to career transitions and in particular retirement from sport. Study Three highlights the dual identity one player (Kristen) adopted due to her dual career of teacher/coach and football player. This resonates with Carless and Douglass's (2006), narrative tension concept where the player has both careers conflicting with each other. However, having a dual identity has been attributed for successfully transitioning out of sport.

The literature for the thesis covers discipline areas in organizational theory, the historical social and cultural concepts to add context in the understanding of the positioning of women's football in European countries featured in the studies. Transitional theory and the association of dual careers, athletic identity and resilience helps to understand the player and the associated challenges they face transitioning throughout their playing career.

6.2 Methodology journey reflection

This section aims to contextualize 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, Study Two and Study Three, (Figure 5.1). Discussions turn to notions 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 all three studies. The

content analysis identifies themes and these themes develop from Study One to Study Two and finally into Study Three where the narrative adds depth to these findings.
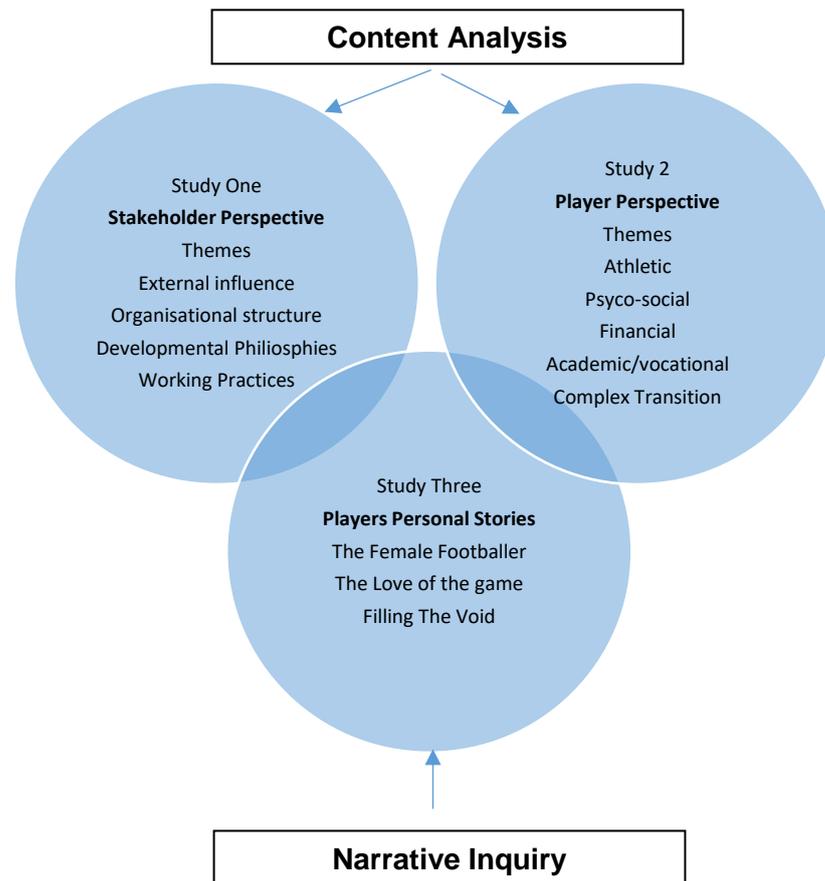
Figure 5.1 Methodology Journey

Study One and two used content analysis as a methodological approach to draw out the pertinent themes from the interviews of key personnel in the football associations and the football players. Content analysis was used in both studies to analysis large data sets of text which the interviews formulated. A common criticism of content analysis is the way in which experiences and dialogue are often de-contextualised from an individual's own story to be compared with other similarly de-contextualized sections of data (Tesch, 1990; Côté et al., 1993; Biddle et al., 2001). As a consequence of the process of content analysis in

Study One, tabular representations emerged and brought together the themes. The themes in Study One and Study Two were unconnected in terms of the individuals within the football associations and players but connected across the group as each person's story moved (in some way and at some time) to embrace a specific issue. As a result, data and interpretations risked appearing detached from the stakeholder/ player's global narrative or interview, and could become personally and contextually neutral (Biddle et al., 2001). Despite this limitation the content analysis did allow large amounts of data to be managed and presented in a way that was accessible and thematically coherent. In addition, different elements of the content analysis in Study One have 'traveled' through the analysis of Study Two and the narrative of Study Three. Thus de-contextualised segments are grounded in the language and culture of any given context as the thesis progresses. More specifically the process of 'pulling' Study One data (represented as raw quotes, 1st, and 2nd order themes and general dimensions) through into Study Two and Study Three also allows a more coherent, evolving and consistent understanding of the player's careers and challenges to emerge. Equally, data from Study One and Study Two were also synthesized within the narrative in Study Three. I felt this configuration would more accurately reflect the interconnecting nature of the data within the entire thesis. Indeed, the process itself seemed a straightforward one to myself, with themes of data naturally coming together for discussion. In this regard, Bloor et al., (2001), contended that analysis of different kinds of data bearing on the same topic (e.g., content analysis themes from stakeholder/player interviews alongside the narrative) serves to deepen and enrich a researchers understanding of an area. This unique configuration and synthesis of data might also be embraced in future research projects when seeking to understand, highlight and discuss the nature of an inquiry in its entirety (in this case relating to transition phases and accompanying support provision for women footballers).

