



University Library

Author/Filing Title WELFORD, J.

Class Mark T

**Please note that fines are charged on ALL
overdue items.**

--	--	--

0403694760



What's the Score? Women in Football in England

by

Joanna Welford

A Doctoral Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Award of

Doctor of Philosophy of Loughborough University

April 2008

© J. Welford (2008)



Loughborough
University
Pilkington Library

Date

4/3/09

Class

T

Acc
No.

0403694760

ABSTRACT

In 2003, football overtook netball as the most popular female sport in England, and current estimations suggest that 1.6 million girls and women now play the sport regularly (Cochrane, 2007; Randhawa, 2003). To many, this was a vindication of the successful admittance of women's football into the Football Association in 1993, when it became governed, organised and developed by the organisation that is responsible for the well-established male structures. Historically however the movement of women and girls into this traditionally male-dominated arena has been problematic, and discourses surrounding the sport, particularly in the UK, are particularly powerful in reproducing this 'male preserve'. The surge in female participation at the grassroots level does not necessarily indicate that such issues have been overcome.

This research has examined the current experiences of women within grassroots football in England, locating these in the context of the club and organisational structures through which they experience the sport on a day-to-day basis. Following an initial survey (n=55) of affiliated women's football clubs, the experiences of twelve women substantially involved in the organisation of football for both girls and women within ten football clubs were studied in depth, with reference to both their positioning within relationships with male football clubs, and their perceptions of the wider football context. The mixed-methods strategy allowed for an overview of the relationship between women's and men's football to be developed, and dynamics within this to be explored in greater detail. A broad feminist theoretical framework was utilised, paying particular attention to the role of discourse within the organisation of football.

The research found that women who 'work' within football are frequently positioned as 'outsiders-within' the sport and face continuous challenges within structures that are constraining both individual experiences and collective advancement in the game. The relationship between women and the context of football that they are both embedded within yet detached from was complex and at times contradictory. The study concluded that the reported increase in participation represents limited progress in establishing the women's game and has done little to challenge inequitable gendered practices that persist in football structures.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The first thanks go to the twelve women who gave up their valuable time to talk openly to me about the role of football in their lives. Although these women deserve credit for the help they provided me, in allowing their lives to be the heart of this study, they deserve more recognition for the significant role they play in the development of female football in this country. During all discussions, the one constant was the commitment these women demonstrated to developing opportunities for girls and women to play football, and bringing opportunities to those who cannot see them. Despite differences in beliefs, backgrounds and experiences, all women contributed to a common cause in this respect, and deserve much wider recognition for this than I can give.

Secondly, I have been lucky enough to have the support and guidance of two supervisors who are not only fantastic academic role models but also incredibly good and genuinely nice people. Dr Tess Kay and Dr Emma Rich have been consistently supportive and between them have covered every angle, and assisted with my varying needs at different points in the study. A big thanks to both of them for their help in getting me to this point, especially in meeting the ridiculous demands I have placed on their time in the later stages. Thanks also to Prof Barrie Houlihan as Director of Research and Dr Mike Weed for their constructive input and feedback at various stages.

A large number of people have provided support outside of this study that has had a very significant impact on its completion. Jeffo, Nic, Anna, Nome, Alfie, Ches, Kraze, Nicole, Lucy, Woody, Fuller, Sammy, Caz, Pom, Lea, Irish, Kellie and Russ, Erin and Ben, Sarah, Danielle, Beth, Craig... the list could go on. Thanks for all your help during the final year, you really have all contributed to this more than you know. Big thanks also to Ruth, Rob and Debs for help in various forms during the very final phase.

Finally, to the clan at home, this is for you. Mum, Dad, Lisa, Andrew, Steven, Rachel, Sarah, Les... you've all played a massive part in the person I am and what I have achieved and I am so proud to have such a great family. To mum especially, for putting up with me going on constantly about football and this project recently when you have a million and one other things to do. Thanks to you all for being proud of me, and for the unconditional support.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	i
Acknowledgements.....	ii
Table of Contents.....	iii
List of Tables.....	vii

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION..... 1

1.1 Aims and Objectives.....	1
1.2 Women and Football.....	2
1.2.1 Historical Developments.....	3
1.2.2 The Football Association and Women's Football.....	5
1.2.3 Women and Football, September 2007.....	5
1.3 Positioning the Study Within the Current Context.....	8
1.4 Chapter Overview.....	10

CHAPTER TWO: APPROACHES TO STUDYING GENDER AND THEIR APPLICATIONS TO SPORT..... 15

2.1 Introduction.....	15
2.2 Socialisation and the (Re)Production of Gender Difference.....	16
2.2.1 The Family Unit.....	17
2.2.2 School Based Experiences and Physical Education (PE).....	19
2.2.3 Sporting Structures.....	21
2.2.4 Mediated Influences.....	25
2.3 Sport and Male Dominance.....	28
2.3.1 Conceptualising Male Dominance in Sport: The Gender Order.....	29
2.3.2 Maintaining the 'Hierarchy': Female Collusion.....	31
2.3.3 The Adoption of Male Norms.....	34
2.3.4 Gender and Sexuality.....	36
2.3.5. Strategies for Change: Liberal 'Equal Opportunities'.....	36
2.3.6. Limitations of the Liberal Agenda.....	39
2.3.7 Separatist Politics and Sport.....	44
2.4 Deconstructing Dualisms: Complexities, Contradictions and Challenges.....	46
2.4.1 Multiplicity of Sporting Experiences.....	47
2.4.2 Resistance to Feminine Norms – Alternative Images of Women.....	49
2.4.3 Deconstructing and Challenging Dominant Masculinity in Sport.....	52
2.4.4 Challenge and Resistance from Within?.....	55
2.5 Gender, Organisational Studies and Sport: Integrating Experience and Structures..	57
2.5.1 Gender, Organisational Studies and Sport.....	58
2.5.2 Gender Equity Policies in Sports Organisations.....	62

2.5.3 The Deconstruction of Gender Equity Policies in Sport: Incorporating a Discourse-Based and Multi-Level Approach.....	66
2.6 Summary.....	69

CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK(S)..... 71

3.1 Introduction.....	71
3.2 Developments Within Feminist Theory.....	71
3.2.1 Liberal Feminism.....	72
3.2.2 Radical Feminism.....	75
3.2.3 Marxist Feminism.....	77
3.2.4 Feminist Cultural Studies.....	79
3.2.5 Feminist Postmodernism and Post-Structuralism.....	82
3.3 Feminism, Women and Football: Positioning the Study.....	85
3.3.1 Liberal and Radical Approaches to Sameness and Difference.....	85
3.3.2 Discourse, Organisations and Power.....	88
3.3.3 Historical Specificity.....	89
3.3.4 Complexity and Contradictions.....	90
3.4 Summary.....	91

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS..... 93

4.1 Introduction.....	93
4.2 Feminist Epistemologies.....	93
4.2.1 Challenging the Enlightenment and Traditional Scientific Enquiry.....	94
4.2.2 Modern Humanism.....	95
4.2.3 Feminist Standpoint Theory.....	96
4.2.4 Feminist Postmodernism and Post-Structuralism.....	98
4.3 A Feminist Methodology?.....	102
4.4 The Role of the Researcher.....	103
4.5 Exploring Experience Within Structures: A Two-Phase Approach.....	105
4.5.1 Survey.....	105
4.5.2 Interviews.....	106
4.6 Transcription and Analysis Procedures.....	109
4.6.1 Data Analysis.....	110
4.7 Representation.....	112
4.8 Summary.....	113

CHAPTER FIVE: INTEGRATION/SEPARATION AT THE CLUB AND ORGANISATIONAL LEVEL OF WOMEN'S FOOTBALL..... 116

5.1 Introduction.....	116
-----------------------	-----

5.2 Overview of Survey Results.....	117
5.2.1 The Football Association and their Role in Women's Football.....	118
5.2.2 Male-Female Club Relationships.....	122
5.2.3 Summary.....	125
5.3 Conceptualising 'Links': The Clubs in the Study.....	126
5.3.1 Club Categorisations.....	131
5.4 Dynamics Within and Between Club Categories.....	132
5.4.1 Independent Female Clubs.....	133
5.4.2 Linked Category A: 'Linked and Separate' but Static.....	141
5.4.3 Linked Category B: 'Linked and Separate' but Evolving.....	147
5.4.4 Linked Category C: 'Integrated but Separate' in Collaboration.....	152
5.4.5 Partnership Clubs.....	157
5.5 Summary.....	161

CHAPTER SIX: NEGOTIATING GENDERED DYNAMICS..... 165

6.1 Introduction.....	165
6.2 Increased Participation and the Growth of Clubs.....	166
6.2.1 Developing, Maintaining and Accommodating the Growth in Participation Rates.....	166
6.2.2 The Football Association and the Growth in Participation.....	169
6.3 Detachment of Women's Football from the Wider Context.....	171
6.3.1 Internal Cycle of Control.....	171
6.3.2 Financial Detachment.....	172
6.3.3 The Football Association and Integration/Separation.....	173
6.4 Deconstructing Difference and Sameness.....	181
6.4.1 Junior level – Sameness over Difference.....	183
6.4.2 Senior level – Difference over Sameness?.....	189
6.5 Difference, Sameness and the Football Association.....	197
6.6 Summary.....	201

CHAPTER SEVEN: WOMEN'S ROLES IN FOOTBALL.....205

7.1 Introduction.....	205
7.2 Women and Football Roles.....	206
7.3 'Women's Work'.....	207
7.4 The Movement of Women into Traditionally Male Roles.....	208
7.4.1 Accommodating Masculine Norms.....	209
7.4.2 Challenging 'Masculine as Superior' Understandings.....	213
7.4.3 Women's Work as Inferior to that Done by Men.....	216
7.4.4 Female-Only/Female-Dominated 'Spaces'.....	221
7.5 Interactions Between Football Roles, Paid Work and Domestic Responsibilities...	224
7.5.1 Football/Paid Roles Overlaps.....	225

7.5.2 Football/Home Life Overlaps.....	227
7.6 Summary.....	230
CHAPTER EIGHT: DISCUSSION.....	233
8.1 Introduction.....	233
8.2 Discourses of Sameness and Difference.....	234
8.2.1 Sameness: Looking to the Future.....	235
8.2.2 Difference: Inferiority <i>and</i> Superiority.....	236
8.2.3 Difference and Sameness: Overlaps, Contradictions and Complexities....	237
8.2.4 Acknowledging Difference Within Women's Football.....	240
8.3 Integration and Separation: Positioning Women Within Football.....	241
8.3.1 Differing Degrees of Integration.....	243
8.3.2 Inconsistencies and Implications of Integration.....	245
8.3.3 The Significance and Limitation of Separatist Spaces.....	248
8.4 Liberal Advances and Limitations: Problematising Policies and Practices.....	250
8.4.1 The Growth of Female Football.....	250
8.4.2 The Football Association and the Liberal Agenda.....	252
8.5 Summary.....	256
CHAPTER NINE: CONCLUSIONS.....	258
9.1 Introduction.....	258
9.2 Aims and Objectives Revisited.....	259
9.3 Implications of the Study.....	265
9.3.1 Policy and Practice.....	265
9.3.2 Directions for Future Research.....	267
9.4 Concluding Remarks.....	270
REFERENCES.....	271
Appendix 1: Newspaper Article, September 2007.....	303
Appendix 2a: Questionnaire Covering Letter.....	304
Appendix 2b: Questionnaire.....	305
Appendix 3: Interview Schedule.....	311
Appendix 4: Survey Results.....	313
Appendix 5: Club and Interviewee Descriptions.....	323
Appendix 6: Women's Football Structure.....	332

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1 Participation figures.....	2
Table 5.1a Advantages/benefits of women's football being run by the FA.....	120
Table 5.1b Disadvantages/problems with women's football being run by the FA.....	120
Table 5.2 Support from male football clubs.....	123
Table 5.3a Benefits/advantages of links with male football clubs.....	123
Table 5.3b Problems/disadvantages of links with male football clubs.....	124
Table 5.3c Suggested improvements in male/female club relationships.....	125
Table 5.4 Club demographics.....	127
Table 5.5 Interviewee demographics.....	129
Table 5.6 Club categorisations.....	132

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This study explores the experiences of women within football in England. It offers a broad examination of the diversity of women's experience at a time when they are not just participating in football as players, but acting in diverse capacities to deliver local football opportunities for girls and women. By investigating how women are moving into these roles in the structure of football, and how they negotiate the positions available to them, the study attempts to position the experiences of the women firmly within the structure and culture that their roles are embedded in. It argues that this positioning of experience is critical to understanding not just the complexity of women's experiences, but the potential for them to create space to challenge existing gendered arrangements.

1.1 Aims and Objectives

The aim of the research is to develop an increased understanding of how women experience football in relation to the male dominated structure within which they participate. Major research objectives are therefore to:

- Investigate the dynamics between women and the male football clubs that they are associated with;
- Analyse the perceived role of the Football Association in accommodating and/or resisting female movement into all levels of the sport;
- Identify how women position themselves in relation to dominant discourses that structure both football as a broad context and women's football as a micro-context within this;
- Examine and highlight areas of tension between competing discourses, and areas in which women are attempting to challenge gendered practices.

In an attempt to move away from simplistic understandings of independent structures of power, understandings of organisations and institutions as sites of competing discourses have been drawn upon to acknowledge the complexity of the increased movement of women into a context that has traditionally and persistently resisted this. Particularly relevant is the recognition of power as a process, rather than a structure (Morley, 1995); it is therefore not something that an individual or a group possess, but a relationship that

is never totalising but constantly shifting and multi-directional (Weedon, 1987). A major objective of the study is therefore to explore the potential for women in football to challenge gendered arrangements that structure their experience, both formally and informally, through highlighting the socially constructed nature of 'assumed truths' (Jäger, 2001: 34) and thus open up a space for alternative frameworks of understanding. Most importantly, this will be related to the gendered realities that women in football experience through their day-to-day roles in football.

1.2 Women and Football

'The future is feminine' declared Sepp Blatter, General Secretary of the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), the global governing body of football, in 1995 following a successful Women's World Cup championship (cited in Williams, 2004: 114). Academic interest in women's football is also increasing. Fan Hong, in the epilogue of her edited book of essays on women's football from across the globe, declares that "a new era for women's soccer has begun" (2004: 270). In 2003, football overtook netball as the most popular female sport for girls (Randhawa, 2003). However the movement of women into this 'time honoured male preserve' (Williamson, 1991: 72) has traditionally been resisted in the majority of football nations, and with particular strength in Britain. The well-publicised and relatively recent growth in female participation in football as promoted by the English Football Association (FA) (see Table 1.1) tends to overshadow the formal and informal policies and practices that have excluded women from football, and encourages the perception that women's involvement in football is a recent phenomenon. This not only demonstrates a lack of awareness of the challenges women have attempted to make to the male dominance of the sport (and during World War 1, with some apparent success), but also denies women history and renders them invisible in the development of what is often termed England's 'National Game'¹. In an attempt to reposition women within this history of football, and provide a context within which to understand the current position of women in the sport, a number of writers have provided an insight into the development of women's football from both a structural and individual perspective (Lopez, 1997; Melling, 1999a, 1999b; Newsham, 1997; Williams, 2003, 2004; Williams & Woodhouse, 1991; Williamson, 1991). As all discourses are historically produced and interpreted (Mills, 1997) and can only be understood with reference to their contextual development (Meyer, 2001), a

brief history of women's football will now be outlined to provide a foundation for understanding women's often contradictory position(s) within the sport.

Season	Women's Teams	Women Players	Girls Teams	Girl Players	Total Players
1993	400	10400	80	800	11200
1996/97	500	13000	750	15000	28000
1997/98	600	15600	850	17000	32600
1998/99	650	16900	960	19200	36100
1999/2000	700	18200	1150	23000	41200
2000/01	741	19366	1800	36000	55500
2001/02	804	20000	2200	41667	61667
2002/03	865	21265	4820	63301	84926

Table 1.1 – Registered female players in England. Source: <http://www.thefa.com/Womens/>²

1.2.1 Historical Developments

The first recorded UK women's football match took place in Scotland at the end of the nineteenth century, and in 1894, a 'British Ladies' Football club was founded. However women first began playing football in large numbers around 20 years later during the First World War. Matches were played in front of thousands of paying spectators to raise money for war charities. John Williams and Donna Woodhouse describe how a combination of factors encouraged the popularity of football for women:

"The eventual suspension of the [male] League and Cup programme, and the drawing of more and more women – the nation's 'hidden army' – into work in the war industries, coupled with the wider, ongoing political struggle for female emancipation, seemed to provide a catalyst for a previously unimaginable growth in the popularity of women's football"

(Williams & Woodhouse, 1991: 90)

At a time where women found structural and ideological space within football, coupled with social and political progress made by women in the absence of men, the sport flourished. Women proved that they could function perfectly well within the spheres that traditional stereotypes had denied them (Melling, 1999a). At the same time, the charity focus allowed their participation to be perceived as evidence of patriotism rather than moral decadence (Pfister et al, 2002). Importantly, due to the suspension of male football, women were not competing with the established male game for the football audience – they were not perceived as serious footballers, and therefore did not pose a direct threat to the masculine hegemony of the sport (Williams & Woodhouse, 1991). At

the peak of its popularity, 53,000 people watched Dick, Kerr Ladies, unarguably the most successful women's team in the history of the sport (see Newsham, 1997), beat St Helens on Boxing Day 1920. However in the years shortly following the end of WW1, 'normalisation' returned to both male football leagues and the sexual division of labour, and by 1921, the charitable nature of women's football had begun to lose its legitimacy, leading to press calls for a return to normality in the gender order (Pfister et al, 2002). On December 5th 1921, the FA passed a unanimous resolution, stating:

"Complaints having been made as to football being played by women, the council feel impelled to express their strong opinion that the game of football is quite unsuitable for women and ought not to be encouraged...the council requests clubs belonging to the association to refuse the use of their grounds for such matches"³

(Cited in Lopez, 1997: 6)

This ban not only prevented women from playing organised matches at football league grounds, but highlighted a resistance to women's involvement within the structures of male football that has persistently impacted women throughout the development of the sport and remains a significant issue today. The implications of the 1921 ban remain central concerns to the current status of women's football; the sport was socially, culturally and economically marginalized (Williams, 2004), and without official recognition and support, the public's interest, trust and credibility also disappeared (Williamson, 1991). The development of football as a male preserve was protected, strengthening discourses of female unsuitability for physical contact sports.

When women began to visibly reassert their rights to play the sport in the 1970's⁴, they were faced with a significantly hostile environment. The idea that women are unsuitable for football remains a prominent theme, and has been identified in FA practices in the 1980's and 1990's⁵ (Meân, 2001). The negative perceptions and exclusionary practices that women in football continue to face today are therefore partly a result of historical gendered processes. The protection of masculinity has been strengthened through both formal and informal practices over the last eighty years, and the current position of women in football must acknowledge the historical strength of discourses that position football as a bastion of masculinity, and due to the prevalence of gender differentiation discourses, in opposition to femininity.

1.2.2 The Football Association and Women's Football

In 1993, the FA formally took control of the administration of women's football from the Women's Football Association (WFA). As a voluntary organisation, the WFA had encountered problems in attempting to accommodate the growth of the sport, with a weak infrastructure compounded by financial difficulties (Lopez, 1997). To highlight the relative timing of this takeover, women were accommodated in their respective governing bodies in Germany, Norway, Denmark and Sweden in the early 1970's, after UEFA encouraged national football associations to take responsibility for the women's game (Brus & Trangbaek 2004; Hjelm & Olofsson 2004; Fasting, 2004; Pfister, 2004).

Since the FA takeover, female participation figures in England, especially for girls, have increased greatly (Table 1.1). To what extent this is a direct impact of the FA's management is however much debated. It is undeniable that association with the FA has increased exposure, provided better access to resources and effectively centralised administration. Yet these benefits can be considered as largely cosmetic, as little has been done to alter the provision of football. Integration has involved the acceptance of an institution that historically dismissed the sport and has been traditionally, at best, hostile to the involvement of women (Williams, 2003).

1.2.3 Women and Football, September 2007

September 2007 saw the Women's World Cup in China, which was built around the tag line 'Beautiful game, Beautiful goals' (Kessel, 1997b). England, ranked 12th, had a successful campaign, reaching the quarter-final of the competition where they lost to the USA, ranked world number one. England's matches were televised live on terrestrial television, with other matches offered through an interactive service. This builds on the success of the European Championships held in England in 2005⁶, and coupled with the recent increase in participation, claims that 'the future is feminine' are seemingly not out of place in the current climate. However these gains are uncomfortably juxtaposed with the strength of traditional discourses concerning the inappropriateness of football for women, and it is within this ambiguous and conflicting framework that this study is situated. The current role of women in football involves both a challenge to and maintenance of dominant discourses of gender difference and male natural superiority; tensions concerning the differing extent to which women are incorporated into the

current context of 'football'; differing understandings and positions in relation to femininity and masculinity; and seemingly conflicting aims of liberal and radical feminist agendas. It is not the intention of this study to attempt to reconcile any of these tensions, but to investigate how women are attempting to manage the contradictions that they are confronted with through their increased involvement in a traditionally male sport. Before providing an overview of the study, three recent examples will be used to introduce the prevalence of these tensions within football.