Study Three has illustrated how each player interviewed had a personal narrative to tell of her experience of being heavily involved at the highest level of football while still committed

to her academic and vocational development. By adopting a life-story approach to interviews I sought to find a creative and meaningful way for these players to discuss issues that concerned them directly. In order to ensure that this does in effect take place, a narrative approach to life-stories was employed where interviewees were given the opportunity to express their own perceptions in negotiation with myself in an open fluid manner. This generated a range of intuitive understandings from the players. By engaging the participants through this particular qualitative method, I believe they were empowered from the start giving them the opportunity to present their unique perspective of how they had personally negotiated their football career. In order for the reader to gain a better insight into these perspectives extensive quotations extracted from the interview transcripts were presented throughout the whole thesis. From a methodological point of view, at one level I acknowledge that life-stories can aid in gaining an understanding on how these players are constructing their football careers but without giving further consideration to how these life-stories are being shaped. On reflection, I acknowledge to further empower the players and amplify their voice, I could have sent the players the completed narratives I complied, to tell their stories. This would further enhance their stories by producing a better jointly constructed story. This is something to consider for future research with these two players to tell their important and unique perspective of their careers.

Trustworthiness and authenticity in narrative research is often taken into consideration. In listening to the players and hearing their stories as told by them does nevertheless raise issues in terms of the trustworthiness and authenticity of the end product. Reissman, (2008), described two important levels of validity and authenticity of narrative inquiry which are the story as told by the narrator, and the way the story is interpreted and told by the researcher. When I listened to the players stories I was cognisant that their career would be composed of multiple realities and that no representation can therefore be considered the truth (Lai, 2010). I found this challenging because I wanted to privilege the player's stories in providing an honest interpretation of them, yet I cannot be certain that the players have told the truth

or that indeed my interpretation is an accurate reflection of what the players meant. This is important to me as the researcher because I was unable to position myself in the research process knowing that the stories being told could not be entirely verified as being true and were being told by the players as a representation of their reality.

With this in mind I was cognisant that the truth will always be subjective because it is presented from the perspective of the story teller, (Smith and Sparkes, 2009), it will be culturally and historically bound and may not even be the whole story as the player can be selective on what she has chosen to tell me. Subjectivity thus becomes inevitable within narrative inquiry and this made me consider my own position in relation to the study and how my own personal story, biases and assumptions may affect the players' behavior during the interviews and through interpretation of the data. In this instance I came from an elite team sport background, not in football, due to growing up in a generation where the football opportunities did not exist and was guided to a more female appropriate team sport. I also experienced early retirement from elite sport due to a serious injury. I have been in sports education and coaching for over twenty years. Therefore, a significant reason for undertaking the research is underpinned by a mix of both personal and professional concerns for the development of women's football. I thus needed to be careful not to lead the participants into giving answers that they felt I wanted to hear. (Holloway and Jefferson, 2000).

In able to collect quality data I was conscious about their positioning within the research process and the element of trust between the myself and the players. Therefore, with this in mind, I wanted the research to be co-constructed, a joint product of the players, myself and our relationship (Finlay 2002; Polkingthorne, 2007). I felt that without trusting relationships, players will not be willing to open their lives to me, (Krane & Baird, 2005).

On reflection, the nature of the connection between the myself, stakeholders and players during the interviews, seemed to directly feed-into the quality of the data sets. For example, when the dynamic between the myself and interviewee had trust then the material that came forth appeared more genuine, insightful, and authentic in all three studies. I felt there were very similar 'moments' of trusting engagement during each phase of data collection. For example, the deeper levels of players' self -reflections during the interviews in Study Two and three disclosed some of their most private experiences regarding their personal lives (e.g., their personal relationships and marriages). I felt the authentic interactions and depth of exchanges with players during Study Three also appeared to be a result of (what I believed to be) a, strong and trusting relationship with them which had developed over time.

All of these moments required myself to earn (what I believe to be) peoples trust and respect. Through this process I emphasised that what was spoken about would be represented in a way that portrayed anonymity and that each transcript would be sent to the interviewee for comments to make sure it was an acute reflection of what was said. This helped to build trust and with Study Two and Three the continuity of interviewing players several times seemed to provide a passport to richer data.

Within the following reflections I intend to draw upon the thinking of Denzin & Lincoln, (1998), by making reference to the specific paradigms of each study. The decision to delay this discussion stems from my desire to focus on the research data and to reflect on the research journey as a whole.

A research paradigm can be described as a basic belief system or worldview that guides the researcher (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Denzin & Lincoln, (1998) discussed qualitative inquiry through reference to a paradigm matrix. In their clarification they choose to bracket research into positivist, post-positivist, criticalist and constructivist lists. According to Denzin

& Lincoln, (1998), positivism represents the received view that has dominated formal discourse in social sciences.

In terms of its ontology, an apprehensible reality is assumed to exist, driven by immutable natural laws. Within this paradigm, research can, in principal, join on true replicable findings. The investigator and object of study are assumed independent entities, and the investigator is thought capable of studying the object without influencing it or being influenced by it. Hypotheses are stated in propositional form and subjected to empirical test(s) to verify them (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Post-positivism represents efforts over the past few decades to respond in a limited way (whilst remaining within essentially the same set of beliefs) to the most problematic criticisms of positivism (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Post-positivist assumptions accept (to a degree) that reality is a rather more inflexible phenomenon (i.e., harder to get at) that requires a range of methods (including qualitative techniques) to enable imperfect and approximate apprehension (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998).

In their review of qualitative research, Biddle et al., (2001), specifically noted that qualitative research papers, when viewed collectively, demonstrated a dependence on semi-structured interview and content analysis protocols. In this sense, Study One is thought to employ protocols that are associated with a post-positivist view of research. More specifically, the methodological process of constructing a semi-structured interview in Study One, and Two involved the myself being guided by a theoretical literature base. The resulting (predominantly) deductive analysis and discussion of findings (i.e., players' experiences) then involved extensive synthesis with existing literature. Thus Study One, and Two might, by proxy, become an extension of previous positivist work and draw parallels with notions of post-positivist research. However, I might also contemplate a degree of engagement with interpretivism within Study One and two and also within Study Three. This degree might stem from elements of inductive interpretation of interview and case study data where knowledge was socially constructed (e.g., understanding stakeholder player's experiences

through interviews and contexts through player's personal stories) and all studies sought contextualised meaning, (Greene, 1994). However, intepretivism retains the positivist assumption that the goal is value free description and assessment of phenomenon (Bain, 1989). In this sense, while interpretivism celebrates the durability and importance of the subjective experience, it also seeks to undo from that experience and objectify it. The paradox of how to develop an objective interpretive science of subjective human experience thus arises (Schwandt, 1994). Study One, two and three might draw further parallels with interpretivism in that they both sought to authenticate interpretations as empirically based representations of experiences and meanings rather than a biased inquirer opinion (Greene, 1994). Like most interpretivist evaluation, the studies utilised procedural guidelines to enhance the credibility of interpretations. In this sense, Lincoln & Guba, (1985), indicated that qualitative research should be judged by its trustworthiness, or how the investigator persuades others (including him/herself) that the findings are worthy of attention. A number of procedural criteria for establishing trustworthiness have been proposed and the suggestion is that qualitative research should be evaluated relative to these procedural criteria.

Sparkes, (2002), explored the different forms of writing available to qualitative researchers and in doing so allows for further classification of this research. These classifications included scientific, realist and confessional tales (amongst others including autoethnography and poetic representations for example). Realist tales are thought to dominate a great deal of the qualitative research (i.e., products) that has been published in sport and exercise psychology (Sparkes, 1995). According to Biddle et al., (2001), the realist tale, as a genre, has a number of compositional conventions. These conventions can be linked to the form of writing across sections and chapters of this research. In this research, there is a marked absence of myself as narrator with a first person presence throughout Study One and (discussion sections in) Study Two. In these sections I become author evacuated and appear as a traditional scientific narrator who acts as an emotional, camera

like observer (Biddle et al., 2001). Moreover, in Study One and Study Two (but also within reflective stop offs in Study Three) I also appear to seek experiential authority by promoting the view that only what the players and stakeholder say and do, and think, are visible in the text (Biddle et al., 2001; Sparkes, 2002). Further to this, extensive, closely edited quotations / data in the text suggest to the reader that the views put forward are not my views, or just those views closely related to a specific theoretical problem (e.g., exploring player's lifestyle experiences), but are actually the authentic and representative remarks of the stakeholders and players in the study (Sparkes, 2002). It would appear that I was seeking to construct 'interpretive influence', in which I would have the final word as to how the culture will be interpreted and how it will be presented. In this sense, Van Maanen (1988) recognised that the realist tale can only offer one reading, and culls its facts with care to support that reading. Biddle et al., (2001), proposed that such tendencies might be partly explained through a range of personal and technical factors. For example, they cited Krane et al., (1997), who argued that a researcher's prior knowledge of salient theory is likely to result in work housing deductive qualities. Indeed, throughout the results and discussion sections of Study One, Study Two, and within the stop offs of Study Three, I tended to look (deductively) backward towards positivist assumptions (and prior theory established from the same source) to guide and support the research venture. Within these sections it might be argued that a deductive, distal post-positivist mind set seems operational and realist tales may have been produced. Moreover, as a qualitative PhD researcher, it seemed difficult to not be associated with the procedural rigour and theory laden security offered by the landscape of post-positivism and interpretivism. These insecurities also created certain dilemmas, in that theoretical grounding seemed to be found within sport psychology literature when the focus of this research was more transitional in orientation. However, this needn't be seen as entirely negative, as elements of post-positivist / interpretivist research and realist tales within this research might also be deemed credible and useful precisely because they deflect light back onto established theory, (Gilbourne, 2002). One must also remember that post-positivist / interpretivist research and realist tales, amongst other forms, tend to be informed

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by different philosophical assumptions and so have different purposes and ends in mind, (Sparkes, 2002). To this end, Study One and Study Two were able to offer a certain degree of understanding in terms of the lifestyle experiences of players, and stakeholder perspectives and accompanying notions of support.