Firstly, a very recent media article by professional male footballer David James, Portsmouth and England goalkeeper, is shown in full in Appendix 1 with the final paragraph highlighted below. The clashing of discourses is here particularly evident, in the attempts by James to understand the elite level of women's football, despite persistently asserting his support for the game. Although reflecting only the viewpoint of a single male professional footballer and commentator, this article is important in highlighting both the women's game's perceived need of, and complexity resulting from, attempts to gain male support. Moreover, the difficulty in separating women's football from on the one hand, men's football, and on the other, the prevailing notion that women must at all times retain their femininity, is evident throughout the article. After describing how he and the England squad had been impressed with the quality of the women's games, including "some John Terry-esque⁷ clearances and tackles going in from the England back line", the piece concludes:

"For young girls to be watching a player the quality of Kelly Smith⁸ can only be a good thing. All the England lads were saying it after the Japan game – she is a phenomenal player; with her positioning on the ball, she wouldn't look out of place in a men's side. One of the lads put it deftly when he said: "She's a manly player – without looking at all manly", which made me chuckle. She's definitely the real deal. Come on, England, we're all backing you to beat Argentina tomorrow."

(David James, *The Observer*, 16/09/2007)

This article highlights both the challenge women pose to the male dominance of football, and the limitations of this challenge due to the dominance of masculine understandings. Equating being a 'phenomenal player' with (usually) being 'manly' limits the subjectivities available to women in football; to be accepted is dependent on being able to 'play like a man' but not 'look like a man'. The norm in football is also reproduced as a male norm that women should aspire to whilst remaining firmly within the boundaries of femininity. While this thesis does not examine football media reporting in detail, or

explore in-depth the gendered discourses that are frequently presented in the sports media, it recognises that these are important manifestations of the issues with which it is concerned. What is important is the complexity of women's increased involvement in a sporting arena that has traditionally and constantly excluded them. Despite providing a positive report of male interest in football, the liberal discourse of equal opportunities that is increasingly interpreted as the 'successful' movement of women into an arena they have traditionally been excluded from, masks much deeper complexities concerning the struggle women face in being accepted in their own right outside of the dominant (male) frame of reference.

A second example of the ambiguous positioning of women in football is evident in the conclusions of an independent report into the current structure of the FA (The FA, 2005b). A structural review was undertaken to ensure that the FA "evolves to respond to the increasingly diverse demands of the game" (The FA, 2005a: 3). The FA has been criticised in research on women's football for the under-representation of women on boards and councils (Williams, 2004), and the sport remains heavily influenced and controlled by men (Scruton et al, 1999). The only recommendation made by the report concerning the representation of diversity was in section 10, which stated:

"The Council of The FA should evolve so as to become more representative of the diverse interests in the game, including *supporters, players, managers, coaches, referees* and so on...Transitional arrangements should be put in place to ensure that individuals currently serving on Council are not disadvantaged by the changes" (my emphasis)
(The FA, 2005a: section 10, p3)

Diversity in this context means diversity of roles within the game, not diversity in terms equality of representation, and therefore does not reflect any intention to increase the representation in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality or ability. This is the only reference to diversity, despite the aims of the report to respond to the 'increasingly diverse demands' of the game. The ambiguity and silence on the minority groups that are under-represented in the structure and organisation of their sport, of which women are one, ensures that hegemonic male, white, heterosexual interests are protected. A recurring pattern from the 1920's to the present day is the lack of female influence in the decision-making structures of football, which creates a conflict of interest between female participants and male administrators (Williams, 2004). Further, the aim to ensure that current serving members are not disadvantaged, strongly represents a liberal approach to change that involves 'adding' to existing structures rather than destabilising

relations of power. Williams (2004: 119) states that "the tentative phrasing of the agreements" of the FA to integrate women in 1993 reflected "a conspicuous lack of enthusiasm". It could be argued that this has not been overturned in the most recent report. While exploring the experiences of women in relation to the current football context, the study will attempt to acknowledge "the mutually informing nature of structural and cultural power within organisations" (Aitchison, 2000: 181) that renders an analysis of the gendered relations within football severely restricted without incorporating structural gendered processes.

The third issue involves the failing of this liberal approach to truly involve women in existing male structures. An example of this is how Charlton FC ended the funding to their successful women's section⁹ after being relegated from the Premier League (Leighton, 2007). This was not the first case of an elite men's football club withdrawing funding from their women's section in recent years¹⁰, but due to the success of Charlton WFC, was certainly the most high profile. The fragility of male-female club associations, even at the top level of the sport, raises some serious questions concerning the integration of women into existing male dominated structures at club level. This issue will be returned to in greater depth in later chapters, and critiqued in an attempt to reconsider the discourses that frame these associations that are becoming increasingly popular.

1.3 Positioning the Study within the Current Context

In highlighting both the increased popularity of women's football and some current areas of contention, it is clear that a contradiction exists within the increasing number of females participating in a sport so strongly associated with men and masculinity. As a result of this, 'women's football' is both embedded within and distanced from the wider context of 'football'. Here the importance of language is introduced, in giving meaning to discourses – 'women's football' is represented as separate from 'football' through the addition of a prefix that is not applied to 'men's football' (and similarly *is* applied to other branches of the game such as youth football and disability football). 'Football' is therefore representative of 'men's football', but the invisibility of this distinguishing feature may result in it being taken for granted, strengthening discourses that associate football with masculinity. The study therefore intends to tease out some of the tensions that emerge from this, and apply an individual focus to these broader concerns, asking

questions about what lies behind this context and what subjectivities are available for women to negotiate the conflicts, complexities and ambiguities that structure their experiences. These tensions are understood not as static or fixed but fluid and ever changing, so an exploration of issues will attempt to highlight any areas of potential challenge to dominant discourses. An increasing (although still relatively low) amount of attention is being paid to women who play football, most notably in terms of negotiating the complex relationship between a traditionally male sport and constructions of femininity and sexuality (eg Caudwell 1999, 2003, 2004; Cox & Thompson, 2000; Scraton et al, 1999; Williams, 2003), in a body of work that primarily focuses on the playing experiences of women. The purpose of this study is to broaden this to address women's experiences through their other football roles beyond that of participant.

This study therefore intends to build on the existing research base by examining the gendered processes that currently structure women's football in England, through the perceptions and understandings of women embedded in these processes in playing *and* leadership roles such as coaching, club administration, management and representatives on league committees. This is currently an under-researched area, although a number of authors have addressed aspects of it. Williams (2003) considers women in these roles in her comprehensive overview of both the historical development and current context of women's football; Coddington (1997) explores the movement of women into male structures of football, incorporating roles such as spectator, match officials, and employees at football clubs; and a small amount of research has been conducted on the gendered experiences of women as football coaches, an area within sport more generally and football in particular that remains heavily male dominated despite increases in female representation as participants (eg Fasting & Pfister, 2000; Knoppers, 1987). This work has however focused on the elite level of women's football, and has limited applicability to the recent increase in participation at the base level of the sport. This study is an attempt to understand how current issues and gendered processes impact this level of the sport where the overwhelming majority of female participants experience football. Moreover, this may encourage the emergence of any tensions *within* women's football itself, rather than focusing solely on the relationship between men's and women's football that can preserve the dichotomy between men's and women's football that encourages comparison and as a result, perceptions of female inferiority.

1.4 Chapter Overview

Chapter two considers how developments in research concerning gender, dominantly but not exclusively in the area of sport, provide a context within which this study can be located. Included in this review are the different approaches to studying gender, with the family, schools, wider sporting structures and the media considered as significant sites for the construction of, (re)production of and challenge to dominant gendered norms. Early work into gender socialisation is critiqued and more recent moves to incorporate the complexity of gendered subjectivities and relations of power are examined and considered in relation to the study of women in football. However the movement of (and policies to encourage more) women into sport have been dominated by liberal frameworks of 'equality of opportunity' that have been demonstrated to mask the deeply gendered exclusionary practices, both formal and informal, that women face. Recent advances in the study of gender that incorporate the multiplicity and fluidity of gender will be used to demonstrate the complex relationship between women and masculinity that simultaneously aids the movement of women into physical sports yet limits their potential to penetrate traditional dialectical understandings of gender from within these contexts (eg Obel, 1996). To incorporate the different roles of the women in this study, work in gender and organisational literature will also be reviewed, particularly those studies attempting to move beyond simplistic assumptions towards an approach that disrupts the discourses and beliefs that make gendered hierarchies and practices appear normal (Shaw & Frisby, 2006).

After highlighting some issues concerning the difficulties regarding liberal approaches to understanding gender and sport, chapter three will extend this discussion to demonstrate how developments in feminist literature have contributed to the understandings of women's role in sport and inform this study in particular. The theoretical underpinnings of the study will be discussed, in particular the recent developments in feminist thought that have attempted to move away from simplistic understandings of patriarchal structures to a more comprehensive appropriation of the complexities that women in football encounter. The usefulness of post-structuralism to feminist projects will be debated in relation to this particular study. Concepts of discourse, multiplicity and fluid relations of power are discussed in relation to the exploration of women's experiences of sport. The development of feminist thought will be traced, with current critiques of simplistic and structured understandings of gender demonstrated to accommodate the

significant ground made by early feminist work. It is acknowledged how recent feminist work is attempting to develop an approach aimed at challenging the deeply-rooted gendered structuring of sports and organisations that the liberal agenda failed to confront. It is argued that as feminism(s) are multiple, fluid and complex, an approach that accommodates these facets can be applied to the feminist agenda without losing sight of its fundamental aim to improve the position of women in society. It is accepted that grand-scale policies of change are not attainable in this context, but neither are they desired. To aim for this would be to deny the multiplicity and complexity that the study endeavours to draw attention to. However it is also acknowledged that feminism is constantly developing, and researchers must continue to contribute to the knowledge-building regarding women in sport, and it will be outlined how this study aims to make such contribution.

These prominent issues are theorised from a methodological perspective in chapter four. An overview is conducted of feminist methodologies and epistemologies, asking questions as to whether a 'feminist epistemology' exists, and what this might incorporate. There is no doubt as to the emergence of a feminist-informed methodology that although accommodating multiple forms, the centrality of women and attention to the significance of gender throughout is an imperative feature (Cook & Fonow, 1990: Meis, 1999). ****Ps use chopped****. The methods utilised in the study are considered and justified, and details of the phase 1 (survey) and phase 2 (in-depth interview) data collection are given. My own role as embedded in the research process and output is also discussed.

Chapters five to seven outline key themes that emerged from the analysis of survey and interview data. Firstly, chapter five focuses on the relationships between male and female football clubs, and how the interviewees positioned both themselves and their clubs within the wider club structure of football. Before analysing the individual perceptions of and positioning within both day-to-day relationships and wider gendered processes, it was deemed imperative to provide a framework within which to position these individual understandings. The results of a survey of women's clubs are therefore presented to provide demographic data and to begin to explore some of the complexity of the relationship between women and the male structures of football. These relationships are then conceptualised in more detail to provide an insight into the

different types of arrangements that can exist in sports clubs and the potential implications of these.

Wider dynamics within football are then explored in chapter six. This extends the positioning of club relationships to position these within debates of difference/sameness and integration/separation, and incorporate the role of the governing body in the dominance of these discourses. In particular, issues of 'outsider on the inside' (Crosset, 1995) are applied to this context to analyse issues of detachment and to raise the question of how much control women have over their own sport. Chapter seven moves to a more detailed examination of the individual roles women play in football, examines how movement into these positions is facilitated and highlights the gendered practices the women both meet and employ in their roles that have been traditionally occupied by men. These two chapters provide a detailed examination of the positioning of women in football and how the different levels of the game are inextricably linked. For example, policies developed at the organisational level (FA), are interpreted by individuals within clubs and impact the relationship between women's and men's football clubs, and as a result, the way women understand their own position and role(s). These chapters are snap-shots of both the day-to-day experiences of women in football and their wider understandings of women's collective positioning in the broader context of the sport, two differing levels of analysis that cannot be separated.

In chapter eight, the implications of the issues explored in chapters five to seven are discussed and related to pertinent debates in research into gender and sport. The theoretical implications of the research are explored and again related to those debates inherent in feminist research, and in particular the tensions within feminism and the role of liberal policies for women in sport. Issues of difference/sameness and integration/separation are revisited and explored in an attempt to consider some areas of conflict in current gender equity policy in football where revisions could be made to benefit the position of women in the game. The study concludes in chapter nine by revisiting the aims of the study and drawing out recommendations for future research.

¹ The dominant position football holds in England, and Britain more widely, is reflected both in the overall visibility of the game, particularly in the sports media (eg Harris, 1999) and the cultural dominance of the sport (eg Sugden & Tomlinson, 1994). Further, in a recent structural review of the FA by Lord Burns (The

FA, 2005b), the two main components of the sport were frequently referred to in the terms 'professional game' and 'National Game' (caps in original), with the latter representing the amateur and semi-professional levels of the sport. This labelling is interpreted in this study to infer the claim by the FA that the sport of football, as played by the majority of participants (non-professional), is the 'National Game' of England.

² The most recent 'official' figures produced by the FA only go up to 2003. However an article on the FA's website in 2005 stated that "last season the number of girls and women playing in football leagues or cup competitions peaked at 130,000. There are over 8,000 girls teams across England" (www.thefa.com/womens/getting_involved/howtogetinvolved/). This implies that the growth is continuing, but the lack of recent data makes it difficult to assess whether it is continuing at the rate specified or whether interest is reaching a plateau. Reliable figures are difficult to come by – an article by Arnott (2006: 54) states that "Today there are 3,820 registered, charter-standard clubs (see chapter 5 footnotes), and each week 1.6 million girls play properly coached and organised soccer, either through a club or their school. The FA calculates that the current annual growth rate for participation is 35%." It is unclear where these figures have been obtained from, or the accuracy of these claims; the number of reports into the current situation for females in football does however suggest that it has grown rapidly over the last 10 years.

³ The official line adopted for this resolution was a lack of clarity concerning how revenues from games were used, suggesting that the women players were paid (Pfister et al, 2002). However there was no proof that underhand dealings ever took place (Williamson, 1991), and any confusion over figures not adding up was more likely a result of loose accounting procedures rather than corruption (Williams & Woodhouse, 1991). Researchers have commented that the ban was more likely a result of the significant popularity of women's football, with Giulianotti (1999: 153) claiming "in England, there is clear evidence from the inter-war years that the football authorities saw the rise of women's football as a threat to the male game".

⁴ After the 1921 ban, historical research has demonstrated that women's football continued in a more or less 'underground fashion' (Williams & Woodhouse, 1991), but little research has been done on this era. Dick, Kerr Ladies continued to play successfully, finally folding due to lack of players in 1965, and a number of clubs predominantly in the northwest of England participated in formal competitions (Lopez, 1997). 48 member clubs formed the Women's Football Association (WFA) in 1969, with no formal sanction from the FA, and developed a fluid league structure for clubs. Tensions over the direction the women's game should take were however central throughout the history of the WFA; volunteers favoured a grassroots, gradual approach to development, and opponents wanted a more high-profile, professional and aggressive international launch (Williams & Woodhouse, 1991).

⁵ In 1988, Ted Croker, secretary of the FA, demonstrated significant resistance to the role of women in football. Williams & Woodhouse (1991: 99) quote Croker as stating: "we just don't like males and females playing together. I like feminine girls. Anyway, its not natural"; Dunning (1999:235-6) cites a similar statement from Croker: "football is a game of hard physical contact, a form of combat. It is, and must remain, a man's game. Women have no place in it except to cheer on their men, wash and iron their kit, and prepare and serve refreshments." The strength of dominant discourses of women's inappropriateness for football are clear, and demonstrated as a 'truth', forming the basis of women's exclusion. Despite an increase in female participation in the 1990's, this has not been eradicated; in 1999, the FA lost a sexual discrimination case after a female was refused a coaching licence despite achieving higher scores than her male counterparts. The FA were ordered to pay damages, and given the choice of granting a licence or paying an additional settlement of £10,000. The FA chose to pay the additional settlement rather than grant the licence (Meân, 2001).

⁶ England's opening match of Euro 2005 attracted an attendance of 29,092 (FA, 2005), a record for a competitive match outside of the USA and perhaps even more impressive considering the greater popularity of women's football in other European countries, particularly Scandinavia. Also, television audiences were much higher than anticipated with an average of 2.5 million viewers (FA, 2005) for the live matches on BBC2, although figures for the knock-out rounds which did not involve the England team were significantly lower.

⁷ John Terry is the current Chelsea FC and England captain, a strong, physical defender who is commended for displaying commitment, passion and vigour, strongly symbolising the dominance of masculinity in football. Steve McLaren, the England manager at the time, was quoted after the appointment as stating "John has all the attributes an England captain needs – leadership, authority, courage, ability, tactical awareness and a total refusal to accept second best" (BBC, 2006). These attributes can be understood to represent the 'ultimate' hegemonic masculinity in football. However his reputation has been questioned, having faced numerous allegations of gambling, cheating, drinking and fighting, leading some to question the appropriateness of John Terry for the position of England captain, considered as 'the ultimate role model' for children (eg Wilkes, 2006).

⁸ Kelly Smith is unarguably the most successful current English women's football player, with a national and international media profile unlike any other English player (Williams, 2003). She played professionally in the USA both in the well-advanced college structure (where Seton Hall, the university she played for, retired her shirt number in honour of all the records she had broken) and WUSA, the professional women's league. Following the collapse of WUSA in 2005, Smith returned to the UK and now plays for Arsenal, who have won the FA Women's Premier League for the last 4 years (with 9 titles since the FA takeover in 1993) and in the season 2006-07, became European champions for the first time, winning the UEFA Cup alongside all three domestic competitions (www.thefa.com/women/s; Williams, 2003; http://www.football-england.com/arsenal_ladies_fc.html).

⁹ Charlton adopted three-time FA Premier League champions, Croydon WFC, in 2000; the club won the WFA Cup twice as Croydon and once as Charlton, from seven finals. Charlton reached three consecutive league cup finals up to the season 2005-06, winning two, and were close to gaining their first ever place in European competition at the time of the financial withdrawal in June 2007 (www.fgmag.com).

¹⁰ Leeds United, Manchester United, Bristol City and Birmingham City have all lost funding from their respective male clubs in the past three seasons; however all clubs have ensured their survival through securing funding from elsewhere and developing relationships with external parties. For example Leeds United WFC have developed a link with Leeds Metropolitan University, which allows access to facilities and provides financial support (<http://www.leedsunitedladies.com/>). Although these are all cases from the elite level of women's football, considering the financial struggles of the majority of male football clubs it seems likely that this issue will also be evident at the lower levels of the game, despite lower running costs.

CHAPTER TWO: APPROACHES TO STUDYING GENDER AND SPORT

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines various approaches and their theoretical underpinnings that have been utilised in research on women and football. An overview of research in this area is provided, and is both related to and positioned within the wider literature on gender, sport and physicality with particular reference to the experiences of women in physical contact and/or 'traditionally male' sporting contexts. To frame these issues and relate them to wider theoretical debates, developments in the examination of gender and sport will be traced and critiqued, with particular reference to how these developments can shaped understandings of the relationship between women, sport, masculinity and football. The potential of this study to contribute to theory and knowledge in this area will be emphasised throughout.

In examining the experiences of women in football it is necessary to give a brief overview of the wider literature pertaining to gender relations within sports. It has long been established within this literature that for many girls and women entering sporting contexts, the perceived conflict between social constructions of *femininity* and *athleticism* presents problems of social inequality. The blurring of these two often-polarised characteristics can create problems for the female athlete, and the widespread - and often uncritically accepted - association of attributes such as strength and power with masculinity works to suppress athletic women and girls. This close association between masculinity and athleticism contributes to the construction of sport as a male activity, and from a relational perspective, not a female activity. A large volume of literature from second-wave¹¹ feminist analyses of gender development distinguished this from biological sex, and highlighted wider socialisation processes, beginning at birth, which contribute to a gender order (Connell, 1987). However the emergence of post-modern and post-structural understandings has represented a major shift in the direction of focus from dialectical understandings of male/female, masculine/femininity and other dualisms that dominate discourses of gender difference to a more fluid and multidimensional theory to incorporate the complexity of gendered subjectivities and relations of power. These debates in feminist thought will now be traced and related to

the study of women and football, and the chapter concludes with a section that demonstrates the importance of developments in organisational literature that is highly relevant to the study of gendered policies and practices within sports organisations.

2.2 Socialisation and the (Re)Production of Gender Difference

Dominant discourses of gender affect female movement into football in terms of organised opportunities and ideologies surrounding gender-appropriate behaviour, alongside dominant understandings of masculinity and femininity as both fixed and oppositional. Earlier studies in this field tended to draw upon sex role socialisation and attempts to appropriate understandings of difference based on oppositional and hierarchical understandings of masculinity and femininity. Applications in social contexts such as the family, schools, and sporting structures will be discussed in reference to how these contexts are underpinned by constructions of masculinity and femininity that are frequently drawn upon to make sense of women's position in football. An exploration of the role of women within football can gain from and contribute to wider theories on the social construction of gender. It is important to first highlight how various work has contributed to an understanding of how gender is constructed and made available to children from a young age, in order to understand how girls and boys both move into football and understand their experiences in what is a significantly masculine culture.