6.3 Synthesizing the studies

The overall aim of the thesis aimed to examine the development structures of women and girls' football from a Pan European perspective, in order to identify and illuminate the critical transition phases experienced by top- level female football players prior to, during and after their football career. In order to fulfil this aim, three studies were identified. Study One was chosen to set the context of women's football in Europe and understand the challenges female footballers have faced over the years to play football in their respective countries. The football associations are instrumental in developing women's football and an understanding of where women's football is positioned in the organization aided in the understanding of how football organisations are central to the development of the female game in their country. The success of countries such as Germany has been attributed to the resource and support women's football has within their football association. This study was important to discover the development and priorities of women's football and how the development was put in practice with the European football associations.

Study Two was important for understanding the player's positioning within the football associations development policies and working practices and to confirm whether these working practices are supporting the development of the players. The study developed from the gaps that were identified within the working practices within Study One and Study Two helped to identify how female players transition through their playing career. The adoption of Wylleman and Lavelle's, (2004), holistic career model helped frame the study and identify the complexity of transitions in female football. The country of origin did not affect the transitions, more so the complex nature of football structures in general and the pursuit of

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a dual career which is forced upon female players due to the money they earn and their short football career. The country highlighted the lack of opportunities in structures and forced players to migrate to other countries to further their playing career to play a better standard of football. The study highlighted that female football players do not fit into Wylleman and Lavelle's, (2004), model completely and some areas such as athletic, psychological, psych-social financial and vocation/academic correlate to previous research, however the complex nature of non -normative transitions (injury, de-selection) and single transitions (moving clubs, migration) do not fit into this model.

Despite the complexities and challenges players did navigate through their careers which begged the question why and how did they continue to pursue football? Study Three extended the knowledge in more depth about the individual players through a case study narrative gaining further insight into the players prime motivation to continue in this complex sporting environment. The love of the game and the resilience the players demonstrated to continue playing football despite the setback of injury, moving clubs/countries and putting on hold having a family to pursue a football career are prominent within this study. Alongside this, players have to gain an education or balance a vocation and football career. Consistent themes of migration, identity and need to pursue a dual career run through all the studies highlighting the complexity of navigating through a female football career.

6.4 Contribution to Theory

This thesis contributes to the existing research in the area of women's football. Study One adds and extends insight into the academic research in the area of women's football by examining where female football is situated with Football organisations and how women's football operates within these organisations in the respective countries examined. Previous research into women's football has centred on the social, historical development and the inequalities existing within women's football. Pfister, (2003, 2006); Williams, (2003, 2007);

Fasting, (2004,); Brus and Trangbaek, (2004). Study One highlighted that inequalities still exist in relation to women football structures and the resources available to them. Despite this female football is progressing and societal perceptions have changed in the countries within the studies.

Wylleman and Lavallee's, (2004), Development model and the transitions faced by female football players allowed me to view female footballer's transitions in "a holistic, life-span perspective which spans the athletic and post-athletic career" while also taking into consideration those transitions that occurred in other domains of life (Wylleman, Alfermann and Lavallee, 2004 p7). Study Two has focussed on the athletic, psycho-social, financial academic and vocational domains of life outlining both a series of normative (expected) transitions as depicted on the model together with a range of non-normative and in-career transitions that the model does not account for. This resonates well with the recommendations put forward by the proponents of the model Wylleman, Alfermann and Lavallee, (2004p7), who suggested that future conceptual developments to the model should include: the need to extend the available knowledge on the characteristics of specific transitions (e.g. non-normative transitions, in-career transitions), on the influence of sport, gender, or culture-specific factors on the quality of the transitional process. This research therefore has managed to make a substantial contribution to fill this gap in the literature, having identified the developmental, interactive and interdependent nature of transitions and stages that female footballers encountered, while also beginning to tease out the specific characteristics that impact on the transitional experience. Having interviewed female footballers some insight into the gender-specific factors that influence the career plans of these individuals was provided as the findings illustrated that some female players may have different requirements to managing a dual career; especially of elite sport and full-time employment.

7.0 Conclusion

The research aimed to examine the development structures of women and girls' football from a Pan European perspective, in order to identify and illuminate the critical transition phases experienced by top- level female football players prior to, during and after their football career.

Study One has outlined the structures in each organization and looked at how this has impacted the development of women's football in each country. It has also identified gaps within the development structures within the player pathways and the resulting factors such as players having to migrate to play elite level club football and the lack of opportunities to play professionally has led to players combining football with a career of an education.

Study Two evaluated and found the different experiences of the players from six European countries' how they have navigated through their country's player pathway. This was framed around Wylleman and Lavallee's, (2004), holistic career model and examined this model is appropriate to explain some of the complex issues faced by female players. The research has captured this and eludes to the critical areas the players faced when transitioning through their football career.

There has also been an increasing awareness that transitional research has been largely adopted without the full understanding of elite footballers' perspectives, which arguably can only be captured through qualitative research methods. Douglas and Carless, (2006a:10), pointed out how in Britain, UK Sport, (2001), itself had identified that previous studies investigating elite athletes had adopted 'a narrow focus' and therefore a more holistic approach was deemed necessary to take into account the wider social, experiential,

psychological and environmental factors influencing these individuals. To this end, this study has adopted both a multi-disciplinary approach to take into account as many of these factors as possible utilising, as a starting point a psycho-social model (Wylleman and Lavallee, 2003) that encompassed four life domains (athletic, academic, psychological and psycho-social), and also a virtually unique qualitative method which is arguably uniquely suited (within this context) to provide a clearer understanding of the holistic experience of female footballers.

An area that does not translate sufficiently in transition models is historical social cultural acceptance of female football players within their respective country's traditions and culture. It is dependent on the country's positioning of women's football within this culture and has led to lack of resources being available to develop women's football in certain countries, as eluded to in Study One.

This lack of resource is evident with the players having to plan sufficiently what they will do after their playing career has finished. The players do not earn anything close to their male counterparts and many of the players have to balance a part time job or education alongside their playing careers and adopting dual careers to enable them to have financial security in the future once their playing career is over.

Study Three added further insight into the complex nature of female football careers and their key transitional moments within their career. The results emphasised the significant challenges the players faced in transitioning through their career. Both players had to move clubs to aid in their development as players and to be able to play at the highest level. This transition brought challenges with Kristen especially, who had to move to different countries to pursue her career. It highlighted the difficult decisions the players had to make to pursue the sport they loved. The study stressed the resilience the players have and how they had to overcome key transitional moments such as injury and changing clubs. The concept of

undertaking a dual career features strongly within the player's stories and how female football players have to plan for retiring from football so they can have a second career after retirement. With this their identity as players came into conflict. Another concept which arose was the planning to start a family which is not accounted for in transitional literature and this has an impact on female football career decisions and if often put off until retirement, in the fear that the player will not play as they did previously and may not regain their position back in the team.

The impact of this research to the academic community is that it helps to better understand the challenges faced by female athletes, in particular female football players, in pursuing professional sporting careers. Within the football industry, it will help to inform and educate the Football Associations and clubs to understand further the challenges players face in transitioning through their playing careers. Players have to balance a football career and an education or vocation, especially now women's football is moving towards being a professional sport. Denmark specifically allows their elite players the opportunity to extend their education to help them cope with the demands of playing football and studying an education. Historically professional football was limited to these players involved in the study, therefore it was achievable to gain an education whilst playing. The move towards the professionalization of the game in countries such as England, Germany may inhibit players into studying for degrees if the support networks are not in place and we may see the female game mirror the male professional game due to the attraction to become professional players. This as a result could lead to poor transitions post retirement which has been reported by male footballers.

Players also have to make difficult choices in delaying having a family. The Football Associations and clubs need to promote an environment where players have the support to take career breaks to have families and make them feel they will be welcomed back and have the opportunities to rejoin the team. The clubs and football associations should

develop support networks to have the children travel with the players if they are at major tournaments.

New professional league structures in England, and the Netherlands have helped to develop the standard of football in these countries which have been evidenced in the recent European and World tournaments at Junior and senior level. Football Associations need to invest in the development of the women's game and professionalise these structures to retain the players in their country and stop their players migrating to other countries to seek a better standard of play and fulfil the player's ambition of becoming a professional female football player.

7.1 Research Limitations

While it has been argued that this doctoral study has sought to make a significant contribution to both theory and knowledge within this particular field, the researcher must also acknowledge a number of limitations that and should be taken into consideration when conducting future research in this area.

One set of limitations relates to the nature of this piece of research. In order to investigate the four research questions, set for this study, a qualitative approach was deemed appropriate to capture the range, diversity and complexity of the research participants' life experiences in managing a football career in elite football. Since this study was designed with the aim of developing in-depth understanding of these life experiences only 17 players were interviewed and although the data ranged across 6 countries, generalisation from sample to population is inappropriate. However, the three studies resonate with similarly aligned contexts rather than statistical generalisation and therefore the goal of the account which accompanies this research.

Another limitation inherent in the research sample is that by targeting elite female players (who one might argue, are already a privileged group who have the capability to articulate their narrative to serve their own interests) and who have 'made it' in their football career, the research may be missing out on a substantial segment of the non-elite female football population. By not interviewing footballers who did not pursue an elite football pathway the researcher may be overlooking a population whose experience may be markedly different from those who were fortunate to have an elite football career.

While the strategies that were adopted in this research did not meet the traditional positivist notions of validity and reliability, it has however employed alternative means to ensure that the study was rigorous, trustworthy and credible. Such strategies included 'member-checking', confirm ability and researcher reflexivity (Plummer, 2001; Miller, 2000). 'Member checking' required returning verbatim transcripts to the interviewees to give them an opportunity to amend any of their comments if necessary. (though none of the participants sought to add or amend comments.