Gendered inequalities and experiences within the area of football need to be viewed in the broader contexts of the social construction of gender across various social fields. Tracing a detailed history of these influences is beyond the scope of this study, but it is important to register the significant shifts in the ways in which gender has been conceptualised in the literature in this area, and how this has influenced beliefs around and attempts to challenge gender inequalities in football. The process through which boys learn to be men and girls learn to be women is one full of complexities, dynamics and inconsistencies. Despite the rejection of biological determinism – assumptions that the growth of boys and girls into men and women is natural, and as a result of inherent biological differences – these notions still circulate in society today (Thorne, 1993). Women's experiences of football are therefore impacted upon by various social contexts, including the particular influence of the social history of football that has traditionally and persistently excluded them. The experiences of women in what are perceived to be

historically and socially 'masculine' sports have been researched from a variety of theoretical perspectives, which will be examined and critiqued throughout this chapter and into the next.

2.2.1 Socialisation and the Family Unit

Research has revealed that traditional ideals of femininity and masculinity can be conveyed to and internalised by children from a very young age, even from birth. This has entailed the acknowledgement of how this is the start of a lifelong socialisation process, instigated by the family and developed through all aspects of culture and society that the child comes into contact with. Although the term 'family' is very ambiguous (Hill & Tisdall, 1997), especially in contemporary society, it has been used to acknowledge the influential role parents, guardians and adults outside the immediate unit have in the socialisation process (Campenni, 1999; Coltrane, 1998). It has been highlighted how this process is a very efficient tool to construct discourses that serve to limit what the child can do respective to their biological sex. The differences between sex and gender have been asserted in socialisation research, with sex believed to be biological and gender demonstrated to be "constructed through psychological, cultural and social means" (West & Zimmerman, 2002; 3). Attempts to distinguish between sex and gender, particularly work by Oakley (1972) has been invaluable in countering assumptions that male/female divisions were natural and unalterable (Cealey Harrison & Hood-Williams, 2002). However the sex/gender dichotomy has been widely challenged as preserving 'natural sex difference' (Connell, 1987: 66), focusing on gender as something that someone 'has' or 'acquires' (Butler, 1990) and placing the categories in opposition, which becomes difficult to reconcile and therefore fails to recognise the complexities of sex and gender as inextricably linked (Cealey Harrison & Hood-Williams, 2002).

Greendorfer (1983) suggested that sex-typed socialisation dominantly consists of a lack of exposure to those things deemed inappropriate. Research into this process from birth has highlighted the importance the role of parents in toy selection (Pomerleau et al, 1990; Wood, Desmarais & Gugula, 2002, Messner, 2000, 2002¹²), children's physical environment such as bedroom décor (Wood, Desmarais & Gugula, 2002), and clothing (Measor & Sikes, 1992) that 'transmit' gendered messages to children and 'teach' differences between girls and boys (Coltrane, 1998). Parents can play a significant role

in reinforcing the appropriateness of behaviour that constructs gender differentiation (Messner, 2000). Socialisation theory has been influential in critiquing understandings based on essential differences between the sexes, and demonstrating how becoming a male or a female is a social process, and that therefore notions of gender are not fixed but may in fact change over time and place (Kehily, 2001). Further, group socialisation theory has highlighted the importance of peer group socialisation for the development of gender (Harris, 1998).

Although valuable in highlighting how girls and boys are perceived differently through this process, which creates (and allows for the justification of) very real exclusionary conditions for girls, socialisation theory has been extensively critiqued as simplistic, ahistorical, deterministic (West & Zimmerman, 2002) and focusing on the 'schooling' of individuals leaving very little space for agency. Its reliance on role theory has been criticised for its emphasis on 'consensus, stability and continuity' (Stacey & Thorne, 1985: 307). Keddie (2005) interpreted masculine collectives at school, concluding that in drawing on humanists tenets (see chapter four for a discussion of humanism), "gender injustice tends to be overlooked and taken for granted through linear and essentially fixed accounts of masculinity" (439). Positioning individuals as "passively shaped by norms and values" proposes a degree of certainty, linearity and inevitability that can constrain understandings of gendered interactions within social contexts (Keddie, 2005: 434). The lack of complexity prevents these conceptualisations from making 'meaningful interventions in practice' (Gorely et al, 2003: 440) due to limitations regarding complexity and subsequent avenues for change. In relation to girls and football therefore, advocating that girls find it difficult to participate due to being socialised into more 'feminine-appropriate' activities from a young age cannot explain the increased participation levels, and also fails to acknowledge the resistance girls demonstrate towards feminine norms by expressing their desire to play football (Scruton et al, 1999; Williams & Bedward, 2002) and successfully accessing this 'male space' (eg Griggs, 2004). In contrast to socialisation theory, Gorely et al (2003) utilised Bordieu's (1993) concept of habitus to conceptualise the process by which girls and boys actively engage with the social world and how 'social fields', of which the family is one, can have a key role in the reproduction of values (Jarvie & Maguire, 1994) by active positioning rather than simply passive socialisation (Davies & Harré, 2000). Habitus as a social construction can therefore allow for the uniqueness of positioning, and provide the

potential to challenge hegemonic practices and present alternative constructions (Gorely et al, 2003) in contrast to deterministic understandings of socialisation that can be very difficult to challenge.

2.2.2 School Based Experiences and Physical Education (PE)

The above section demonstrated the significance of the family unit in the formation of gender identities; attention will now be turned to schools, another significant socialising site for young people. Schools do not exist in a social vacuum (Hargreaves, 1994) and discourses drawn upon by teachers can play a significant role in positioning students in relation to prevalent notions of femininity and masculinity and reinforcing gendered behaviour. Children often enter school very aware of gender stereotypes concerning appropriate behaviour for males and females (Short & Carrington, 1989) and schools have a major impact in either reinforcing or challenging these. Research in education has been influential in highlighting how both formal and informal practices in schools can be gendered, and as a result, legitimise perceived gender difference. Throughout the history of schooling, boys and girls have been consistently positioned as different through the provision and management of education. The way the school and curriculum is formally divided on the basis of gender can reinforce and maintain differences between the sexes from a young age. Gender divisions are apparent at all levels of schooling throughout Britain (Hargreaves, 1994), such as separate playground areas and cloakrooms (Measor & Sikes, 1992). These formal divisions naturalise and maintain differences between the sexes; the formal segregation of boys playing areas not only limits girls' access to football (Epstein et al, 2001) but further reinforces and legitimises this lack of access.

However outside of formal guidelines and organisation, values inherent in teaching practices can educate children indirectly in a variety of ways – often referred to as the 'hidden curriculum' (eg Bain, 1990). Gender difference can be normalised through the hidden curriculum, in constructing emphasised heterosexual femininity as the only socially sanctioned option for teenage girls and young women (Cockburn & Clarke, 2002). Further, the teacher holds an influential position for either challenging or implicitly reinforcing gender ideologies through teaching practices and behaviours (Talbot, 1993), for example by giving boys more attention and allow them to dominate mixed interactions (Measor & Sikes, 1992), or using sex-stereotyped language (Kay, 1995). Classrooms are therefore significant sites where gendered discourses of

differentiation can be reinforced and drawn upon to position girls in opposition to boys (Sunderland, 2004).

A substantial body of work has highlighted the gendered inequalities inherent in Physical Education, which for many girls, may be the first opportunity to experience sport. PE in schools has been gendered since first emerging on the curriculum (Kirk, 2002), and remains highly gender-segregated and resistant to change at a time where equality of experience is being strived for in all other subjects (Lines & Stridder, 2003; Williams & Bedward, 2002). Traditionally, assumptions surrounding the physical ability and capacity of women were based on understandings of not only difference between girls and boys, but how this difference resulted in female inferiority, for example: "one way of dealing with these disparities between the athletic promise and achievement of men and women is to view women as truncated males" (Weiss, 1969: 215-216, cited in Scraton, 1992: 49). These highly gendered divisions continue to affect PE, a subject that retains its traditions of dividing pupils on the basis of gender that suggests biological differences (Hall, 1996). The offering of different subjects to boys than girls, or 'gender positioning'¹³ of teachers (Brown & Rich, 2002) maintains gender differences in relation to sport and reproduces discourses concerning the appropriateness of certain sports to boys and girls. Research has suggested that the PE curriculum is more likely to strengthen gender stereotypes than challenge them (Kay, 1995; Talbot, 1993). Discourses surrounding sexual divisions of labour are also particularly evident in PE, where Head of Department's (HOD) are usually male, affecting students' perceptions of the suitability of women for this role whilst maintaining male dominance of the subject and its organisation (Evans & Davies, 1993).

With regards to organised football experiences in school, girls often find that due to gendered subject divisions, girls get little opportunity to play football. Studies of adult female footballers exploring their entrance to the game found that major barriers can be experiences at school regarding access to structured opportunities (Scraton et al, 1999; Williams, 2003). However despite an increase in attention on gender equity and the growth of football as a sport for young girls, it has been demonstrated that girls can still struggle to find opportunities to participate in football in PE lessons. A recent government report stated that football provision for girls at primary school is considerably inconsistent (DCMS, 2006) and Harris (2002) suggests that many girls in

schools today find that opportunities to play football are limited. A lack of opportunity in primary school is evident despite FA legislation only preventing mixed-sex provision from the age of eleven (Lopez, 1997). Opportunities to play football at secondary school, when this preventative legislation is enforced, have been found to be further limited. Williams & Bedward (2002) discovered that football was not taught to girls in PE lessons, with a male teacher justifying this by drawing on gendered stereotypes that construct girls as in opposition to football. The implications of alignment with dominant discourses of femininity as in opposition to sport is that girls remain distanced from football and it becomes very difficult for this gap to be closed.

Although the lack of formal opportunities for girls to play football at school has been documented, the strength of football as a male preserve translated into school cultures may be more significant in restricting girls' access to the sport. Epstein et al (2001) found that spaces to play football in primary schools remained dominated by boys, with girls excluded unless they could prove their ability (and therefore their 'sameness' to boys). However proof of ability, although opening up opportunities for girls, allows male-defined standards of ability to remain dominant. Football within schools, particularly as part of the playground culture, is both constitutive of and constituted by performances of a hegemonic form of masculinity that positions girls (and non-conforming boys) as 'the other'. Swain (2000) demonstrates this by describing how football is used as a model for boys to construct and negotiate their masculinity in relation to marginalised masculinities and femininities. This domination is not however limited to the playground, as male bonds formed through football can spill into classroom situations where non-conformant identities continue to be marginalised (Skelton, 2000). This culture can prove very difficult for girls to enter, with female footballers interviewed by both Scraton et al (1999) and Williams (2003) reporting that male support and acceptance are vital to provide an access route to this male-dominated culture.

2.2.3 Sporting Structures

Football is a significant example of an activity that demands the portrayal of those behaviours typically associated with masculinity, and girls can find it necessary to conform to those behaviours to be accepted by male football peers (Scraton et al, 1999). Research on the lives of young footballers found that many understood that they were

not conforming to femininity, and as a result their gendered identities were often in conflict with those of their friends (Cox & Thompson, 2000; Scraton et al, 1999). Harris (2002) discovered that conflict between sports participation and 'ideal' notions of femininity first became apparent in primary school experiences of girls, who understood playing football as 'boyish' and in opposition to being 'girlie'. In research conducted on girls and football, the 'tomboy' identity is particularly significant, and although considered a term that views girls as 'deviant' (Hall, 1996), in relation to football, research concurs with findings by Thorne (1993), that this identity is nevertheless tolerated (Harris, 2002) and even recalled by adult female footballers as pleasurable (Scraton et al, 1999). This is likely because acceptance into the 'football world' has been found to be dependent upon the display of these attributes for acceptance by male peers, as emphasising gender similarity over difference. However girls engaging in this behaviour can "reinforce and reproduce, rather than challenge, the power relations between male/female and the binary oppositions of masculine/feminine and men's sport/women's sport" (Scraton et al, 1999: 105).

Stereotyping and Homophobia

A number of researchers have explored how gender, sexuality and identity intersect within women's football, and have highlighted the prevalence of masculine/butch/lesbian stereotypes that female footballers must negotiate, regardless of their own sexuality (eg Caudwell, 1999, 2006; Cox & Thompson, 2000; Harris, 2005; Menesson & Clement, 2003). Scraton et al (1999: 100) state that "normative ideals about female bodies and 'ideal' femininity have become seriously disrupted as women have moved into traditional male-only sports", and this disturbs the ideological equation of physical power solely with masculinity (Wright & Clarke, 1999). The stereotype of the female athlete and the lesbian share masculine traits so an association is made between the two (Therberge & Birrell, 1994b), and the butch or manly lesbian is a common stereotype that women in 'traditionally male' sports must overcome (Hargreaves, 1994; Krane, 2001) as characteristics often required by these sports such as aggression, physicality and power are normatively associated with men. Crawley (1998) found that questioning the sexuality of female athletes is a common response to those who pose threats to the binary gender hierarchies of sport. The 'butch lesbian' is one of the most popular stereotypes for women who play football in the UK, and one that is "an inscription marking all players' sexuality indiscriminately" (Caudwell, 1999: 401). Research in this

area has demonstrated how female footballers express frustration at the stereotypes they feel they have to overcome in order to continue their participation. Cox & Thompson (2000) describe how sportswomen experience conflict between athletic and feminine statuses, with being physical and athletic perceived as deviating from the norm. With heterosexuality as an organising principle, female footballers therefore must negotiate this conflict in a way that allows them to develop a muscular athletic body whilst maintaining a distance from both men and the lesbian stereotype.

Harris (2005) describes the prevalence of the butch/lesbian identity as an image 'problem' for women's football that can result in players distancing themselves from a masculine identity and even dropping out of the sport completely (although this study focuses predominantly on the experiences of heterosexual women, who play football in a club environment described as only 'conditionally tolerant' (p193) of lesbians in sport). Defining the image of women's football as a 'problem' from the outset is however particularly difficult, in implying that this 'problem' can be rectified through providing a more socially acceptable (feminine and heterosexual) image. Understanding a certain type of identity as more problematic than another maintains a hierarchical understanding of gendered relations in sport that suppresses non-conformity and celebrates hegemony (eg Connell, 1987). Women in football therefore participate in a sporting context that devalues and marginalises masculine identity in women, even though their participation demands these attributes. Although the heterosexual context of Harris's (2005) study is not considered to be representative of the majority of women's football clubs, research from this perspective explicitly demonstrates how the butch/lesbian stereotype of women who play football can create a significant tension *within* women's football, rather than being perceived as an issue that derives from relations between men and women and 'male defence' of the sport as a masculine preserve. The relationship and interplay between football, gender stereotypes, heterosexuality and homosexuality is therefore complex and fluid, and constitutive of multiple relations of power between women as well as between women and men.

As a result of the dominant stereotype of butch/lesbian, homophobic practices can be a significant barrier to women's participation in sport. Homophobia is defined as "fear or intolerance of homosexuality, gay men or lesbians, and even behaviour that is perceived to be outside the boundaries of traditional gender role expectations" (Griffin & Gramsci,

1990: 211 in Therberge & Birrell, 1994b: 337). As playing sport in general, and 'traditionally male' sports in particular, is outside of these boundaries, female athletes can be subject to homophobic treatment *regardless* of their sexuality (Blinde & Taub, 1992; Lenskyj, 1994). Feminist research from a radical perspective (see section 3.2.2) has examined the existence of lesbianism and homophobia in sport, and how this is prevalent throughout sporting structures whilst examining how lesbians in sport are considered deviant as a result of heterosexuality dominating the gender order. Scraton & Flintoff (2002) suggest that sexuality is centralised as a major site of men's domination over women in sport, through the construction, normalisation and naturalisation of heterosexuality as the only 'legitimate' form of sexuality. In football, homophobic treatment experienced by female footballers has been explored from a range of perspectives, such as heterosexual players in a strongly heterosexual environment (Harris, 2005) and women (both heterosexual and lesbian) who play for an overtly and publicly lesbian football club (Caudwell, 2006; see section 2.4.4 for a further discussion of how this may be challenged). Homophobia therefore defines boundaries of acceptable female behaviour and can be used to control or intimidate women in sport (Griffin, 1992), and discourage women from participating in sport too aggressively (Cahn, 1994). Further, questioning the sexuality of a female athlete can discredit a person's accomplishments (West & Zimmerman, 2002); lesbian assumptions can assist others to 'make sense' of a woman's skill in sport, again as result of the powerful association between sport and masculinity and the difficulties women face in challenging this association (Crosset, 1995). Homophobic discourses and compulsory heterosexuality make it very difficult for lesbian athletes to 'come out', due to not only individual fear and prejudice but also institutional exclusionary practices and policies (Griffin, 1998). Despite the claim that increased homosexual visibility is one of the most effective tools to counteract homophobia (eg Lenskyj, 1994), practices undertaken to hide and dissociate from homosexuality, such as 'playing feminine' are frequently used by female footballers (Caudwell, 1999; Cox & Thompson, 2000; Harris, 2005) and therefore contribute to the maintenance and normalisation of 'compulsory heterosexuality' (Rich, 1980¹⁴), enabling it to remain normative and suppress alternative sexualities (Sunderland, 2004). Similar practices have been documented in rugby (Wright & Clarke, 1999), boxing (Halbert, 1997; Mennesson, 2000), golf (Crosset, 1995) and sailing (Crawley, 1998). Women can feel the need to perform (heterosexual) femininity as being

identified (wrongly or not) as a lesbian in women's sports results in prejudice and discrimination (Krane, 2001).

2.2.4 Media Influences

The role of the media in legitimising discourses of male sporting domination and superiority is well documented and particularly pertinent to the study of women's football. The media, as one of society's most influential institutions (Duncan & Hasbrook, 2002) and the medium through which the overwhelming majority of spectators experience sport (Kane & Greendorfer, 1994), plays a significant role in reinforcing normative understandings of gender difference that associate this with female inferiority. The media do not simply report information, but 'frame' it – place it in a context for viewing and understanding (Duncan & Messner, 1998). The sports media can therefore be understood to be both constitutive of and constituted by dominant discourses of masculinity and femininity (as opposing and exclusive categories), rather than an independent or transparent structure. Pirinin (1997: 239) describes how "media texts may be seen as both an embodiment of specific discourses that constitute gender relations in sport, and as a social practice that reproduces these discourses". The study of the media is therefore particularly important when understanding the position of women in sport as they can play a major role in shaping people's perceptions. It is even more significant to recognise that the media is such an influential societal institution that it has the ability, power and means to produce counter-stereotypical images (Kane & Greendorfer, 1994), the transformative potential of which remains unfulfilled. Portraying images of women that are in conflict with normative understandings of femininity, such as playing football, would be an example of this; the lack of attention paid to women's football (eg Lopez, 1997) therefore legitimises discourses of inappropriateness by rendering the sport invisible, and as a result, insignificant in relation to the highly visible field of male professional football.

It has been well-documented that both print and televised media dedicate the overwhelming majority of sports coverage to male sports (eg Bernstein, 2002; Duncan & Messner, 1998; Dworkin & Messner, 1998), and when women do receive coverage, it is individual and 'socially acceptable' sports that tend to receive coverage rather than team sports (Bernstein, 2002; Duncan & Hasbrook, 2002; Harris & Clayton, 2002). The continued lack of coverage of female athletes contributes to the continuation of what is

often referred to as 'symbolic annihilation' (Gerbner, 1978 in Messner et al, 2003), and a 'denial of power' (Duncan & Messner, 2002: 84) to women and the accordance of power to men due to the invisibility of women's sports, particularly those considered as a male domain and hold further notions of inappropriateness. Carle & Nauright (1999) suggest that the media and its limited coverage of women's rugby is the most obvious and influential illustration of the hostility towards the sport.

What is also necessary to an understanding of the current position of and perceptions towards women in football, is whether media coverage of female sports is increasing to reflect the rise in girls and women's participation. Messner, Duncan & Cooky (2003) examined change in media coverage of women's sport in general, concluding that there had been little improvement. Lopez (1997) describes how this is particularly significant for women's football, in that the increase in female participation has not been mirrored in media attention, which helps to reinforce the hostile perceptions that surround the game. The significant lack of media attention afforded to the sport, especially considering the visibility of male professional football, contributes to the marginalisation of the sport and is limiting the spread of the game (Williams, 2003); Lopez (1997) states that this marginalisation is still far greater in Britain than other countries such as the USA and Scandinavia. In Sweden, women's football developed rapidly in the early 1970's alongside an increase in media coverage, and with the support of male journalists (Hjelm & Olofsson 2004). The lack of support for women's football by the British media is therefore significant in denying the sport an official status.