In order to demonstrate rigour and credibility, another measure - confirm ability was employed during the data analysis stage. Inductive coding was initiated by the researcher and her supervisor simultaneously but separately. In this way the supervisor, who was at the time unfamiliar with the data, was able to give an unbiased opinion regarding the credibility of the analysis. The supervisors and the researcher worked on interview transcripts together in order to have an opportunity to discuss the different interpretations and to agree on the way in which the analytical findings should be presented.

Researcher reflexivity has been described by Plummer (2001:208) as the process of acquiring a greater social and self-awareness through the research journey, in relation to both the participants and the environment (e.g. personal, cultural, academic, intellectual) in which the research knowledge is produced. Although it has to be acknowledged at this

stage that in practical terms this might prove to be quite challenging at times, the I sought to engage in critical reflection throughout the whole research process. For example, during the interviews, reflecting on the lived' experiences of the players enabled the me to develop a sensitised, complex and occasionally, sharp understanding of a number of issues raised by the interviewees. It soon became apparent that I shared common knowledge and assumptions about a number of the issues which were concerning the players interviewed, and these were shared during the interview process. While current trends in research assume that when the researcher shares similar experiences to those being interviewed the understanding of a phenomenon is increased, the reader must also recognise that my particular biases and assumptions, might also influence the research outcomes in a certain way (Douglas and Carless, 2006). From a methodological point of view, I must also account for the use of retrospective, self-reported data collected through the life stories Respondent bias, poor articulation, faulty memory recall are all factors that could have potentially influenced the data (Cresswell, 2003).

7.2 Recommendations

Whilst acknowledging football is an ever changing industry and there have been many developments in women's football since the start of this research in 2009. In light of the findings from Studies One, Two and Three, football structures for women are progressing albeit not in comparison with the male game. Five recommendations can be drawn from this research, Study One identified there is a need for more support in the terms of resources (facilities, coaches, support staff) from country football associations to develop structures to grow and retain players in their own country. Recommendation **one** is the implementation of a new junior age structure at club level for under 18, 21, 23 are needed to help with the transition into senior teams. This has been evidenced at the international level and has had positive outcomes reflected by players in Study Two.

Recommendation **two**, the introduction of full time professional leagues will help football associations to retain players in their own country and help players fulfil their ambition of being full time professional players, at present full time professional leagues exist in Norway, Germany, USA, and Sweden. Semi-professional leagues are evident in England, The Netherlands and France. Study One, Two and Three highlighted the challenges players face when migrating to another country to play professional football, the introduction of professional leagues does present challenges to football associations and education and recommendation **three** support is needed to help players transition from amateur to professional football and lessons need to be learnt from the male game to nurture academy players into that transition. Specific support in psychological wellbeing to aid in such transitions would be helpful, many of the countries participating in this study do not use sport psychologists in the female game, England being the exception. (Relvas et al., 2010; Cook et al., 2014, Morris et al., 2016)

Study Two and Three illustrates the challenges of players combining a dual career, the development of professional leagues may present a different challenge in that players may look to pursue a single career as a footballer and not combine an education which has been evidenced in Study Two and Three to help with transitioning out of the sport**.** Recommendation **four,** all football associations and clubs need to provide specific career advice for players to help them plan a career after football and provide sufficient time and resource to allow players to gain qualifications and training to prepare them to transition out of a football career. This would follow the EU directive that protects athletes access to educational opportunities and vocational training. (Henry, 2013).

Study Three captured the unique position of female football players postponing having children, in the fear it will affect their playing career. Recommendation **five**, a statement included in football associations welfare policies, to provide a supportive environment within female football for players to have children within their footballs career and have sufficient

support mechanisms in place from clubs and football association to allow for this to happen. For example, if players are away at major tournaments for a number of weeks, support is available to allow the children to travel with the player.

7.3 Future Research

This research has uncovered gaps within the current literature in women's football and transitional literature. An expansion to this research could include a development of the narratives in study three to amplify the player voice further, and enhance the stories of the female players having dual careers and as a result, dual and multiple identities (player/teacher, player/daughter/mother/partner). This duality of identities and roles have identified conflicts within their careers, making them unique in football. This is important for football organisations to consider in the welfare policies.

Further research into the impact of professionalisation of the women's game and its impact on women footballer's preparation for retirement would help inform the football associations to develop robust programmes to avoid a repetion of what has happened in the men's game in relation to poor transitions out of professional football. A comparative study of male and female footballers could highlight the historical problems male footballers have faced such as alcohol abuse and mental health issues and the female game can learn lessons from this.

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Appendix 1

Participant Information sheet

Critical transition phases within top-level female football players in Europe

Dear

I would like to explore your thoughts on the organisational structure and culture, working mechanisms and philosophy concerning your football organization and learn from your experiences.

The aim of this research/process is to examine the development structures of women and girls' football from a Pan European perspective, in order to identify and illuminate the critical transition phases experienced by top- level female football players prior to, during and after their football career. The research aims to highlight the issues surrounding organisational structures, working mechanisms and philosophy regarding the development of women footballers within football development programmes across Europe. The results will allow football association development programmes and the football organisations to take into account key moments which can affect female players during the critical period of transitions throughout their playing careers.