Research on the sports media has discovered several trends concerning the type of coverage that women and women's sports receive. Male sport and male athletes are positioned by the media as the norm against which female comparisons are made; this makes these norms very difficult to challenge, and as a result the masculine values and practices embedded in competitive sport are supported and reproduced (Pirinen, 1997). Lopez (1997: 211) describes how when elite female football players do receive coverage, this can involve a comparison to their male counterparts, reinforcing misconceptions about women 'wishing to compete' with men and supporting the notion that norms in sport and football especially are 'male norms' against which women are constantly judged.

Several techniques that can marginalise and trivialise women's participation and achievements in sport, such as referring to female by their first names, infantising women (Duncan & Messner, 1998), and framing men's performances as active but women's as inactive and passive (Duncan et al, 1990). Attention is repeatedly paid to the personal characteristics of female athletes, in framing them by their private sphere as wives, mothers or girlfriends (Lenskyj, 1998; Lopez, 1997; Pirinen 1997). Bernstein (2002) asserts that these practices do not tend to be country specific but exist on a global scale, as the media is a transnational institution, and construct female athletes and sports as 'other to' but also 'lesser than' men and male sports (Duncan & Hasbrook, 2002). Media portrayal of athletes has a dual purpose in constructing women's sports as both different and inferior: male athletes maintain their dominance of sport through the celebration of 'masculine' characteristics such as pain and sacrifice, and at the same time female athletes are marginalised and trivialised to limit their potential to challenge this (Harris & Clayton, 2002). Significantly to women and football, these issues are also more visible when analysing sports in which women are relative newcomers (Pirinen, 1997). Condescending or 'novelty' coverage of women's football represents an implicit need for women to have the approval of men (Lopez, 1997). In recognising that women in football are part of a wider system of gender relations, it is evident that coverage of men's football also contributes to the trivialisation of female footballers alongside the minimal coverage afforded to women's games. The mass media's football coverage caters continuously to the male gaze, 'football talk' invents "an exclusively masculine football world" (Giulianotti, 1999: 158), and when mentioned in tabloids, women generally constitute the 'sex angle' that confirms "key aspects of contemporary ideological relations between women and football in Britain" (Williams & Woodhouse, 1991: 86). Harris (1999) suggests that this sexualisation continues to promote football as a predominantly male activity, despite increased female participation.

Further, female athletes can be trivialised (as well as heterosexual femininity reinforced) by focusing on their appearance and their sexuality. This directs attention to women as sexual beings rather than serious performers (Kane & Greendorfer, 1994; Lenskyj, 1998; Pirinen, 1997) and robs them of 'athletic legitimacy' thus preserving hegemonic masculinity (Bernstein, 2002) and reinforcing normative understandings of gender. Highlighting the 'feminine' aspects of women's sport presents female athletes as culturally acceptable women (Krane, 2001) and therefore does little to assist movement

towards gender equity as differentiation is reinforced rather than opening up new forms of feminine identity. Further, heterosexual femininity can be reproduced as the only visible form of femininity; Wright & Clarke (1999: 235) found that feminine attributes of female rugby players were highlighted to mask the lesbian stigma, a practice that players complied with, maintaining the hegemony of heterosexuality through the construction of a "restricted version of reality". However the sports media has the potential to challenge this assumption; Christopherson et al (2002: 138) suggests that in the USA, female footballers are popular due to being physically tough and competitive yet caring and congenial – role models yet real people – described as 'a new kind of woman'. Cole (2000) adds to this in asserting that the popularity of the 1999 Women's World Cup proved that women could be athletic and feminine, although the challenge to this apparent dualism is fraught with tension (eg Krane, 2001; see below for further discussions).

This section has introduced the dominant ways in which gender has been conceptualised in early feminist thought, incorporating several significant sites where gendered messages are transmitted both implicitly and explicitly. Work on gender socialisation has been invaluable in challenging biological essentialism, but has been the subject of much critique due to its reliance on sex-role theory, deterministic understandings concerning how ideologies are transmitted to passive recipients and assumptions that gender is something that is 'acquired'. All of these criticisms limit the potential to acknowledge agency, and the active role individuals play in gender development and management. Moreover, the failure to acknowledge the fluidity and multiplicity of gender considerably limits its relevance to women in sport, particularly traditionally male sports such as football where participation requires the adoption of normative masculine attributes which can be a complex, contradictory and problematic process for women and girls.

2.3 Sport and Masculine Dominance

Attention will now shift to how feminists have attempted to highlight the gendered exclusionary practices that women and girls in sporting contexts can face. In particular, attempts to challenge this both from a liberal perspective of equal opportunity provision, and more radical attempts to demonstrate the patriarchal nature of sporting structures

will be discussed in reference to the increased movement of women and girls into football structures and cultures.

2.3.1 Conceptualising Male Dominance in Sport: The Gender Order

Sport in general and football in particular have been described as 'male preserves'; however it is clear that male participation in football both constitutes and is constituted by a particular dominant mode of masculinity that incorporates physicality, force, and heterosexuality (Skelton, 2000). The domination of this form of masculine identity is maintained through the subordination of femininity and other modes of masculinity; in particular, the exclusion of females and the feminisation of subordinated males (Swain, 2000). This dominant or 'hegemonic masculinity' in relation to other multiple masculinities and femininities comprise what Connell (1987) terms the gender order, an attempt to conceptualise the significance of gender relations in social hierarchies and understand why and how certain forms of masculinity are privileged and maintain dominance over other positions. From this perspective, understandings of gender move away from static, deterministic ideas about gender relations and towards a more inclusive understanding that accommodates varied forms of domination (Messner & Sabo, 1990).

Connell (1987) proposed that in societal institutions, there is not simply masculinity and femininity, but "a historically constructed pattern of power relations between men and women and definitions of femininity and masculinity" (98-99). This allows the recognition of multiple forms of masculinity as well as femininity, which interact with other categories of identity. This has been important in recognising relations between groups of men as well as between men and women (Connell, 1995) – this can also be applied to relations between women, with 'emphasised femininity' proposed to dominate other forms of femininity, and importantly, support the dominant position of hegemonic masculinity through accentuating opposition (Connell, 1987). Hegemony is however not complete control, but a balance of forces supported by social, structural and organisational factors (eg the media, family, schools) that promote differences as 'natural' rather than ideological and masculine hegemony is "socially defined in contradistinction from some model (whether real or imaginable) of femininity" (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Due to its historical construction, the gender order is a dynamic process that is constantly in a state of change (Messner & Sabo, 1990),

although Shakib & Dunbar (2002) suggest that changes to the gender order only occur very slowly, and any challenge to the status quo merely redefines it slightly and rarely upsets it.

In applying the gender order and understandings of hegemonic masculinity to sport, it has been described how sport plays a significant role in supporting this hierarchy, particularly in body contact sport such as football (Messner, 1992; Wigmore, 1999). In sport, differences between men and women are resiliently constructed as 'natural' and 'common-sense' (Shakib & Dunbar, 2002), resulting in the subordination of women due to these differences. Sport focuses on the exclusion of women, and homophobia is rife (Messner & Sabo, 1990); hegemonic masculinity is therefore maintained and reinforced through practices within sport. Connell (1995: 216) notes that there exists an "active defence of hegemonic masculinity" through being defined in hierarchical contrast to other groups whilst embracing qualities of physicality, violence and autonomy. It is also important to recognise that contexts are historically produced, in that gender relations are developed over time and place (Connell, 1987). In football, the consistent exclusion of women throughout the development of the game (Williams, 2003) must be acknowledged in attempting to understand the prevalence of dominant masculinity and the struggles women face in attempting to break into football hierarchies despite an increase in participation (Williams, 2004).

Further, the recognition of multiple forms of masculinity and femininity, and the complex interrelationships and power balances between these groups, can provide a framework for understanding the often contradictory position of women in football. Connell & Messerschmidt (2005) highlight how both incorporation and oppression can occur together; this is evident amongst girls and women who attempt to construct masculinities (Halberstam, 1998). This is applicable to understandings of female football identities, although the interplay between masculinity and femininity is complex and multiple in itself. Women who play football are required to display attributes associated with hegemonic masculinity, such as physicality and power. Acceptance in football is dependent on proof of ability, in meeting established 'male' standards (Williams, 2004); yet women simultaneously 'play' at being feminine in an attempt to counter not only the masculine traits displayed through participation in football but also to dissociate from the lesbian stereotype (Cox & Thompson, 2000). This highlights a criticism of the

gender order as a systematic 'model' or typology – positions are often considered as exclusive, with limited potential for overlap – hierarchical understandings of gender relations can therefore impose a rigid structure on what is a fluid and incomplete negotiation of various positions. There is also the problematic tendency to interpret the gender order as a simplistic patriarchal system of power relations – “the global subordination of women to men” involving women's “compliance with this subordination” (Connell, 1987: 183). Although Connell & Messerschmidt (2005) accepted the criticism of and subsequently rejected this claim, the underlying generalised premise of men and women as powerful and powerless groups respectively “is to negate the complex social relations between the groups of people involved in sport generally and the organisation of women's soccer in particular” (Liston, 2006: 373). Gender relations in football are then also inextricably embedded within discourses of gender difference and sexuality, the negotiation of which requires considerable management. This will be explored more fully below in relation to the multiplicity and fluidity of sporting subjectivities that have been utilised by researchers in an attempt to challenge the hierarchical maintenance of gender dualisms and the relatively fixed positioning within the gender order.

2.3.2 Maintaining the 'Hierarchy': Female Collusion

Resisting traditional gender expectations can be problematic for both boys and girls, particularly during adolescence (Coleman & Hendry, 1999). Cockburn & Clarke (2002: 661), in their study of schoolgirls and Physical Education, found that as a result of positioning within the wider gender order and the localised male-dominated culture of PE, girls were faced with a significant tension between identifying themselves as a 'doer' of PE (a 'tomboy'), or a feminised 'non-doer'. This resulted in a paradox, a double standard to which teenage girls and young women are subjected. Girls who do not conform to socially defined standards of femininity, often by participating in what is perceived as masculine behaviour and therefore crossing symbolic gender boundaries, can be considered as deviant and can find that they face certain consequences of this deviance (Cockburn & Clarke, 2002). However masculine behaviour is generally tolerated from girls at primary school age on the assumption that they will eventually grow out of it (Halberstam, 1998); yet Sisjord (1997: 434) explored young wrestlers' experiences and concluded that female wrestlers felt “outside the norm” and that they expressed feelings of being different to other girls due to the physical nature of the sport.

This deviance becomes increasingly problematic as girls move into adolescence, a time when identity formation is crucial (Coleman & Hendry, 1999). The strength of heterosexual discourses further necessitates the requirement for girls to cement their feminine identity and distance themselves from physical sport, as displaying those attributes typically considered as 'masculine' is tied to female homosexuality (Shakib & Dunbar, 2002; explored in more detail above). Work such as this has been valuable in highlighting the real and negative consequences of crossing gender boundaries for girls (and some boys), and although over-reliant on 'typical' gendered attributes and oppositional understandings of 'doer' or 'non-doer' that girls can 'choose' to take up (critiqued further below), has contributed significantly to the body of work that attempts to improve equity in Physical Education.

Further, research across a variety of sports contexts has explored the difficulties women can face in being accepted into sporting structures and cultures by the dominant groups (generally hegemonic males). Acceptance is often based upon ability requirements – although to a standard lower than the male norm – and successfully demonstrating attributes valued by those sporting contexts without compromising their feminine identities. It has been demonstrated how in order to be accepted into the male culture of sports, women do have to prove that they have a certain degree of ability in activities such as boxing (Halbert, 1997), golf (Crosset, 1995; Nylund, 2003), sailing (Crawley, 1998) and ice hockey (Therberge, 1997; 2002). Women's football coaches can find that they struggle to be accepted until they have proved their football ability (Fasting & Pfister, 2000). However this demonstration of ability must not threaten the male standard. Mennesson (2000) found that female boxers were accepted by their male counterparts as long as they did not possess the same fighting ability as men, and Wright and Clarke (1999) proposed a similar process for female rugby players, who were accepted because of their devotion but their participation at a lower level ensured that they did not threaten the stability of rugby as a male-dominated sport. This is particularly evident in the claim that the increased movement of women into football is accepted as its essentially amateur nature is unthreatening to the male dominance of the sport (Williams, 2003); there is little evidence that women's football provides a serious threat to the gender order (Scruton et al, 1999). Being required to demonstrate a certain standard of ability is however always in relation to established *male* standards – understandings of sameness upon which this is premised is always in relation to a male

norm (Bacchi, 1990). Achieving this standard for acceptance challenges perceptions of female inferiority but simultaneously strengthens this standard and maintains not only male normative standards as 'the norm' which all women (and men) must aspire to.

Not only is acceptance based upon this fine line of ability, but research has also demonstrated how female athletes must also achieve a balance between portraying a feminine identity whilst conforming to the male culture of sport. Carle & Nauright (1999) found this to be a pertinent issue in women's rugby – players had to display appropriate levels of conformity to feminine ideals, but were still expected to conform to dominant behaviour within the rugby culture, such as drinking after matches. Even when this was achieved, players were not taken seriously as athletes by all male members of the club, with some talking patronisingly about the game as a novelty and discriminating against players that did not conform to their (male) expectations of femininity and attractiveness. But if female athletes conform to femininity without displaying the kind of masculine attributes required for participating in sport, they become sexualised and devalued, for example the stereotype of women boxers as 'foxee' wrestlers (Halbert, 1997; Mennesson, 2000) and as a form of sexual entertainment (Scambler & Jennings, 1998). The negative reaction expressed towards women displaying physicality represents a double bind for women, as despite efforts to dispel female incompatibility in physical sport by committing to celebrated attributes, the perception that this is in conflict with normative femininity means that they continue to be positioned by their gender (Rich, 2001). Being accepted and taken seriously involves female athletes both conforming to and rejecting normative and often opposing gendered behaviours dependent on the context; Cox & Thompson (2000) have highlighted how female footballers utilise feminine hairstyles to counter the display of masculine attributes required when playing the sport. This does not necessarily involve uncritical acceptance however; as discussed below, many female athletes challenge this double-bind by portraying non-conformant identities and taking pleasure from this (see for example Heywood & Dworkin, 2003).

However, the mere participation of women in sports, especially those perceived as masculine, presents a challenge to the male dominance of sport, although the extent of this challenge is debatable due to varying degrees of compliance with existing masculine values and ideologies in sport (explored further below). All relations of power are dynamic and multi-directional; power is therefore never completely within the hands of

the dominant group (in this case hegemonic males) and therefore there is always the potential for resistance and transformation (Cole, 1994; Therberge & Birrell, 1994a). Although dominant discourses surrounding gender and sport are very powerful in maintaining male domination, this dominance is complex and continually shifting and female participation in sports that were traditionally male preserves is a form of resistance to dominant discourses of male supremacy and 'natural' associations between masculinity and contact sport. Despite the barriers they face, women are still participating in traditionally male sports in growing numbers – for example women are making careers as prize-fighters (Halbert, 1997), contributing to the redefinition of boxing as an exclusively male practice (Mennesson, 2000). The movement of women into football, in increasing numbers, can therefore be understood to be an attempt to destabilise the male dominance of the sport, although with significant limitations.

2.3.3 The Adoption of Male Norms

A great deal of research analysing the experiences of women in traditionally male sports has shown concern over how these female athletes are limiting their potential to challenge existing gendered arrangements in sport by colluding with practices inherent in the existing model (eg Young & White, 1995). Hargreaves (1994: 252) claims that "it is inevitable that if men have so much influence, they will impose on the women's game their own values and practices, and women footballers are being effectively schooled to copy what men do". However this can be interpreted as a limited and deterministic perspective on gendered behaviour, in proposing that men 'school' women rather than acknowledging the complexity of the issue. Existing structures for the expression of physicality and femininity remain limited, and female athletes can find that they have no alternative set of meaningful discourses within which to understand their sporting experiences (Young & White, 1995), so although not being 'schooled' to do what men do, women are adopting masculine practices inherent in the culture of sporting contexts.

Carle & Nauright (1999) found that female rugby players, as well as 'mimicking' the masculine attributes required in the sport, also collude with the masculine subculture of rugby. Through participating in drinking games, excessive alcohol consumption after matches in the clubhouse, and singing songs, female rugby players are colluding with the dominant 'manly' traditions that surround rugby. However, the women are replicating a subculture of norms that degrade women through sexist, explicit, sexually

graphic and homophobic songs and rituals (Wheatley, 1994). Women's collusion with traditional rugby practices and replication of a masculine subculture is, therefore, demonstrative of how women can engage with practices that contribute to their own subordination (eg Heywood & Drake, 1997). For example:

"It is clear that women players have adopted behaviour that conforms to dominant 'manly' traditions surrounding rugby. A desire to be viewed as 'one of the [rugby] boys' and, therefore, to cement their standing within the club itself has led women players to adopt cultural attributes that emulate men in the club"

(Carle & Nauright, 1999: 136).

This suggests the homogeneity of women rugby players as a group, which is perhaps better understood as collective positioning. Further, Carle & Nauright (1999) propose that by conforming to what is seen as 'real' (male) sport, female athletes "appear to be contributing to a male-defined sports process replete with violent, excessive and health-compromising characteristics" (56). The way female athletes can adopt the negative aspects of male sport that are associated with physicality, competitiveness and aggression such as normalising and playing through pain and injury is beginning to surface in research (eg Charlesworth & Young, 2003; Etue & Williams, 1996; Nixon, 1996; Therberge, 1997; Young & White, 1995). Female ice hockey players were found to still use physicality and violence in their sport despite the removal of body checking in an attempt to 'legitimise' women's ice hockey and challenge the structural differences between female and male ice hockey that constructs the female version as different and inferior (Therberge, 1997). Again, work from this perspective, although highlighting the paradox of the female athlete as colonising and preserving male spaces simultaneously, reinforces masculine-as-problematic discourses and can underplay the complexities of how and why women engage in these practices. For example, Blinde (1989) describes how in American collegiate women's sport, increasing emphasis was being placed on 'male model' values with adjectives such as competitive, demanding, intimidation and aggressiveness dominating women's experiences. Although useful in highlighting the limitations of Title IX and the value alienation female athletes can experience in established sporting models, the research preserves gender dualisms by conceptualising attributes such as 'competitive', 'demanding', 'intimidation', 'serious' and 'aggressiveness' as 'male-model-values' in opposition to alternative (feminine) values such as 'enjoyable', 'emotion' and 'respect' (Blinde, 1989). This not only suggests that women are in opposition to competition and aggression but also that men cannot access those 'alternative' values.

2.3.4 Gender and Sexuality

Lesbian sportswomen can also be understood as a pocket of resistance to hegemonic femininity. In open and supportive environments, women can be themselves and lesbian women can find a unique space to be together away from prejudice and discrimination that can be experienced in mainstream sport (Hargreaves, 2000). Scraton et al (1999) suggest that football can provide a relatively safe, shared space for lesbian women, but can also produce hyper-femininity as a strategy of resistance and negotiation of homophobia. Similarly, a club examined by Caudwell (2006) as 'publicly out', provides "a safe space for women, predominantly lesbians, to play football" (425) and further, aims to challenge discriminatory practices and homophobia. The increase and interest in gay sports challenges stereotypical images of women (and men) in sport, and increases visibility due to the position of sport as a hugely public channel (Hargreaves, 2000). Visibility is important, as it is one of the most effective tools in counteracting homophobia (Griffin, 1998). Hargreaves (2000) documents the struggles and achievements made by lesbian women in sport, which not only gives the women a place in mainstream academic material but in celebrating the gains made by these women, highlights how exclusionary practices and homophobic barriers can be overcome in sport. In particular the Gay Games, a global event attracting gay athletes from parts of the world where homosexuality is illegal, allows athletes to celebrate their sexuality (Elling et al, 2003) but also "has encouraged gay women and men to set up support groups and organisations even in areas where homosexuality is criminalised" (Hargreaves, 2000: 164). Despite the concern that separatism can reinforce the division between gay and straight, environments such as these are important in opening up spaces for both individual comfort and identity development, and collective mobilisation against discriminatory practices.

2.3.5 Strategies for Change: Liberal 'Equal Opportunities'

In perceiving inequality as a result of socialisation into sport and discriminatory practices within sporting structures (Scraton & Flintoff, 2002), policies directed at changing this inequality has dominantly been from a liberal equality of opportunity perspective that has criticised gendered divisions that exclude boys and girls from certain activities. This liberal perspective "provides a useful starting point for exposing andocentric (i.e. male) bias in physical education and sport resources and opportunities

for the purpose of initiating changes to legislation, policy and practices” (Macdonald et al, 2002: 146). Although widely critiqued in current theory for failing to challenge gendered practices (see 2.3.6 below), liberal interventions have been important in demonstrating how inadequate access and exclusionary practices on the basis of gender can have very real and negative consequences for girls (and some boys) (Wright, 1999). Equal opportunities discourse is commonly interpreted as the need for mixed-sex environments (Scruton, 1993) as single-sex provision of different activities can reinforce ideologies about the importance of male physical skill (Scruton, 1992) and “augments attitudes that announce and celebrate the stereotypical polarities of masculinity and femininity in sport” (Humberstone, 1990: 203). Yet mixed-sex teaching can also pressure girls to conform to feminine ideals (Lines & Stridder, 2003), inadvertently reinforcing masculine hegemony (Humberstone, 1990) and reproducing inequalities in mixed settings (Scruton, 1993). In other words, co-educational sports settings can create interactions between boys and girls where normative gender expectations that support the gender order can be reproduced (Shakib & Dunbar, 2002).