The interview will last approximately one and a half hours, and will be recorded using a digital Dictaphone. You will have the right to withdraw from the project at any time and you have the right to not answer any question that is asked.
The transcripts of the interview will be stored by the researcher on a password protected computer file and only the researcher and supervisory team will have access to the contents. The interview will be kept for a maximum of five years for reference and will be destroyed after this period of time has lapsed. The identity of interviewees will not be disclosed unless they grant an explicit permission

Thank you for your time

Jackie Day
Principal Lecturer in Sport Studies
School of Sport, Tourism and the Outdoors
University of Central Lancashire

Appendix 2

FORM OF CONSENT TO TAKE PART AS A SUBJECT IN A MAJOR PROCEDURE OR RESEARCH PROJECT

Title of project/procedure:

Critical transition phases within top-level female football players in Europe

I, ... agree to take part in
(**Subjects** full name)*

the above named project/procedure, the details of which have been fully explained to me and

described in writing.

Signed ....   Date ....
     (Subject)

I, ... certify that the details of this
(**Investigator's** full name)*

project/procedure have been fully explained and described in writing to the subject named above and

have been understood by him/her.

Signed ....   Date ....
     (Investigator)

I, ... certify that the details of this
(**Witness'** full name)

project/procedure have been fully explained and described in writing to the subject named above and

have been understood by him/her.

Signed ....   **Date**..
     (Witness)

NB   The witness must be an independent third party.
* Please print in block capitals

Appendix 3
Interview Schedule/Themes

Study One- Football Organisations

Introduction

Outline Aim of the interview, who I am and my role within it
Participant's background (playing career, academic and administrative career)

Structure of organisation

The following phase of questions concern the working mechanisms of the organisation (Governing body) and the role the organisation has in developing football development working practices across the country
Can you draw the structure of your organisation and your location within it?
Can you describe your relationship with the other roles within the organisation?
Moving on to the roles and responsibilities of Head of Women's football. Can you identify their responsibilities and/or your expectation of them. Can you tell me a little bit about the type of people they are (e.g., their background)?

Philosophy of the organisation

What is the philosophy of the organisation in regards to women and girl's football development?
What is the Head of Women's football own philosophy/beliefs with regards to football development? Do they influence each other?
What are the organisation's goals within regards to women's football?
What is the Head of Women's football own goals in developing the game?
Any examples of conflict of philosophy/goals?

Political/Ideological positioning

What are the aspirations of the FA with regards to women and girl's football?
Does the Head of Women's football believe he/she can influence the development of women's football in their country? How?
What are their priorities with regards to women's football? (compared with other areas of development?) How do they prioritise?
What is the status of women's football within the FA? Has this changed over time? Examples of how it has changed? And what it was like before?
How is women's football perceived by the organisation? Has this changed over time? Examples of how it has changed? And what it was like before?
How is football perceived by the country's population? Is it popular? Has this changed over time? Examples of how it has changed? And what it was like before

Development Structures

What are the development structures in place for women and girl's football?
Elite – centre of excellence, academies, clubs
Grass roots – clubs, schools
Transitions, pathways between?
Do they believe these structures are working? Examples?
How long have the structures been in place? What changes have been made?
Professionalisation?

Barriers to Development (Internal and external)

Are there any barriers to the development of women's football within the organisation/country? What are they?
If yes can they be overcome?
Are there any barriers for the Head of Women's football in developing the game?
How is women and girl's football funded within the organisation?

Why is the organisation important to the development of women and girl's football?

Study One

Interview Phases

1. Structure of Organisation – aims to ascertain the working mechanisms of the organisations and to clarify the role the organisation has in developing football development working practices (Arnold,Silvester,Patterson, Roberston, Cooper, Burnes 2005.Taylor. Doherty. McGraw (2008).Mullin (1998).

2. Philosophy of the organisation – aim is to explore whether the philosophy of the football organisation and the key personnel is the same/similar or whether there are conflicting roles. Also whether the organisational goals are shared by both parties? (Mullins 1999 Arnold,Silvester,Patterson, Roberston, Cooper, Burnes 2005,)

3. Political/ideological positioning –this aims to examine how the key personnel in the football organisation can influence the decision making process and how this can influence the status of women's football within the organisation/country. (Williams, 2007 Hong and Mangan 2006 Taylor. Doherty. McGraw 2008)

4. Development Structures - This aims to clarify how football development structures are formed in each country and highlight the key transitions between each phase of development. (Pummell, Harwood,Lavallee, 2008, Wylleman & Lavallee 2004).

5. Barriers to Development – This aims to identify the potential barriers faced within women and girl's football and discuss how these barriers can be overcome **(**Scraton ,Fasting,Pfister and Bunuel 1999, Williams 2003).