It is important to assess the implications and application of the liberal agenda in PE as these policies are often replicated in sports settings, and in particular the growth of football can be considered “a political outcome of liberal-feminist discourses that centres on equal opportunities, socialisation practices and legal/institutional reform” (Scruton et al, 1999: 99). Since the Football Association (FA) took control of women's football in 1993, female participation levels have grown, and in particular the number of girls playing football has increased dramatically (see chapter one, Table 1.1). Proponents of FA governance have highlighted how this has increased access to resources, structural playing opportunities and provided centralised administered co-ordination (Williams, 2003) and the 1993 takeover was celebrated in a government report as “of enormous benefit for women's football” (DCMS, 2006, paragraph 7). Integration into existing sporting structures, that have established governing bodies who can provide organisational help, can therefore benefit women's sports in a variety of ways. Despite being subject to extensive critique, it is difficult to deny the success of the liberal feminist agenda in opening up opportunities for women in sport on account of the sameness between men and women, improving equality in terms of access (Scruton & Flintoff, 2002). Sport feminists have worked hard to ensure that more sports are now

accessible to more women, fought for easier access and better facilities, improved funding and rewards and equal rights with men and boys under the law (Hall, 1996).

A significant outcome of the liberal agenda has been an increase in the visibility of women in 'traditionally male' sporting roles that can begin to destabilise hegemonic male dominance and provide female role models. For example in golf, Suzy Whaley¹⁵ became the first woman to qualify for a PGA tour event, and after considering her position seriously, decided to take up the offer as it provided the opportunity to increase female visibility at the top of the sport (Whaley, 2003). Clearly the potential for women to compete *against* men is limited, as in the majority of sports that require physical contact, understandings of differentiation and separation justified by discourses of biological differences prevent this. It has been proposed however that female athletes can however reach new athletic heights by participating in established (male) models of sport. Etue & Williams (1996) comment on this with regard to the female Canadian ice hockey teams' victory in the World Championships, which allowed female ice hockey players to fulfil sporting dreams (Therberge, 2002). Integration in these global events still however involves separation, highlighting the complexity of the integration/separation debate as women do not participate in the male structures, but a 'separate but equal' model with the same rules, simultaneously expressing integration and separation. Crawley (1998) found that women's success in sailing, a sport that is traditionally considered as masculine due to the requirements of strength and power, challenges the dominant group. However the demands for female sailors to use modified on-board winches is resented as participants wish to compete with men using the same equipment; it was concluded that success at a sport places women in a much better position to transform it, although success achieved through modification can be used to marginalise women's achievements. Tensions between integration and separation are therefore complex and multiple at times.

Based upon premise of gender sameness, women often portray the desire to compete on the same terms as men, and therefore occupy what were previously 'exclusively male spaces'. Women's mere presence in established football structures reflects this, further strengthened by their desire to play the standard form of the game, with no modification to the rules and regulations (Williams, 2004). Opportunities for women to participate in football alongside male counterparts are limited due to FA prohibitions, which generally

means that the spaces women occupy within football are separate to those occupied by men. Despite this, literature has highlighted how informal opportunities for women to play mixed football can be both positive and equitable (examples described in Caudwell, 2006 and Williams, 2003), and by proving their ability alongside men, women can make a greater challenge to understandings of male 'natural superiority'. Aside from actually playing football, women (albeit a limited amount) also now occupy other roles in male football structures such as match officials, sports journalists, club administration and coaching (eg Coddington, 1997; Williams, 2003). However the significant increase in participants has not been replicated with regards to women in these other sports roles where the growth in numbers remains very slow (Fasting & Pfister, 2000).

A high profile example that started a very public debate about the appropriateness of women's movement into men's football was the criticisms aimed at a female official in a men's match, where Mike Newell, manager of Luton Town FC¹⁶, was quoted as stating "she should not be here" and "if you start bringing in women, you have big problems. It is tokenism, for the politically correct idiots" (in Sharp, 2006). This example demonstrates the desire of some men to exclude women from football; in this case female involvement in a *men's* football match is seen as a much more significant challenge to the male dominance of the game as she has moved not just into 'football' but plays a vital role in a professional male match. As Newell was quoted, the elite end of the football hierarchy is perceived as exclusively male territory and is no place for women: "this is Championship football. It is not park football, so what are women doing here?" (in Williams, 2006). This strongly suggests that women should only be involved in football at an informal and low level ('park football'), maintaining their position as inferior and assuring that their movement into the sport is unthreatening to the exclusive male preserve of professional football. The liberal agenda is therefore seriously limited in attempts to improve gender equity in football, understood here as a problematic outcome of 'politically correct' discourses to increase opportunities for minority groups.

2.3.6 Limitations of the Liberal Agenda

The integration of women into sports, especially those considered as 'traditionally masculine', can however be met with considerable resistance, and as a result, women can find themselves both integrated into but suppressed within sporting structures. This has been documented in the case of football; Williams (2003, 2004) examines the

structure of women's football at both club and organisational level and highlights the resistance met at both levels in terms of fully integrating women, which continues to position them as an inferior 'other' to their male counterparts and denies them a voice within their own sport.

As outlined, policy in PE tends to be directed towards liberal notions of equality of opportunity, and the first aim of the national curriculum is to provide opportunities for all pupils to learn and achieve (NC website, 2004). Yet research has found a dominance of competitive games (Lines & Stridder, 2003; Scraton, 1992), a focus that favours boys (Griffin, 1989) and does not reflect the fact that girls tend to prefer less structured sports (Kay, 1995). Williams & Bedward (2002) found that girls recognised and criticised the gendered aspects of the PE curriculum that they were offered, including the refusal to offer football on the bases of gender-appropriate divisions even though they wished to play. An increase in the participation of girls in traditionally 'male' activities such as football has not been mirrored by an increase in boys in traditionally 'female' activities such as dance, which remains an activity that symbolises femininity in a masculine sporting structure, despite attempts to integrate it into the curriculum for both sexes (Keyworth & Smith, 2003). It is also important to recognise the limitations of the liberal agenda, in that providing increased access to sport for girls can create an unquestioned acceptance of male norms (Scraton & Flintoff, 2002) and fails to challenge the deep-rooted and gendered sporting structures or dominant feminine and masculine norms (Weedon, 1999). Debates concerning mixed/single sex provision are misguided, as it is more pertinent *how* practices within both of these environments are implicated in the gender order rather than which environment is 'best' (Kenway & Willis, 1997). Further, the foundations of the liberal equal opportunity approach have been criticised for the emphasis on quantity over quality (Hargreaves, 1990) and a democratic ideological basis (eg Bacchi, 1990; Birrell, 1998; Hargreaves, 1990). These problems are highlighted in the failures of Title IX to benefit the majority of sporting females (Boutilier & SanGiovanni, 1994; discussed further in section 3.2.2) and not only as participants. Whisenant (2003) studied female administrators in interscholastic athletics and concluded that Title IX had not increased access for women to positions of power, despite the continuing reported increase in female participation (see for example Acosta & Carpenter, 2008). Further, it has been reported that female head coaches and women

managers of female college teams and programmes have actually declined, in some contexts significantly so (Acosta & Carpenter, 2002).

In football, the limitations of equality of opportunity are perhaps even more apparent, as despite increased playing opportunities, attempts to integrate women have been significantly disparate. Williams (2004: 119) states that a “recurring pattern from the 1920’s to present time is the lack influence of women in decision-making roles in positions of power at the top level of their sport”. Women’s football remains heavily influenced and controlled by men (Scruton et al, 1999), and a lack of widespread support means that fundamental issues of women’s control over their own sport are as contentious now as they have ever been (Williams, 2004). This is in contrast to the integrated status women’s football holds in other countries where the sport is much more popular; in Norway, regulations state that the number of female members on boards and committees should be equal to representation of women in the organisation, with a minimum of two to avoid tokenism (Fasting, 2004). A strong focus on gender equity is evident: the women’s national coach shares the same philosophy as the men’s coach, but also the same office (Lopez, 1997). The English FA lags significantly behind this, both in terms of structural and cultural integration. However there have been some structural advances for women – the Players Football Association recently granted the England women’s squad associated membership, the first time amateur members have been accepted, meaning the female England players can now gain similar benefits to their male counterparts in terms of access to education, legal advice and coaching badges (Kessel, 2007a). However integration and equality of opportunity initiatives are limited as they are built around discourses of ‘sameness’, which rather than representing sameness between men and women, tends to imply women’s sameness ‘to’ men, signifying how the point of reference from this perspective is always male (Bacchi, 1990).

At club level, there is more variation of experience in terms of the extent to which women’s teams are integrated into male clubs. The FA stance on club links is clear – FA administrators see independent women’s clubs as “extremely low priority” as in the case of Doncaster Belles¹⁷, financial support was withheld as they were not linked to a male football club despite their unrivalled success in the sport at the time (Williams, 2004: 120). Yet alongside the FA drive for integration is the alarmingly frequent withdrawal of

funding from men's clubs. The most recent and most high profile case is that of Charlton Ladies, who despite being second only to Arsenal in recent achievements, came close to folding when the men's club "unceremoniously dumped their women's team and academy set-up of 140 players, shortly after the men's team were relegated from the Premier League" (Kessel, 2007a; see chapters one and five footnotes). Attention to this is generally focused at the elite level of the game, and although it is significant that even at the top level of the women's football, there is little stability in the support clubs receive from the male structure of football, this is also likely to occur at the grassroots of the game, as male football clubs struggle financially. Women's integration into male football clubs is therefore a complex and contentious issue; the reluctance of the FA to fully support independent female clubs, even at the top level of the game (Williams, 2003), sits uncomfortably alongside the significantly low status women's teams can be (but are not necessarily) afforded within male football clubs. The historical development and strength of discourses that limit women's involvement in the sport however must be acknowledged. The exclusion women have persistently faced from football is evident not only in FA legislation and cultural attitudes, but also the lack of history afforded to the game. There is no central archive for women's football records (Williams, 2003) and as a result, there is the conventional wisdom that women playing football is a recent phenomenon (Williams, 2004). Historical documentation of women's role in the development of football is growing, in an attempt to give the women's game a history and acknowledge its presence throughout the history of the sport; this is not just in terms of records and statistics but also in highlighting personal experiences to give character to its history (eg Melling, 1998, 1999; Newsham, 1997; Williams, 2003; Williamson, 1991).

Research on various sporting contexts has demonstrated how exclusionary practices continue to be experienced by women as a result of patriarchal structuring. Golf is an example of a sport that, due to its highly masculine (and upper-class, white and heterosexual) roots, women have struggled to be accepted into, despite having a professional association since 1950 (Crosset, 1995). Women can suffer from exclusionary practices in clubs that make them feel inferior (Nylund, 2003), have to comply with standards of appearance and behaviour set by male executives (Haig-Muir, 1999) and informal discrimination practices against women are still ever-present despite formal equality policies (Shotton et al, 1998). Female athletes can find themselves in a

unique 'outsider-insider' position, especially at the elite level (Crosset, 1995); they are participating in the male model of sport, but still struggle to be totally accepted by or integrated into that sporting culture. Crossett (1995: 218) demonstrates that despite female professional golfers occupying a politically powerful position as members of a male-dominated world of golf, the transformative potential is significantly limited and it is "unlikely that the LPGA represents a social advancement that will help to cause a chain-reaction of enlightenment, tipping the scales in favour of a new gender order". This 'outsider on the inside' status is also evident in the way female rugby players can be members of a male club, alongside male players, but struggle to be accepted into the subculture of the club or the sport – they remain 'tolerated' rather than accepted (Carle & Nauright, 1999). This exclusion from and lack of acceptance in certain sports creates a profound lack of opportunities for women to participate as serious athletes. Female athletes can therefore struggle to be made visible in these sports, and a lack of visibility reinforces ideological notions that certain sports are inappropriate for women.

As well as direct exclusionary practices, women integrated into existing sporting cultures can find that more indirect practices can occur regarding access to resources, particularly in male clubs. Carle & Nauright (1999) found that women's teams at rugby union clubs in Australia had unequal access to training facilities and pitches; however the players accepted this, feeling that they were 'lucky' to be allowed to be part of the club at all. Women in male football clubs can experience similar situations, due to playing at facilities on Sunday afternoons, after up to three other (predominantly male) teams. Williams (2003: 55) describes how "it is not unusual for facilities and clubhouses not to have been cleaned after the men have used them, or for match officials to cry off after refereeing in the morning, or for the playing surface to be extremely cut up". This reflects the institutionalisation of gender in women's football, and Scraton et al (2005: 83) suggest that such organisation of football "relegates all women's access to official football spaces to Sunday afternoon [behind men's teams], regardless of ability". This limited access women have to football resources not only contributes to the inferiorisation of the game but significantly impacts women's day-to-day experiences of football. It highlights how women's football struggles to find space outside of the male dominated culture, not just in terms of resources but also culturally. Brian Barwick, current chief executive of the FA, has recently called for a review of the current status of women football, with one proposal a summer league for women (Kessel, 2007a). This is

intended to free up space for women, not just with resources but also in providing a space where women's football can exist outside of the male football season and not have to fight for attention – interestingly, intentionally retaining the ‘insider-outsider’ position that is criticised for not fully integrating women as legitimate members of sport, both structurally and culturally.

2.3.7 Separatist Politics and Sport

It has been recognised that liberal policies promoting equity in sport have increased the numbers of females participating in a wide range of sports and physical activities, but this dominantly involves the integration of women into existing male sporting structures (Hall, 1996). Despite these gains, “the weakness of the concept of equality in accepting the gender-linked values of mainstream sport while failing to acknowledge or understand broader structures of power” has been questioned (Scruton et al, 1999: 99). The movement of women into existing sport structures can involve unquestioningly accepting men’s sports practices and organisation (Scruton & Flintoff, 2002), and the deep-rooted gendered structures of sport remain unchallenged (Weedon, 1999). Elling et al (2003: 452) consider the limits of liberal policies, remarking that “most sports clubs...are in principle ‘open’ to everybody. Nevertheless, a culture of exclusion often exists”. Existing sporting structures have also been criticised as promoting negative and even health-compromising practices (eg Charlesworth & Young, 2003; Nixon, 1996), which women collude with as they have no alternative set of meaningful discourses in which to understand their sporting experiences (Young & White, 1995). In an attempt to escape this, radical feminists propose that separate spaces should be developed for women to resist the dominant norms inherent in existing sporting practices and develop empowering alternatives. However as separatism has been criticised for maintaining dialectical understandings of men and women that can construct women as inferior, and female athletes do not necessarily wish to participate in separate models of sport, attempts can be made to reconstruct sport from within established structures. In her criticism of how periods of increased female participation have not led in any direct way to alter the male dominated systems of football, Williams (2003: 20) states that “a radical revision of the place of women, and by extension gender difference, within football is required to bring about fundamental transformation”, suggesting that change can (and should be) directed from within existing structures of football (see 2.4.4 below).

Radical feminists have proposed that either patriarchal sporting structures need altering dramatically, or recognising the difficulty of this, women should be participating in alternative environments separate from established and male-dominated contexts (Hall, 1990). Krane (2001) found that the most empowering areas for women in sport have been in women-controlled organisations, feminist leagues, or lesbian teams; all of these can provide overt challenges to hegemonic practices in sport and allow for the creation of female spaces to develop alternative values. Feminist structures, teams and clubs can employ alternative practices to transform sport, by avoiding an over-emphasis on winning, elitism, hierarchies of authority, social exclusion and hostility towards opponents (Birrell, 1988). Collectivity can be an important factor in women overcoming exclusionary practices (Pelak, 2002). Lenskyj (1994) documented a lesbian softball league that actively rejected hegemonic femininity and sporting practices, based on feminist principles such as equal relationships between players and team staff, co-operation, shared decision-making, collectivity, and the recreational and social aspects of sport rather than success or failure. The league also included the celebration of female sexuality and physicality, allowing women to be open in a supportive environment without fear of prejudice – challenging compulsory heterosexuality. An increase in ‘visibly’ gay and lesbian sport activities “present chances to enjoy gay, lesbian and queer spaces which, although sometimes ambivalently, contest hegemonic heterosexual sports cultures” (Elling et al, 2003: 452-3). The Gay Games is an example of a separatist sporting event, which provides this challenge based around a radical challenge to “the aggressive competitive ideology and divisive conventions of mainstream sport” by promoting inclusiveness, involvement and experience (Hargreaves, 2000: 157). Separatist environments do however remain ‘separate’, and therefore have limited potential to challenge existing sports structures and practices that continue to exclude minority groups.

Similarly, Hargreaves (1994) highlights how a London female netball team created their own radical culture, with a non-conformist flamboyant kit and a democratic and ‘politicised’ approach, contrasting traditional netball philosophy that they felt was “strait laced and socially restricting” (250). Examples such as this highlight how women are actively seeking to redefine the mainstream values and practices of women’s sports, but also how “struggles over women’s sports occur not just between men and women but between different groups of women with contrasting views of the social world of sports”

(Hargreaves, 1994: 254). The netball team participated in a an established league, highlighting the potential to participate in sporting structures *and* provide a separatist environment away from dominant (male) values and norms. This 'separation within integration' is discussed further below.

This section has discussed how attempts to improve the position of women in sport have dominantly been from a liberal perspective of 'equality of opportunity', that is remarkably different from equity (Hall, 1996). These policies have been judged as successful due to the provision of increased opportunities for women to access spaces they have been previously denied. However research in a variety of sporting structures and contexts has highlighted the failure of equality discourses in challenging (often deeply rooted) gendered practices that continue to impact on women's participation. A lack of integration is often a result of this, particularly in football, where women are simultaneously integrated and retained as a separate dimension of the sport. Both liberal and radical feminisms have been criticised for their failure to recognise the complexity of women's experiences and ignore the wider structural forces that act to maintain the male-dominated nature of sport, and do not pose a challenge to the deep-rooted and gendered structures or dominant feminine and masculine norms (Weedon, 1999). Alternative perspectives underpinned by an exploration of discourse have examined how taken-for-granted assumptions within sports organisations are influenced by the complexities of gender (Shaw, 2006). Specifically, studies drawing upon this approach have attempted to deconstruct such discourses to reveal how organisational practices and actions of individuals are influenced by gender to produce 'truths' that can become common-place. The application of these to women and sport will now be discussed, and followed by a discussion of the significance of developments in organisational research that analyse the importance of gender and discourse in sports organisations.

2.4 Deconstructing Dualisms: Acknowledging Complexities and Contradictions

As already suggested, the criticisms of both socialisation and liberal/radical approaches have been directed at a lack of flexibility and therefore the inability to grasp the complexity of issues that women and girls must negotiate in order to participate in sport. Post-structural conceptualisations have been increasingly utilised in research to "challenge ideas of fixed meaning, unified subjectivity and centred theories of power", and have been applied to feminist research "as an effective tool for understanding

subjectivity, gender and society and for devising strategies for change" (Weedon, 1999: 100). Therefore despite the pervasive strength of dualisms in society that continue to structure the way we understand gender, as demonstrated in the previous section, it can be proposed that there exists the potential for women to deconstruct these dualisms through engaging with *and* rejecting dominant discourses to different degrees in different contexts. Deconstructions of binary thinking and dualisms can therefore benefit feminist thought as they allow for a full range of identities to be acknowledged and appreciated (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002). However post-structural theory remains controversial and many writers have resisted its incorporation into feminist work (eg McLennan, 1992, discussed further in chapters three and four). Attention will now be directed towards the increasing body of work that has adopted this perspective on understandings of gender, and debate the development of feminist theory into this new terrain.

2.4.1 Multiplicity of Sporting Experiences

The rejection of positions of complicity or resistant to gender norms as oppositional or fixed can be considered as a significant development in recent feminist thought. The individual is "a site for competing and often contradictory modes of subjectivity" (Weedon, 1999: 104); girls can therefore occupy positions that are both feminine and athletic, although this has been demonstrated to require a degree of careful management. Cockburn & Clarke (2002) discovered that the girls could manage their sporting and feminine identities by employing coping skills to absorb and attempt to counteract the negative consequences of sports participation, through 'reconstructing' their feminine identities straight after sport (replacing make-up/jewellery and styling hair). Acts of individual difference, which have the potential to pose a challenge to existing gendered arrangements, are nevertheless mitigated in how females and males construct their experiences according to dominant perceptions of masculinity and femininity, and modify their behaviour to comply with these discourses. Research has highlighted how female athletes practice this identity management in football (Cox & Thompson, 2000), boxing (Halbert, 1997) and rugby (Wright & Clarke, 1999), in an attempt to compensate for the more typically masculine attributes demonstrated through their sports participation. This can however contribute to the reinforcement of the status quo in sport. Shakib & Dunbar (2002: 369) state that "rather than pose a challenge to the gender order, the girls tended to negotiate within the constraints set up by it, therefore reifying

the masculine sport hegemony and the larger gender order that supports it". In understanding gendered identities as multiple and fluid, resisting dominant notions of femininity by participating in sport can allow females to access a diversity of feminine practices, and viewing gender as a performance (Butler, 1990) suggests that these performances congeal over time and become a part of their feminine identity (Cox & Thompson, 2000).