Appendix 4

Risk Assessment: Interviews

Risk Assessment For	Assessment Undertaken By
School:	*Name: Jackie Day*
School of Sport Tourism and the Outdoors	*Date: 21st January 2010*
Location / Activity:	*Signed by*
Interviews for PhD German FA Frankfurt	*Date: 11th December 2009*

Significant Hazards	Groups at risk	List controls, or refer to safety procedures etc.	Remaining level of risk (high, med or low)
Personal Security	Lone Interviewer	• Interviewer will inform someone where the interviews will take place and when and to inform that person when the interviews have finished. • The interviews will be held in a room which can be seen into via glass panels/ window.	Low

Appendix 5
Participant Information sheet

Critical transition phases within top-level female football players in Europe

Dear

 I would like to explore your thoughts and experiences within your playing career.

The questions you will be asked aim to capture the complexity of development (inclusive of performance/lifestyle) experiences of female players, focusing on areas such as lifestyle balance, post 16 experiences, aspirations and support networks and player pathway structure through to discontinuation. Furthermore, this study aims to explore the relationship of the organisation structure of women's football and the individual player.

The interview will last approximately 30 minutes, and will be recorded using a digital Dictaphone. You will have the right to withdraw from the project at any time and you have the right to not answer any question that is asked.
The transcripts of the interview will be stored by the researcher on a password protected computer file and only the researcher and supervisory team will have access to the contents. The interview will be kept for a maximum of five years for reference and will be destroyed after this period of time has lapsed. The identity of interviewees will not be disclosed unless they grant an explicit permission

Thank you for your time

Jackie Day
Principal Lecturer in Sport Studies
School of Sport, Tourism and the Outdoors
University of Central Lancashire

APPENDIX 6

Study Two – Interview Schedule

Aims

To better understand the developmental experiences of young female footballers from a Pan European perspective.

To gain a better understanding of the complexity of performance and lifestyle issues affecting top level female European footballers.

Introduction

Outline Aim of the interview, who I am and my role within it
Participant's background (playing career)

Background to playing career

Age started playing
Influences
Clubs/school played for
When entered into academy/talent system
When International career started
Professional/ amateur player

Playing experiences

From your own experience, can you describe what your life was like as a club or junior footballer?

What was your life like as an academy footballer?

Transitions

Experience moving into the academy/centre of excellence (the transition)?

What was your life like when you became an international player?

Can you describe to me what it was like moving to being an international player (the transition)? Did anything change?

Can you describe what was going on in your life away (education, career, family) from football when you became an international player?

What happened to your studies / work during this time?

Do you ever think that transition affected your performance in a positive/negative way? Why?

Do you ever think about what you will do when your football career comes to an end?

Social

What would you say were/are your biggest worries during your football career?

What were/are the biggest distractions?

Who would you say played significant supporting roles during this time in your development?

Barriers

Have you ever encountered any barriers/problems that has affected your playing career?

Did any external pressures and issues ever affect you? Or your game?

Were there any increased expectations as you moved onto the international stage?

Can you describe what you think your current life is like? (Football and social life)

How do you spend your time off the pitch?

What would you say are your biggest worries related to and away from your football nowadays?

Identity

Do you consider yourself to be a footballer first, student, career second? Why?

Has this changed throughout your playing career?

Aspirations

What do you hope to achieve in the future with regards to football, career, education, social life?

Participant Information sheet

Critical transition phases within top-level female football players in Europe

Dear

 I would like to explore your thoughts and experiences within your playing career.

The questions you will be asked aim to explore your career within the five years since we last discussed your playing career. The interview will aim to understand the critical moments in your career and how you navigated through your career in football.

The interview will last approximately 30- 60 minutes, and will be recorded using a digital Dictaphone. You will have the right to withdraw from the project at any time and you have the right to not answer any question that is asked.
The transcripts of the interview will be stored by the researcher on a password protected computer file and only the researcher and supervisory team will have access to the contents. The interview will be kept for a maximum of five years for reference and will be destroyed after this period of time has lapsed. The identity of interviewees will not be disclosed unless they grant an explicit permission

Thank you for your time

Jackie Day
Business, Partnership & International Manager
Faculty of Health & Wellbeing
University of Central Lancashire

Appendix 8

Study Three – Interview Schedule

To further explore and illuminate the key transitional moments experienced by female football players throughout their career pathway.

Two interviews
1. Tell me about yourself approach – journey (athletic, educational,)
2. Significant periods within the career – critical moments/transitions, issues, coping, successful or crisis transitions

Interview 1 Themes

Background – building the story, re acquainting with the story after 5 years

The player given their original interview to review

Career
Can you tell me about your football career so far?
What motivates you to continue to play?
Has your career followed the path you thought it would?
Have you achieved what you set out to do as a footballer?
Have you thought what you would like to do after you stop playing football?

Identity

Why is football important to you?

Can you tell me what you think was your critical transition moment/phase in your career and how you managed to navigate through it?

Interview 2 - Themes

Transitions

We are five years further in your career can we reflect on the last 5 years, when we met in 2012 you explained to me about???
How did it make you feel?
How did you overcome this?
Are you a better player for it?
What were the implications?
What is it about you that made you chose this?
You describe this transition change of club, injury etc. How did you decide to do this? Did you discuss this with coach, friends players?
How did you cope with this situation?