This is therefore a complex process, permeated with inconsistencies and tensions between conflicting discourses (Volman & Ten Dam, 1998). The emergence of discourses promoting alternative female body images such as muscular, fit and toned (Heywood & Dworkin, 2003) is an example of this, although it can be argued that this still exists within the boundaries of dominant heterosexual discourses (Sunderland, 2004). As discourse is located in institutions and practices that shape the social world, the subjectivities available to girls are produced within these discourses (Weedon, 1999) and taking up a sporting subjectivity involves a rejection of dominant discourses that construct femininity and physicality as oppositional. Female involvement in physical sport in general and football in particular therefore involves simultaneous resistance of both dominant norms inherent in sport and traditional normative understandings of femininity, and highlights the importance of the football context as providing a potential space for this resistance. The process by which resistance positions are 'taken up' has however been criticised for reverting at times to a humanist 'choosing' subject who responds to discourses by actively taking up different position, which Jones (1997: 265) describes as "an easy slippage from meaning or discourse determining possibilities, to 'people' determining via discourses". Davies & Harré (1990: 46) suggest that this is not the case, but a "recognises that both the constitutive effects of discourse, and of particular discursive practices, and at the same time recognises that people are capable of exercising choice in relation to those practices". Authors have engaged in fruitful debates in attempting to reconcile the tension between the humanist agent and the anti-humanist subject as neither determined nor free but both simultaneously (see for example Davies, 1997 and Jones, 1997). Research in sport has begun to engage with this debate by highlighting the ways in which dominant masculine and feminine norms can at the same time be both resisted and accommodated, signalling the potential but also the limitation for women in sport to present a challenge to these dominant understandings.

2.4.2 Resistance to Feminine Norms – Alternative Images of Women

The movement of women into traditionally male sports is clearly a fluid, complex and ambiguous process, but one that does allow the portrayal of alternative images of women that has the potential to reach beyond the sporting context. The image of the female athlete emits powerful political symbolism as it can represent strength, force and success (Young & White, 1995). Challenging hegemonic femininity also frees women to develop their own definitions of acceptable body shape and appropriate sporting activities (Krane, 2001). Although there is a great deal of pressure on women to conform to feminine ideals and norms, not all do – women continue to participate in traditionally male sports despite the stigmatisation and negative treatment that they can receive for doing so. Wright and Clarke (1999) concluded that female rugby players' enjoyment of physicality is empowering, and participation in sports that require this physicality can be seen as challenging narrow and limiting constructions of femininity. Female athletes can also use sports as a way to escape the restrictions put on socially accepted 'feminine' behaviour – Thing (2000) discovered that in basketball, females can release emotions such as aggression that are normally tabooed in everyday life. This presents a challenge to gendered social rules of etiquette, but also provides females with feelings of freedom and self-realisation.

In considering the usefulness of this to the positioning of women within football, Cox & Thompson (2000: 5) adopt a 'multiple bodies' perspective that recognises "that women are neither powerless 'victims' of oppressive discourses nor free from structural constraints". This is an attempt to challenge static understandings of women as oppressed victims of patriarchy without slipping into relativist deconstructions that ignore the role of institutions as maintaining dominant discourses and marginalising resistance. Cox & Thompson (2000) maintain that this perspective is useful in exploring how women constitute themselves differently in different settings to "negotiate the overlapping and at times contradictory discourses of sport, gender and heterosexuality" (17), which involves engaging in practices that both challenge and collude with these discourses. The transformative potential of this is outlined in the conclusion that the negotiations women enter into "may potentially be a liberating and empowering situation, in that it demonstrates that being a woman encompasses a wide range of practices rather than a restrictive set of 'natural' traits" (18).

Research has also demonstrated how traditional feminine ideals can be disrupted through the destabilisation of prevalent gender dualisms and female interactions with masculinity. Although the adoption of masculine characteristics by female athletes can be considered a sign of naïve internalisation and replication of dominant masculine norms (eg Bryson, 1987), this can be contested. Words associated with masculinity connote value, worth, power and importance (Boutilier & SanGiovanni, 1983), and an adoption of these attributes may allow women to value themselves and their sporting achievements to a greater level. Further, Krane (2001) discusses how women in sport can redefine the feminine image by rethinking how they respect and value the female body and its ability to develop muscles; this can challenge discourses surrounding women's limitations that are often closely tied to hegemonic femininity (Young & White, 1995). The extent of this challenge is however debatable – those attributes valued in sport are directly applicable to the hegemonic form of masculinity (eg Messner & Sabo, 1990), suggesting that Bourdieu's (1993) concept of sport as 'physical capital' is an empowering resource for boys, such as social power, but for girls has little exchange value outside of sport (Gorely et al, 2003). In other words, musculature and its associated attributes, such as strength and power, may be of value to women in their sporting context but have been suggested to have little worth outside of this and as a result, have little potential to challenge wider gendered relations of power.

Organisational studies may however challenge this claim, as the adoption of masculine characteristics may also aid progression in the business world, particularly for women in non-traditional organisations (see for example Walsh, 2001; explored further in section 2.5). This understanding again does little to disrupt gender binaries, and does not acknowledge how the use of physicality and aggression by females in sport challenges the wider 'common-sense' belief that the female body is weak and passive, and deconstructs beliefs that aggression and strength in sport is biological and/or related to men only (Thing, 2000). An example of the potential transfer of this outside the sporting context is the belief that female muscularity is perceived as beneficial to female bodybuilders for protective and defensive reasons (Miller & Penz, 1991). The concern here however though is how "identifying with men allows us to feel strong, but it also, unfortunately, can reinforce the idea that being female is a form of weakness" (Cox et al, 1997: 198); proposing that it is the association of strength with '*being like a man*' that reinforces gender differentiation and inequality. What is perhaps required therefore is an

explicit critique the dominant union of muscularity, sport and men and a re-appropriation of strength as facet of physical empowerment for boys, girls, men and women, perhaps by linking it to well-being and a responsibility for self and others (Gorely et al, 2003).

It has been asserted in some research how physicality can be pleasurable for women. Young and White (1995) interviewed women in a number of physical sports and found that they clearly valued personal empowerment, benefiting from identity development, goal sharing, self assurance, confidence and self-esteem. They found the women enjoyed being aggressive, gaining strength, and being fit; this parallels findings that women boxers derive pleasure from the physical aspect of fighting and get a buzz from the adrenaline rush that accompanies it (Halbert, 1997; Scambler & Jennings, 1998), the control and freedom experienced in basketball (Shakib & Dunbar, 2002; Thing, 2000), how female ice hockey players enjoy the physical aspect of the game (Therberge, 1997) and the enjoyment that women rugby players receive from the physicality and bodily sacrifice inherent in the sport (Carle & Nauright, 1999). Muscularity and physicality can clearly be empowering for women as well as men (Heywood & Dworkin, 2003), despite the dominance of socially accepted female body shapes constructed as oppositional to a physical muscular body (Krane, 2001). Further, Heywood & Dworkin challenge the feminist drive for 'alternative forms of femininity' to be developed:

"We know – good feminist women and girls aren't supposed to want to be or be "like men"...we are supposed to affirm ourselves as women, all equal, and to redefine 'woman' and 'girl' to encompass value and strength. We're supposed to be creating 'alternative femininities' but still see ourselves fundamentally as women. We're not allowed to do both" (73).

Heywood's personal analysis of her life as a female powerlifter is full of references relating to how she fights battles against "assumptions of limitation" (Heywood & Dworkin, 2003: 59). Competing 'on men's terms' can therefore be empowering for women, in providing a space to free themselves from the normative and restrictive displays of femininity and display emotion such as aggression (Thing, 2000). Further, this may also help to raise the profile of women's sports - the perception of female soccer players in America as appropriated for strength and power as well as sex appeal attracted spectators to the sport, but in seeing that they 'play hard', it was the soccer that sustained the interest (Longman, 2001). As 'soccer babes', they were considered willing participants in the sexualisation of the team, but this benefited both the players and the

sport, and demonstrated a freedom to show pride in their bodies. This is clearly a complex area in which gendered discourses clash and overlap, and subjectivities are multiple and unstable and can shift considerably to be utilised for women's gains.

The visibility of alternative forms of femininity also has the potential to challenge the dominance of emphasised femininity, and the rapidly increasing numbers of women participating in traditionally male sports requiring muscular bodies, physicality and strength can assist with this. As it is the dominant model of sport that receives the most visibility through media attention (eg Duncan & Hasbrook, 2002), women's movement into these structures will contribute to a reduction in the dominance of hegemonic femininity as females are being shown (albeit in a limited amount, as discussed in section 2.2.4) in more varied roles than previously. These roles, in sports that require strength and power, demonstrate different female images that contrast traditional feminine norms and can encourage changing ideas about gender roles and ideal body shapes (Heywood & Dworkin, 2003). However, Halberstam (1998) notes that there is still no general acceptance of or even recognition of masculine women despite multiple images of strong and muscular females, particularly in sport. Understanding the ways in which women incorporate and reject dominant masculine norms into their experiences of football can therefore extend these debates into body contact sports asking questions such as in what contexts are masculine norms rejected, what is believed to facilitate this resistance and whether this resistance represents a shift in gendered relations of power and normative oppositional understandings of gender difference.

2.4.3 Deconstructing and Challenging Dominant Masculinity

Research has also demonstrated how women can attempt to redefine dominant sporting practices and challenge the dominant associations between masculinity and sport. The most prime example of women disrupting gender boundaries and reconstructing a traditionally masculine sport for their own needs is in the study of bodybuilding. Miller & Penz (1991) discuss how female bodybuilders are attempting to destabilise the male dominance associated with the activity, building on the ambivalence that emerges from the fact that although muscles are typically associated with masculinity, a preoccupation with appearance has traditionally been viewed as feminine (Wesely, 2001). Women are engaged in a struggle over claims and meanings surrounding bodybuilding, and use several strategies to make a place for themselves in the sport (Miller & Penz, 1991).

Firstly, they define bodybuilding as a sport of appearance, considering it as a 'bodywork' project which is their 'natural' turf, exposing a tension already present in male bodybuilding; secondly, they defend their use of weights as a solution to problems they may face outside the gym, therefore increasing their strength for protective/defensive reasons; thirdly, they believe that they rationally defend their bodybuilding to work towards personal goals, whilst men are more concerned with vanity. Female bodybuilders can therefore be understood to be challenging the prevailing distribution of power in bodybuilding, and "women's culturally derived expertise in bodywork can be used as a political tool for the colonisation of a male preserve" (Miller & Penz, 1991: 148).

However this clearly highlights some significant tensions regarding the potential female athletes have to challenge hegemonic male dominance of sport in general. If what Miller & Penz (1991) propose is an accurate indication of shifting power relations in bodybuilding, then it would appear to increase the potential for women to challenge the hegemonic male dominance of sports. But there are contradictions and complexities within this proposal. Female bodybuilders are disrupting the binary opposition of masculine/feminine, but in compensating for excessive musculature by emphasising their femininity. Obel (1996) argues that this is unthreatening to the gender order as it supports discourses that constitute masculinity and femininity in opposition. Defining bodybuilding as 'women's work' (Miller & Penz, 1991: 151) due to its reliance on appearance has limited transformative potential as an emphasis on femininity reassures that "women's bodybuilding is compatible with an attractive and heterosexual femininity" (Scruton et al, 1999: 100). Although female bodybuilders can gain intense feelings of control and resistance, they remain judged within the limitations of feminine heterosexual desirability (Brace-Govan, 2002).

The issue explored above is not a fixed or linear practice involving an unquestioned conformity *or* challenge to male-defined sporting cultures, but a more complex appropriation of differing values and discourses and reflects the instability of positions available to female athletes. Young (1997) found that women in physical sports rejected win-at-all cost notions and the use of excessive force and violence, but enjoyed being physical and assertive. Further, the de-emphasis placed on competitiveness by some feminists in favour of more 'alternative feminine' values (eg teamwork, relationship

building) has been criticised by some recent feminists who consider how desires and pleasures such as power can be used to enlighten activist work (eg Heywood & Drake, 1997). Heywood & Dworkin (2003) therefore suggest that women should feel comfortable enjoying what would be considered 'masculine' aspects of competitive sport and athleticism, which second-wave feminists often frame as 'selling out' by replicating and contributing to an idealised (and often destructive) culture of masculinity. Shakib & Dunbar (2002) concur with this, concluding that females want to be able to display aggression and competitiveness through sport and can become dissatisfied with those aspects of sport considered as more 'feminine' such as teamwork. As those values typically associated with femininity tend to have less social value than those associated with masculinity (Messner, 1990) female athletes may find that they become frustrated with the consistent pressure on them to limit their displays of aggression and physicality. Masculinity should be understood within female identities, not necessarily as a negative feature that is in conflict with femininity but a potentially empowering aspect allowing for a challenge to male privilege (Cox et al, 1997). Cox & Thompson (2000) highlighted how female footballers gained a sense of pleasure and empowerment from the physical aspects of their participation. Despite criticisms of the liberal agenda, the gains made may therefore be cyclic, as they have opened up new spaces for women to embrace aspects of masculine identity that can be empowering. Wedgewood (2004: 158) suggests that "being powerfully embodied is a good thing for both sexes", and it should be remembered that women are not simply passive recipients of culture (Davies, 1997) but actively negotiate the values inherent in male sport.

Women in sport have also been demonstrated to be resisting dominant values in certain contexts. Sport for men has been criticised for embracing combat, being intensely competitive and involving dominating and subordinating competitors – traditionally masculine ways of embodying power and overcoming one's opponent (Whitson, 2002). A powerful male body can be translated into social power, which can be used to subordinate, oppress and even intimidate women in all areas of society (Messner, 1990). Pleasure in a sense of accomplishment, co-ordination, and a competent, confident sense of self can be experienced by both men and women, but are seldom allowed to be the central purpose of male sport (Whitson, 2002). Mennesson (2000) found that some female boxers disliked the use of fists but admired the aesthetic and technical characteristics of the sport, and enjoyed the satisfaction of learning and mastering new

skills. Female golfers also were found to enjoy the mastery aspect of their sport above everything else (Crosset, 1995); it is clear that female athletes can reject the perceived negative values in dominant sport practices and create their own meanings from their sports participation that can be personally and politically empowering (Young, 1997).

In relation to football, Scraton et al (1999) highlight that in opposition to the claim by Hargreaves (1994) that women will adopt male values and norms, the women in their study incorporated their own meanings, such as such as pleasure gained from connectedness as a team, even when they had no conscious intention of resistance. Further, the screening of women's football on television has been can highlight how "the slower pace and the more open football of the women's game contrasted strikingly for many viewers with the negative, helter-skelter patterns of much modern male play" (Williams & Woodhouse, 1991: 101). Therberge (2002) found that in female ice hockey, the removal of body-checking created an emphasis on speed, strategy and skill rather than power and force (although this simultaneously worked to inferiorise the game as an 'adapted model'). Difference in these cases is not synonymous with inferiority, but reconstructed as reflecting female superiority. The adoption of and resistance to dominant values inherent in sports practices is therefore a complex situation that will differ between both sporting contexts and individual female athletes, and involves simultaneous rejection and adoption. Although posing a challenge to the male values inherent in sport, this type of analysis can return to gender dualisms that construct 'female' attributes such as teamwork, co-operation and a sense of accomplishment in opposition to more 'masculine' attributes discussed above such as power, strength and aggression. Research should attempt to avoid this dualistic conception of gendered attributes and instead deconstruct the meaning systems that not only gender these attributes but gender them hierarchically.

2.4.4 Challenge and Resistance from Within?

The previous section introduced how separatist politics in sport could be used to promote and celebrate alternative values (eg Hargreaves, 2000) but how often with sport, entirely separate spaces were neither achievable nor meeting the wishes of the majority of female participants (eg Williams, 2003). The key concern, particularly in relation to the structure of football, is how women and girls can experience sport and resist exclusionary gendered practices from *within* existing established sporting cultures and

structures. Caudwell (2006) has contributed to both this debate and understandings of the potential for women's football to provide space for the promotion of inclusive values in her study of two football clubs with political associations. An examination of a 'publicly out' (although not exclusively lesbian) women's football club, with a female-only committee and a strong equal opportunities policy towards sexuality, race, disability, class and age, illustrates how women in football can resist exclusionary practices and the hegemonic male dominance of football whilst participating within established structures. An important challenge to the naturalisation of football as a 'male' sport is the discouragement of the oft-used term in football of 'man-on' in favour of 'woman-on' (Caudwell, 2006). Research such as this demonstrates the complexity of feminist politics, opposing the radical perspective that a challenge can only be achieved through establishing autonomous leagues and clubs outside state-controlled sport systems (Hall, 1990) or 'radically' changing existing sporting organisations (Thompson, 2002). Hargreaves (2000) suggests that political progress made by separatist spaces limits progress to these spaces, and can "create barriers between gay and straight people and provide an excuse for mainstream clubs and organisations to do nothing about their own sexual intolerance, homophobia and discrimination" (171). Providing a politically-informed environment that is occupied by both heterosexual and lesbian women *and* operates within existing sporting structures therefore has the potential for a much stronger challenge to exclusionary practices within existing structures. This 'resistance from within' is perhaps even more evident in the fact that the second club with a political and inclusive philosophy in Caudwell's (2006) study was a mixed football club. Again, the desire to challenge negative values is apparent in the club's constitution, which includes the statement "whilst committed to the rigour of hard physical, competitive sport, players will not behave in an unacceptably aggressive or violent way" (432). This reflects an attempt to negotiate the values inherent in football, in promoting 'acceptable' behaviour without rejecting the physical and competitive aspects of football, and deconstructs the association of physicality with negative understandings of aggression and violence.

Importantly, the expressed desire of women footballers to access and play 'the same' sport as men must not be over-ridden by separatist politics. Williams (2004: 124) states that most women players she interviewed "did not want to play a *very* different form of football either as an alternative to the 'male' game or as a critique of the values of

competitive contact sport". Political philosophies must therefore negotiate this tension and overlap of understandings of sameness and difference, in allowing for difference in promoting alternative values without distancing women from the culture of the sport they participate in. Sporting environments that recognise and promote both the interests of women and challenge exclusionary practices and values often visibly celebrated in football (for example aggression) are therefore possible not just outside of separate league structures, but also in mixed-clubs; this also deconstructs the perception of separatism as preserving the dichotomy between men and women that can be interpreted as female inferiority. Research in the USA has highlighted how the success and popularity of women's football is largely due to the absence of a hegemonic 'soccer' culture, so the women's game is not in direct competition with a male alternative and has been able to develop away from male preconceptions and traditions (Markovits & Hellerman, 2004; Longman, 2001). The context of football in the UK as a highly visible and traditionally masculine sport means that cultural separation is not possible; therefore attempts to deconstruct the association with masculinity and the development of alternative values and inclusive environments must be attempted from within the male-dominated context that has consistently excluded and oppressed women. In the USA, co-ed soccer is popular with both children and adults; Henry & Comeaux (1999: 287) highlight how mixed soccer is "a game played rather than a sport practiced: the limited formality, the negotiation between enjoyment and competition". The potential for informal sporting experiences to be framed by 'the nature of play' rather than over-emphasising competition is important; here, this exists in a mixed sporting environment. This suggests that perceived 'negative' aspects of male sport, in this case over-competitiveness, can still be rejected in a liberal framework of equality – if it is acknowledged that equality should not consist merely of being free to do what men have done, but must involve a questioning of the consequences of those attributes dominant in mainstream sport (Talbot, 1988).

2.5 Gender, Organisational Studies and Sport: Integrating Experience and Structures

As this study is focusing on the role of women within football as an organisation, the vast amount of work undertaken in organisational studies is valuable in highlighting institutionalised gendered practices and discourses that structure organisations and affect both the movement of women into and their experiences within organisations. Research

on gender and organisations has challenged their perceived gender-neutrality (Acker, 1990) in demonstrating how gender is a foundational element of organisational structure and work life (Britton, 2000). The literature in this area, especially the recent move to incorporate understandings of discourses as historically constituted and therefore unstable (eg Shaw & Slack, 2002), can be related to the role of women in the organisational structure of football. In particular, recent advances in organisational research and sport has represented a move to incorporate both macro and micro level forces in an attempt to address the complexity of gendered issues in sports organisations (Cunningham & Sagas, 2008). Work from this perspective acknowledges and analyses the interconnectedness of wider gendered policies that limit the progression of women with individual behaviours and how practices at the micro level are implicitly gendered to exclude women (see for example Fielding-Lloyd & Meân, 2008; Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2008; Shaw, 2007).

2.5.1 Gender, Organisational Studies and Sport

Issues pertaining to gender and sex diversity are prominent in all organisations but especially pronounced in the sport context (Cunningham & Sagas, 2008). Legal mandates have brought substantial changes to the sporting landscape for women and girls, for example Title IX legislation led to girls and women enjoying greater access to sport and physical activity than ever before (Acosta & Carpenter, 2008; see sections 2.3.4 and 3.2.1). The movement of women into sport organisations, especially in leadership or decision-making roles, is a particularly significant challenge to the male dominance of sport. Gharardi & Poggio (2001) suggest that this challenge women pose through their movement into areas they have traditionally been excluded from is a particularly significant site for the exploration of the ways in which gender norms are created and recreated, as it is in these 'challenge' settings where women draw upon gendered practices and values the most in their attempts to comprehend their position that contravenes dominant norms. However sport organisations are often places that still reproduce traditional gender roles and male privilege and dominance (Shaw & Hoeber, 2003; Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007). There is a significant under-representation of women in coaching and leadership positions – it has been demonstrated that women have less access to these positions, and when they are obtained, their pay is less and they tend to be treated less well than their male counterparts (Cunningham & Sagas, 2008). Further, the number of women in sport governance at national and international level is

still relatively small despite efforts to increase the percentage, with this area of gender divisiveness seemingly resistant to change (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007). Joan Acker (1990, 1992) has been influential in highlighting processes that gender organisations. The processes she identifies are the construction of gender divisions; the construction of symbols/images that explain, express, reinforce or sometimes oppose those divisions; gendered components of identity and the presentation of self; and demands for gender-appropriate behaviours and attitudes. A great deal of work has been undertaken in the area of organisational studies, both within and outside of sport, and across various countries such as the UK, the USA, Australia, New Zealand and Norway, that has illuminated gendered processes that are useful to understanding the position of women in football structures. Work within sport has explored women in sports coaching, leadership and governance (Fasting & Pfister, 2000; Hovden, 1999, 2000b, 2000c; Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2001; White & Brackenridge, 1985; Whitson & Macintosh, 1989), women as organisational change agents (Colgan & Ledwith, 1996, Hall et al, 1989; Hovden 2000a), gender and organisational power (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007; Hoyer & Stewart, 2002; McKay, 1997; Rowe, 1998; Talbot, 2002), approaches to gender equity (Aitchison et al, 1999; Shaw, 2007; Shaw & Frisby, 2006; Shaw & Penney, 2003), and gendered social processes within the organisational cultures of sport (Shaw, 2006; Shaw & Hoeber, 2003; Shaw & Slack, 2002).

A great deal of work has highlighted how organisations, including sports organisations, are hierarchical and patriarchal structures where gender inequity is produced and maintained through practices that secure and reify male (hegemonic) dominance and exclude and marginalise women (eg Colgan & Ledwith, 1996; Connell, 1987; McKay, 1997; Talbot, 2002). The concept of patriarchy has been utilised to highlight how patterns of gender are institutionalised, such as in sex-segregation, the portrayal of men as authority figures, informal gendered practices, homophobic and sexual harassment, and the valuing of masculine definitions of merit, skill and performance (McKay, 1997). Understandings of gender difference construct women in opposition to the male norms that are celebrated and privileged in management, often justifying women's exclusion. Further, sport organisations commonly fail to own the issue of female under-representation – women are seen as at fault for not being willing to come forward more, when long-established practices and procedures that limit women's contributions significantly restrict them (Talbot, 2002).

Connell's (1987) conceptualisation of the gender order has been applied to organisational studies to consider how inherent practices work to subordinate women (and non-conformant men) and maintain the dominance of hegemonic masculinity. Knoppers & Anthonissen (2008) used Connell's (1987, 2005) framework to argue that current ways of doing gender are sustained and/or challenged by configurations of practice, and that 'doing gender' (see section below) consists of engaging in actions that are part of social processes. Connell (1987) proposed that structural divisions of labour gender organisations and create significant inequalities between men and women that are very difficult to challenge. The vertical and horizontal segregation of labour structures is particularly evident in the high numbers of women in lower-level positions with little authority and prestige (Gherardi & Poggio, 2001; McKay, 1997). Women still occupy positions with lower rates of pay, and remain 'bunched' under the glass ceiling; the higher the rank, the smaller the proportion of women (Colgan & Ledwith, 1996). Even informal structures within sports clubs can reinforce gendered divisions of labour. Roles that women occupy in clubs and associations often parallel domestic roles – Thompson (1994) analysed the role of women in New Zealand rugby, stating how the domestic labour of the women has always serviced rugby, including providing meals and washing and ironing uniforms. Chafetz & Kotorba (1999) found that Little League mothers were expected to chauffeur, organise and supervise children's activities, design and make t-shirts and door hangers, decorate the playing field and launder kit; jobs which fathers were not asked to do. Informal practices such as these reflect the strength of discourses concerning not only the stereotypical nature of 'women's work' but the significant gendering processes evident in the day-to-day organisation of sports clubs. Knoppers & Anthonissen (2008) examined the discourses that both male and female members of sports organisation drew upon to explain their own role, and how these discourses can be presented as gender neutral have subtexts that create or reinforce a culture that tends to exclude women (as well as other minority groups). For example, impression management, availability and relationality were found to be prominent discourses underlying the stereotyped behaviours of senior board members. Although these behaviours were considered to be 'gender neutral' and therefore achievable by women who wish to progress to these positions, "the accumulated gendered subtexts of these discourses preserve, legitimise and naturalise the power and privileges of those already holding senior positions" (Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2008: 101).

In analysing sports organisations, it is imperative to retain a historical perspective in order to acknowledge how power relations are developed and remain resilient over time (Shaw & Slack, 2002). Women struggle for recognition in areas they have traditionally been excluded from, with no history to draw upon and few role models or networking arrangements (Talbot, 2002). The influence of historical developments is an important feature of Connell's (1987) depiction of gender order, and demonstrated in the examination of patriarchy in sports organisations (eg McKay, 1997); recent work has however explored the socially constructed nature of such traditional discourses, and also their multiplicity (eg Shaw & Slack, 2002). The historical and persistent exclusion of women from sport (Guttman, 1991) is particularly evident in football; the involvement of women has been both formally and informally resisted and continues to have a strong impact on their experiences within the sport (eg Lopez, 1997; Williams, 2003; 2004). Shaw (2007: 423) discusses how the 'deep structures' within sports organisations are an interrelated and naturalised set of values, history, culture and practices that although powerful, are fluid and therefore not above critique and deconstruction. Similarly, language, practices and policies are used within sports organisations to protect the legacy of masculinity (Shaw & Slack, 2002) and reproduce the naturalness of the association between sport and masculinity that is consequently used to justify female exclusion, and become organisational truths such as 'that's just the way it is' (Shaw & Frisby, 2006). For example, women's football remains heavily influenced and controlled by men (Scruton et al, 1999), an issue which is often (and concerningly) understood by women in the game as something they must accept (Williams, 2004). An examination of these taken-for-granted assumptions can highlight their historically constructed and multiple nature, and open the potential to expose contrasting opinions upon which resistance can be built (Shaw, 2007).

In regard to sporting structures, inequitable and gendered practices can result in perceptions that women are different and therefore inferior to their male counterparts in sport. This has led to the construction of 'adapted' models of sport for females, on the premise that this better suits both their needs and physical capabilities. These 'tamed down' models of sports for women serve to 'ghettoise' women's sports and leave the hegemonic masculinity of men's sports virtually unchallenged (Dworkin & Messner, 2002: 25). In female ice hockey, body checking is disallowed, even though it is an

integral feature of the male professional game (Therberge, 1997). This rule difference was passed in an attempt to make the game more attractive to females who may have been concerned about injury (Etue & Williams, 1996). Although this has attracted more female players, the removal of body checking from women's ice hockey positions it as both different and inferior to the dominant (male) model of ice hockey (Therberge, 1997). Women in football often actively resist this in insisting on having access to and playing 'the same' game as men (Williams 2004), to counter perceptions of inferiority suggesting that they cannot play the 'real (men's) game. Further, organisational literature has demonstrated how difference in terms of stereotypically gendered values and behaviours can reinforce gendered hierarchies in sports organisations. Claringbould & Knoppers (2008) studied the 'doing of gender' in sports organisations, and demonstrate the complexity of 'difference', as women did not want to be seen as different in case this resulted in marginalisation, but also found that they were criticised if behaving like men or being perceived to be a feminist.

2.5.2 Gender Equity Policies in Sports Organisations

Literature grounded in feminist organisational theory has also been valuable in demonstrating the failure of equal opportunity and other policies and interventions aimed at improving gender inequity in organisations (eg Acker, 2000; Colgan & Ledwith, 1996; Shaw & Frisby, 2006). For example, despite significant gains for women and girls in sport as a result of Title IX legislation, the earning potential for women in sport remains considerably less than men (Acosta & Carpenter, 2008). Despite these failures, it is important to assess the liberal agenda and its problems as the majority of attempts made to improve the position of women in organisations, not just in sport, have been from this perspective. Macro level research such as this tends to be concerned with structural and institutional elements that shape (re)production of gender (Cunningham & Sagas, 2008). Shaw & Hoeber (2003) state that many women struggle to access managerial positions in sport organisations, and gender equity changes have brought about only modest changes as they do not alter the fundamentally gendered nature of organisations (Acker, 2000). Further, and again significant to this study, equity policies can encourage increasing the numbers of women by offering funding in return, which can undermine the potential for radical change (Shaw & Frisby, 2006). Proposed reasons for the failure of equity policies will now be discussed.

Three common approaches to gender equity management were proposed by Ely & Meyerson (2000) and discussed by Shaw & Frisby (2006). The first approach, based on a liberal individualist framework (Cunningham & Sagas, 2008), is to *fix the women*; this is based on understandings that women are less capable of dealing with management issues, based on dialectical understandings of female attributes as in opposition to those valued by management. Talbot (2002: 277) states that in this approach to sport policies “it is assumed that if women learn new behaviours...then access to sport, whether as participant or as worker, will be unproblematic”. This considers gender equity as a ‘women's issue’ (Colgan & Ledwith, 1996), in that it is the women that need to change and become more suited to management. Female deficits can be ‘fixed’, for example through assertiveness training so women can learn to “emulate men's perceived toughness” (Shaw & Frisby, 2006). A participant in a study by Gharardi & Poggio (2001: 254) describes how to survive in a male-dominated organisation she felt that she had to sacrifice her female identity and “become just like men”; acceptance was believed to be dependent on the conformity to male norms, reproducing hegemonic masculinity. Despite the acknowledged criticisms of this approach – most significantly that the privileging of male norms is reproduced, with male standards maintained as ‘the standards’ and in opposition to non-conformant subjectivities – research has documented how women continue to adopt masculine norms in attempts to succeed in organisations. For example Walsh (2001) described how women can embrace existing masculine discursive practices on the grounds that these are perceived as powerful, and in opposition to ‘weak’ practices associated with masculinity. However perceptions of women as aggressive and confrontational can limit their advancement (Shaw & Hoerber, 2003). There are clear parallels here with the attempts women have made to be accepted as serious participants in sport through conforming to male norms and the contradictory implications of this.

The second approach is to *value the feminine*, which proposes that perceived differences should be viewed as traits to be celebrated rather than fixed (Shaw & Frisby, 2006); not only acknowledged but valued equally (Nentwich, 2006). This can challenge the unproblematised status of masculine norms (Walsh, 2001) but can again reinforce gendered stereotypes and create false binaries around male/female roles that position women as inferior (Meyerson & Kolb, 2000). Behaviour defined as feminine tends to be undervalued at the higher levels of sports organisations, with some females who work

their way up attempting to make themselves invisible as women (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2008; Shaw & Hoeber, 2003; Shaw & Slack, 2002). Also, Shaw & Hoeber (2003) found that feminine behaviours were only valued within confines of a particular role, such as human resources, and were non-transferable outside of this area. Women can be understood as socialised into different roles; their management of domestic/family life can be perceived as affording them interpersonal skills, consensus, team-working and negotiation – all creating a ‘soft’ but undervalued leadership style (Colgan & Ledwith, 1996). Standards of competence are generally male standards as men are in charge of selection processes and therefore assess competence and gender appropriateness (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2008). Further, Gharardi & Poggio (2001: 254) demonstrated how “to deliberately take up a female posture” and emphasise difference can also involve women's active subordination to men, so as not to be perceived as competitive and threatening and increase their chance of acceptance. Here, resistance and compliance are intertwined and complex; the women are reproducing discourses of female inferiority, but in ‘tactically’ using their gender for acceptance, this may be utilised to develop knowledge, gain experience or join networks that become more difficult when adopting masculine norms that may threaten male colleagues.

The third and arguably most dominant approach to promoting equity in organisations is a liberal structuralist approach (Cunningham & Sagas, 2008), that attempts to provide *equality of opportunity*, where the focus is on the structural constraints to women's advancement in organisations (Shaw & Frisby, 2006). This can be through enforcing equal terms, conditions of employment, non-discriminatory procedures, maternity rights, or providing childcare support, flexible work arrangements and career breaks (Colgan & Ledwith, 1996). This reflects a ‘women-friendly’ approach; in sport, organisations try to become ‘more accessible’ to women (Talbot, 2002). Policies such as the Sex Discrimination Act in the UK and Title IX in the USA are examples of attempts to eradicate inequity. Again however this liberal philosophy has failed in challenging systems of power – more women doesn’t challenge inequitable structures, as highlighted in the failures of Title IX to benefit the majority of sporting females as they had to accommodate to current (and male-defined) structures, policies and practices (eg Boutilier & SanGiovanni, 1994). ‘Equity’, even though predominantly used in policies, can be confused with ‘equality’, (Shaw & Penney, 2003). Hall (1996) outlines how ‘equality’ generally means ‘equality of opportunity’; ‘equity’ requires a more

comprehensive view that focuses on how systems need to change to accommodate under-represented groups. Shaw & Penney (2003) demonstrate how a policy by the English Sports Council (1997) set targets to increase girls' participation in sports (equality of opportunity), but defined this as 'equity', assuming that equal numbers would lead to equity. The reliance on simplistic quantitative outcomes such as target setting and the fact that policies are hierarchically imposed and therefore often have little meaning for individuals has limited the success of equality policies (Acker, 2000; Shaw & Penney, 2003). Deconstructing this language use can reveal the discourses underpinning policies and highlight potential tensions where alternatives can be developed. Further, in her examination of *The Equality Standard*, a UK Sport England policy, Shaw (2007) discovered that the limited individual involvement in equality policy creation was a particular drawback. Gendered practices and taken-for-granted assumptions renders the presence of women in non-traditional structures as "discrete and possibly invisible" (Gharardi & Poggio, 2001: 256); policies developed to challenge this without engaging with and encouraging women to contribute to equality are therefore unlikely to address the deeply-rooted discourse that affect women and other minority groups (Shaw, 2007). Talbot (2002) found that if elected onto sports committees, women faced continuing resistance to their inclusion and contributions, sometimes withdrawing from the system altogether; similarly Hovden (1999) discovered that Norwegian women in leadership and coaching posts were prevented from initiating change, instead leaving their posts. The belief that women cannot continue in their role preserves the 'male as norm' culture and male dominance remains self-regulating and very difficult to break down. The reluctance to involve women at all levels of the FA is considered a significant indication both the traditional strength of football as a male preserve and the resistance to fully acknowledge women as members of the football culture (Williams, 2004); the lack of female voice within the organisation of their own sport therefore widens the perceived gap between women's and men's football and attempts to improve gender equity are therefore predominantly undertaken from a male perspective.

The failure of these approaches to alter the gendering of organisations is largely due to the inability to challenge deeply entrenched gendered discourses that are both historically specific and culturally produced and reproduced through everyday practices. Shaw & Frisby (2006) support claims by Ely & Meyerson (2000) and Meyerson & Kolb (2000) that an alternative approach is required to challenge existing systems and sources

of power that reinforce and maintain existing gendered arrangements within organisations.

2.5.3 The Deconstruction of Gender Equity Policies in Sport: A Discourse-Based and Multi-Level Approach

Some organisational analyses have begun to draw upon the importance of discourse, power and the strength of 'assumed truths' to explore gender relations and equity policies (for example Aitchison, 2000; Britton, 2000; Gergen, 1992; Ely & Meyerson, 2000; Fielding-Lloyd & Meân, 2008; Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2008; Marshall, 2000; Meyerson & Kolb, 2000; Morley, 1995; Nentwich, 2006). Research has highlighted how both policy and practice can normalise masculine cultures in sports organisations, making them appear gender-neutral and "masking fundamental links between masculinity, power and leadership" that resist women's movement into leadership roles (Hovden, 2000b: 81). Shaw & Hoeber (2003) propose that discourses surrounding senior management tasks contain various gendered subtexts – jobs associated with women and femininity are often marginalised, with senior positions valorised and associated with discourses of masculinity. Further, Knoppers & Anthonissen (2008) attempt to use discourse to examine the complexity of how individuals make sense of their own roles, and how this involves a contradictory process of meaning-making. This encourages analysis' to place understandings within wider structural processes and move beyond simplistic assumptions and solutions towards an approach that disrupts the discourses and assumptions that make gendered hierarchies and practices appear normal (Shaw & Frisby, 2006). Research has demonstrated that this can be employed by making visible informal practices that appear gender neutral, deconstructing symbols of success and highlighting the 'public face' of organisations that can promote gender equity to be perceived as equitable, but requires little commitment to initiating change (Shaw & Frisby, 2006). For example, the commitment to gender equity by National Governing Bodies in the UK was found by Shaw & Penney (2003) to be "a largely financial exercise" (92) and "gender equity was only pursued because of the promise of funding" (93). In exploring the implications of such funding discourses, it can be demonstrated how equity policies with extrinsic rewards puts little value on committing to gender equity, and through being "outwardly perceived as being equitable" (Shaw & Frisby, 2006: 496), less attention can be paid to these issues as equity is demonstrate to have been achieved. Fielding-Lloyd & Meân (2008) highlight how in football, policies to

increase gender equity can be discursively constructed as inferior and sub-standard (to male standards). Deconstructing equality/equity policies can therefore help to establish why these policies have failed, and highlight avenues for change.

With regard to informal practices, it has been demonstrated that male networking groups are often significant closed and gendered circles (Colgan & Ledwith, 1996; Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2008) that exclude women and deny them valuable networking opportunities (Shaw & Frisby, 2006). This exclusion can restrict women's knowledge, which then contributes to a cyclic process as this lack of knowledge can be used to justify future exclusion (Connell, 1987). This is closely tied to the high value attached to masculine symbols of success, such as competition, control and conquest (Shaw & Frisby, 2006); gender is therefore symbolically conceived (Britton, 2000) and drawn upon to explain, express, reinforce or sometimes oppose gender divisions, for example how masculinity is linked with technical skill (Acker, 1990). Knoppers & Anthonissen (2008) found that discourses of instrumentality, availability and impression management worked together to exclude and suppress women and maintain male privilege, such as the value placed on toughness, job commitment and informal image codes – values that could be perceived as gender neutral and therefore attainable by women, yet when displayed and valued so highly by men, reinforce masculine dominance. Even stereotypically feminine values, such as empathy, a 'people orientation' and intimacy, were adopted by men and cemented their advantageous position as accommodating these behaviours as well as more masculine and authoritarian styles of management where required. The dominance of and value assigned to male symbols of success leaves women without a reference group; they learn male lessons, with little alternative, and management education and training can remain gender-blind (Colgan & Ledwith, 1996). Analyses of women's entry into sports coaching have highlighted similar issues; coaching education and practice is often orientated towards male needs and ideals (Fasting & Pfister, 2000; Fielding-Lloyd & Meân, 2008).

In working to deconstruct these assumptions, space for the development of new meanings can be created. 'Rules' that are produced through dominant discourses in organisations, which regulate behaviour and attitudes, can be analysed to demonstrate ambiguous and discursive construction, and encourage rethinking (Gherardi & Poggio, 2001). For example, the rationalisation of gender inequalities that draws upon the

historical privileging of men in sport – ‘that’s just the way it is’ (Shaw & Frisby, 2006) – can be reconstructed as a socially constructed privilege rather than an inherent feature of sport. This can then provide space for challenge and resistance. Organisational research has begun to demonstrate how the ‘doing’ of gender – the ways in which behaviours are given gendered meanings thus (re)producing gender differences during interactions – can be exposed and therefore be ‘undone’ and challenged (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2008). Intervention research from this perspective is however still rare, and dominantly remains at the theoretical level (Nentwich, 2006); but the focus on deconstructing and the potential challenges this may pose to the deeply-rooted gendered practices within organisations has been clearly demonstrated.

A significant recent development in organisational literature, particularly relevant to this study, is the call for multi-level research, in contrast to what is often a focus on either the macro (structural and institutional forces) or micro (individual behaviours and understandings) level of organisations yet failing to acknowledge the interconnectedness of the two (Cunningham & Sagas, 2008). The meso level has been acknowledged as an area where organisational policies and practices can structure both wider structures and individual behaviours, such as Shaw’s (2006) examination of gendered social processes within national sporting governing bodies in UK. It was found that informal networking, dress codes and the use of humour all served to privilege men and masculinity within sport organisations. Knoppers & Anthonissen (2008) discuss the need to move away from the previous focus on the individual level that explores individual differences between men and women in organisations but also to progress beyond liberal feminist work that see women as deficient, assuming gender neutrality, and cultural feminist work that assume differences that can bring added value to male dominated organisations. Shaw & Frisby (2006) have shown that gender not only shapes identities but is also an axis of power that plays influential role in interactions, structures and processes of sport organisations. It has been highlighted above how work in this area has begun to recognise that strategies and policies designed to shatter the glass ceiling of managerial work do not take into account the multiplicity of discourses and their contextualisation may therefore be destined to fail (Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2008). The interconnectedness of discourses provide the strength to the maintenance of masculinity in sports organisations – targeting one area in isolation is unlikely to have an impact as it is the multiplicity and overlaps that strengthens the gendering of organisations, and the combination of both policy and practice. Individual actions within

wider discourses that legitimise and reinforce masculinity are played out in every day interactions, behaviours and understandings, and it is through multi-level analyses of sports organisations that these interactions can be exposed and the potential to challenges oppressive situations for women lie.

2.6 Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of some of the developments and progressions made in the study of gender and sport; developments that have been important for the study of women in football. Early socialisation theories underpinned beliefs that girls and women did not play football because they were 'taught' appropriate behaviours and channelled into alternative and more 'feminine' activities. This however proposes a rigid developmental model that has no flexibility to account for the role of the individual. As a critique to this, understanding sporting structures as male-dominated and patriarchal began to criticise these structures, and suggested that practical and material barriers existed and should be challenged, such as an increase in opportunities. The liberal agenda has been successful in increasing opportunities for girls and women to play football, but research has continued to demonstrate that gendered and exclusionary practices remain. Recent developments in feminist thought, particularly in organisational studies, has however directed attention to the discourses that structure sport, and both constrain and enable women and involve multiple and shifting relations of power rather than a fixed notion of 'male dominance'. The next chapter will further this discussion by placing these developments and their applications to sport and football within the broad theoretical framework of feminism and attempt to position the study within current theoretical debates.

¹¹ Second-wave feminism is largely referred to as the political drive for improvements in women's experiences (see for example Hirschmann, 2007). The early second-wave feminist movement focused on demands for treatment the same as men; however this did not challenge structures such as the sexual division of labour, and led feminists to question the meaning of 'equality'. As a result, two dominant strands emerged – difference feminism, which suggested that 'equality had to be focused on substance and outcome' rather than procedure, and equality feminism, that continued the drive for women's entitlement to the same opportunities as men (149). These developments are related to sport in the following chapter.

¹² Messner (2000, 2002) highlights the significance of Barbie as a cultural icon that is demonstrative of 'girl power' but within the boundaries of emphasised femininity. Barbie as not just a 'girls toy', but a cultural symbol that epitomises what it is to 'be feminine'. Both girls and boys understand this, and Barbie is dominantly understood as a 'girls toy'. Even when Barbie crosses gender boundaries and adopts 'less feminine' roles such as fire fighter or soldier, she is still the ultimate model of emphasised femininity – children, parents, teachers and the company who market the toy, Mattel, understand this (Rogers, 1999).

¹³ Physical Education teachers in the study by Brown & Rich (2002: 86) reported "being in, taking, and assigning gendered positions according to the context within which they found themselves" and this 'gendered positioning' fitted into rather than challenged the gender order within school sport.

¹⁴ 'Compulsory heterosexuality' as an organising principle is useful in demonstrating the normalisation of heterosexuality and the reproduction and legitimisation of gender difference (eg Sunderland, 2004), but has been subject to criticism – see for example Smith (1996). Hollway's (1984) 'heterosexuality discourses' may be more applicable in the current climate of feminism as it draws in part on post-structural theory, with the recognition of the self as continually constituted and recognising the constitutive value of discourse (Sunderland, 2004).

¹⁵ In a self-written magazine article, Suzy Whaley, the first female golfer to take part in a PGA tour, explains why she decided to compete: "I have a chance to make history - that's huge... But my main goal - besides having a little fun - is to inspire young women to play anywhere they want to, to try out for any team they want to be on, whether it's a boys' or girls' team" (Whaley, 2003). It has been proposed by some feminists that if female athletes, like Suzy Whaley, can be successful in 'breaking through' in male sporting structures, their increased visibility may be particularly significant in the attempts to improve the position of women in sport.

¹⁶ Luton Town FC is a professional male football club that currently plays in the Championship, which is one division below the elite level Premier League in England. Female officials occasionally act as a referee's assistant at this level, but a woman would not take complete control of (referee) a men's game at this level.

¹⁷ Pete Davies (1997) provides an insightful examination of life as a Doncaster Belles player in the 1990s, with reference to both the advantages and the disadvantages of their (at the time) independent status.

CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

As the research is aiming to discover and analyse the experiences of women, a broad feminist theoretical framework will be applied to enable the voices of women to be expressed and understood away from the constraints of mainstream male-dominated research. This will allow for an exploration of the way gendered discourses came to impact both the structure of women's football, and the experiences of women within. Using this as a basis, the extent to which women experience inequalities within these contexts can be explored. Despite variances within this theoretical position, broadly speaking feminists share a commitment towards changing inequalities. By assessing the extent to which these exist for female footballers, this research will be driven by this commitment to improve the experiences of women and girls. Further, the chapter will outline some recent developments in organisational theory that hold significant value to the study of women's experiences within football as a wider organisational structure.

Dominant assumptions of feminism in relation to sport focus on inequalities constituted via gendered discourses that are strongly associated with masculine dominance. In addition they highlight how women's experiences in sport are impacted by gendered discourses associated with biological assumptions explaining their 'natural' position as inferior in sport. Historically women have been excluded from sport and fitness activities, justified by the notion that women lack the necessary physical strength to fully participate in sport (Sabo, 1988). Assumptions of biological difference between the sexes leads to claims that men are *naturally* more aggressive, more competitive, and therefore better at sports than women (Hargreaves, 1994), assumptions that serve to maintain male domination of sport and limit women's opportunities.

3.2 Developments Within Feminist Theory

Although different strands of feminism vary according to their theoretical and epistemological position, broadly speaking, they share a commitment to challenge inequality. However, as feminist research has developed and grown, different feminist positions have emerged due to conflict surrounding the definitions of terms such as

oppression and where the source of this lies (Scruton & Flintoff, 2002), as well as how best to address the problems and advocate change. The recognition within feminism that gender relations are not static or rigid structures in society but fluid, dynamic and variable both within and between social situations makes the idea of one universal theory that effectively covers all 'women' problematic and unrealistic. These different feminist positions can therefore be more or less useful in relation to different areas and issues; no one theory is more 'right' than another and all make a significant contribution to understanding the position and experiences of women in society. Although treated as such here, the different strands are not broad categories that are simply defined. Furthermore, there are no clear boundaries between these differing feminist positions, as between them they have many overlaps. Different perspectives can also become juxtaposed in varying ways, resulting in a situation where 'naming' one particular approach is impossible for researchers and a 'hybrid' of positions is available (Haraway, 1991).

The historical development of feminism can be linked to when and why different strands of feminism emerged, and this can be understood by conceptualising the development of feminism as involving 'waves' of theory (Scruton & Flintoff, 2002), each building on the ideas and work of the previous one(s) but providing a supplement, not a replacement. These will be addressed below in relation to their influence on the study of gender and sport, women's experiences of football, and their relevance to this particular study of women within the structure of football.

3.2.1 Liberal Feminism

Early feminist thought grew out of demands for women to have equal rights to those that men held 'naturally' in society, and modern liberal feminism therefore focused on equality of access and opportunity (Lloyd, 2005). This approach aims to improve the position of women in society via changes in the law and educational practices. Liberal feminists "advocate for women's greater involvement in social life by enhancing their opportunities to join existing structures" (Thompson, 2002: 109), searching for solutions within a male-dominated society and arguing that change has to be achieved from within existing structures. Underlying these aims is the belief that women should have the same access as men to education, public and professional lives on the basis of their sameness (Weedon, 1999). Arguing for sameness attempts to challenge notions that women are

biologically different and therefore inferior to men, notions that rationalise women's exclusion from a variety of different spheres, including sport.

It is important to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the liberal agenda in sport, as it is an arena where liberal attitudes are still firmly embedded in sporting 'ideals'. Crosset (1995: 217) suggests that "implicit in modern sport is a liberal philosophy – equality of opportunity and just rewards for hard-won success". In a liberal feminist approach to sport, the underlying assumption is that sport represents a positive experience that women and girls need access to, and inequality problems are a result of socialisation into sport and discriminatory practices within sporting structures (Scruton & Flintoff, 2002). For example, the family and the school are important in socialising girls into 'feminine' activities, constructing gender differences (see section 2.2). Liberal feminism is based on the humanist ontological position that men and women are more alike than different, but their lives are socially constructed differently, and society erects barriers that restrict their equal participation in society (Birrell, 2000). In removing these barriers, women will regain the opportunities to participate equally that are their inherent right. Public law is seen as an area to change not only opportunities and access but also private attitudes (Coast & Guthrie, 1994) and hence liberal feminists strive to change laws that highlight unequal rights for men and women.

In achieving positive change for women in sport, the liberal agenda has arguably been the most visibly successful (and accepted) of the different ways in which to improve their position. Feminists have worked hard to ensure that more sports are now accessible to more women, fighting for easier access and better facilities, improved funding and rewards and equal rights with men and boys under the law (Hall, 1996). The growing participation rates of girls and women in 'traditionally male' sports such as football is an example of the broadening sporting opportunities currently available to females. It has been argued for example that since the passing of Title IX in the USA¹⁸, there has been a vast improvement in the sporting opportunities and resources available to girls and women in school and higher education institutions (Boutilier & SanGiovanni, 1994; Acosta & Carpenter, 2008). Football ('soccer') in particular emerged a strong beneficiary of Title XI as "physical yet not violent, athletically demanding but not requiring exceptional size, bulk or upper-body strength, it was constructed as a sport suitable for women and an acceptable outdoor female team sport to balance male

football programmes¹⁹” (Henry & Comeaux, 1999: 278), and participation levels rose rapidly (Cole, 2000). A tension begins to emerge here regarding the appropriateness of certain sports for women. Title IX did not succeed in opening up all sporting spaces to women, and soccer is here described as ‘acceptable’ due to its perceived contrast to more physical American sports that require greater strength and musculature that remain strongly male-dominated contexts despite legislation to improve gender equity.

This early feminist work is valuable in the rejection of biological differences, as well as for documenting distributive inequalities between men’s and women’s sports (Scruton & Flintoff, 2002). Also, many questions raised by liberal feminists remain in the current sporting climate – private clubs still have policies which discriminate against women, most overtly golf clubs (eg Crosset, 1995), and women are still greatly under-represented in decision-making positions in sport (Hall, 1996). However although liberal feminism has been very influential in challenging existing sports policy, its foundations are today considered outdated.

Despite liberal gains in providing access to sport for more women and girls, critics have questioned “the weakness of the concept of equality in accepting the gender-linked values of mainstream sport while failing to acknowledge or understand broader structures of power” (Scruton et al, 1999: 99). The fundamental aim of feminism to achieve equality of opportunity is flawed by its mere nature, particularly on its quantitative rather than qualitative focus (Hargreaves, 1994). In assuming that women can achieve equitable experiences in sport, this approach unquestioningly accepts men’s sports practices and organisation (Scruton & Flintoff, 2002), failing to acknowledge the gendered discourses that restrict women’s experience of and progress within sport. Simply ‘adding’ more women to existing social contexts does not challenge deep-rooted and gendered structures or dominant feminine and masculine norms (Weedon, 1999). These problems are highlighted in the failures of Title IX to benefit the majority of sporting females (Boutilier & SanGiovanni, 1994). Reasons for this are discussed further below. Claims that mixed sports may represent an empowering alternative form of women’s involvement in athletics (Hargreaves, 1994) and challenge sexism at its roots (Messner & Sabo, 1994) remain unfulfilled (Henry & Comeaux, 1999). Also the male-dominated administration of sports clubs and organisations failed women regarding equality of opportunity as private clubs are outside equal opportunity legislation and

discrimination is allowed to continue (Scruton & Flintoff, 2002). Decision-making positions in sport are dominated by men, and in realising the importance of this, it is apparent that they are unlikely to pass changes in sport legislation that will threaten their 'male preserve' (Bryson, 1987). Finally, liberal feminism has been criticised for treating women as a homogeneous category, without recognising that there are enormous differences in background that lead to different expectations and experiences in sport (Hall, 1996), and require different types of intervention to improve their position.

3.2.2 Radical Feminism

A more radical approach to feminist thought developed out of the politics of the late 1960s that directed an increasing amount of criticism at the oppressive structures and processes that existed in North American society (Hall, 1990). Radical feminists are concerned with how women are controlled in work, sport, leisure and schooling and how their oppression is linked to underlying structural power relations (Scruton & Flintoff, 2002), believing that male domination forms the basis of all social organisations. Because of this, they believe that it is not enough to simply add more women to existing structures, as it is these structures that perpetuate gendered ideologies and marginalise women. This perspective criticises the liberal notion of sameness, arguing that women's differences should become the primary focus of analysis, and attempts to elude patriarchy by suggesting that women should have nothing to do with men (Weedon, 1999).

For these reasons radical feminists are critical of liberal attempts to improve the position of women in sport, arguing that increasing the numbers of women in sport does nothing to challenge its male-dominated nature (Thompson, 2002) and hence sexist, oppressive and derogatory practices continue to prevail. For example, Title IX aimed to remove inequalities in North American school and college sport by prohibiting discriminatory practices, and as a result there was a vast improvement in the sporting opportunities and resources available to girls and women (Boutilier & SanGiovanni, 1994). However the Act had no potential to transform the structures and processes of sport, and as a result females were expected to accommodate the current structures, policies and practices of the institution (Boutilier & SanGiovanni, 1994). In recognising these limitations of liberal feminism, a more radical approach recognises the need for a restructuring of sport as it currently exists.

Radical feminists analyse the role of sport in the social construction of male dominance and female submission, and how power over women is maintained within and through sport (Scruton & Flintoff, 2002). This can include the objectification of women's bodies, particularly by the media in their portrayal and coverage of female athletes. Radical feminists also examine the existence of lesbianism and homophobia in sport, and how lesbians in sport are considered deviant as a result of heterosexuality being normalised as the only legitimate form of sexuality, to the extent that it permeates society as 'compulsory' (Rich, 1980). Scruton & Flintoff (2002) suggest that sexuality is centralised as a major site of men's domination, through the construction and legitimisation of heterosexuality. Through being defined as the norm, this becomes the only 'legitimate' form of sexuality and acts as a form of social control by normalising and naturalising heterosexuality and suppressing all other forms.

One might argue that all feminists researching sport and physical activity strive to improve the situation of women in sport. From a position of radical feminism, the current model of sport (the male model) oppresses women who attempt to enter this model. From this perspective, a challenge can only be achieved through establishing autonomous leagues and clubs outside state-controlled sport systems (Hall, 1990) or 'radically' changing existing sporting organisations (Thompson, 2002). Changing the nature of the way that sport is played can also allow women to experience sport without male-dominated values; a lesbian softball league analysed by Lenskyj (1994) aimed to achieve this by being constructed around enjoyment, sharing experiences and learning new skills without the emphasis on winning at any cost that can permeate male sport. Yet a completely new structure of sport is an unrealistic aim and for many women, to experience sport is to become involved in its current structure. Clubs can be established within current structures that create and maintain their own traditions and values - Hargreaves (1994) cites a London netball team as an example of a club that organises their play along explicit feminist principles of fun, play, recreation and participation. This is a pertinent issue for women in football, as any attempts to develop alternative values away from male norms remain within established structures that are focused around competition and achievement. These issues are revisited throughout thesis, with some implications considered in chapter nine.

Whilst valuable in recognising the shortcomings of liberal feminism and critiquing its idealist, positivist and functionalist view of sport (Hall, 1990), radical feminism has limited application due to its naivety and emphasis on biological differences between the sexes. Radical feminists fail to recognise the complexity of women's experiences and ignore the wider structural forces that act to maintain the male-dominated nature of sport. In championing the differences between men and women, these differences are portrayed as fixed and universally accepted, maintaining dualisms such as male/female and mind/body, dualisms that are hierarchically constructed (Weedon, 1999). Further, understanding patriarchy as an external and fixed structure outside of women's experience not only underestimates the complexity of gender relations but in the context of this study, treating males and females as homogenous 'powerful' and 'powerless' categories respectively "is to oversimplify a more complex reality in which some men have played more limited, but nonetheless important roles in the development of women's soccer" (Liston, 2006: 373). Despite these limitations, radical perspectives on separation and integration in sport in general and football in particular continue to be contentious issues regarding the future of the sport as becoming closer to or distanced from existing structures (see for example Williams 2003, 2004).

3.2.3 Marxist Feminism

Grounded in traditional Marxist beliefs, this strand of feminism places primary emphasis on the role of class relations and how oppression of groups in society is fundamentally economic (Birrell, 2002). Therefore gender inequalities are seen as derived from capitalism, class and economic exploitation (Scruton & Flintoff, 2002), with Marxist feminist believing that gender equity is not possible in a society where wealth and power are in the hands of an elite ruling class. Whereas radical feminists claim that sexism and female oppression has its roots in biology, Marxist feminists believe that ideas about sexual difference are socially constructed and therefore differ in different societies (Hargreaves, 1994). When applied to sport, Marxist feminists argue that it maintains and promotes class conflict and economic inequalities that prevail in wider society (Costa & Guthrie, 1994) and is heavily related to industrialist capitalism (Hall, 1990). John Hargreaves (1986) criticises feminist work that gives primacy to gender over class, claiming that working-class involvement in sport reproduces gender divisions by being built around men.

A major concern for Marxist feminists is how women are oppressed through the sexual division of labour (eg Connell, 1987), and specifically how a capitalist society benefits from women's unpaid labour including domestic responsibilities, caring for male labourers and maintaining the future labour force in their children (Scruton & Flintoff, 2002). Men are characterised by being engaged in production, in contrast to women who are engaged in *reproduction*, not just biologically through reproducing children and a future work force but domestically by reproducing the necessities to maintain and refresh the male worker (Birrell, 2000). In essence, women's oppression is maintained through keeping them outside the systems of paid labour. The sporting world contributes to this oppression by employing and exploiting women as a work force in a variety of ways. This includes women not only as athletes producing a sports product sold by the media as entertainment, but also producing sports equipment such as trainers and clothes in third world sweat shops, for example by Nike (see for example Sage, 1999).

Earlier work adopting this approach has been important in revealing the sexual division of labour, as even when in employment, women still encountered problems such as a lack of time and energy due to fitting this around further unpaid domestic labour. For example, Deem (1986) produced a Marxist-informed analysis of the restrictions faced by women wishing to participate in leisure. Many of the constraints were found to be related to the economic situation of the women, including having no access to private transport, an independent source of money or employment, and problems with childcare.

As gender oppression is considered to be derivative of class oppression (Scruton & Flintoff, 2002), Marxist feminists argue that only when class inequalities are removed can women's oppression be addressed and challenged. This is where the theory has been heavily criticised, as it removes any possibility of the individual or groups improving their subordinated position in society and discounts progress that has been made by feminist advocacy. Also, the traditional roots of Marxism will always privilege social class and capitalism over gender (Hartmann, 1981), and women are viewed as passive objects "duped into meeting the needs of capitalism" (Messner, 1988: 198) creating a simplistic explanation that fails to recognise the complexity of women's position in society. Socialist feminism²⁰ attempts to provide a synthesis between the narrow focus of both Marxist and radical feminism by recognising both class and gender as mutually supporting systems of oppression, with neither having clear dominance. This builds on

the work by Marxist feminists on the sexual division of labour, by analysing the role of women within patriarchal systems of oppression. A good example of work within this framework is by Thompson (1994) in her research on the challenge of New Zealand women "to the patriarchy, capitalism and white supremacy symbolised by the dominance of rugby in their country". The women withdrew the domestic labour servicing rugby such as catering for visiting teams, caring for uniforms and "attending to injured bodies and egos" (215) to protest against the power of rugby in their lives. This study is influential in highlighting how gender, class and race are inter-related and cannot be studied in isolation; therefore they should be analysed within a framework that recognises the importance of each of these areas and their complex dynamics. However socialist feminism has also been criticised for minimal attempts to guide advocacy, as it is accepted that change can only occur if patriarchal forms of cultural life are challenged, such as enforced heterosexuality, the nuclear family and polarised sex roles (Boutilier & SanGiovanni, 1994) alongside challenges to capitalist structures.

3.2.4 Feminist Cultural Studies

Feminist cultural studies emerged following increasing interest in the dynamic nature of gendered power relations (Birrell, 2000) and in response to massive cultural changes in post-war Britain (Cole, 1994). Theoretically it is underpinned by the assumption that power is distributed inequitably throughout society, often along lines of race, class, gender, age or sexual preference, and power not a fixed entity but is constantly challenged and contested (Birrell, 2000). It is grounded in the assumption that cultural practices are areas where values, meanings and ideologies are contested (Therberge & Birrell, 1994). An important part of this is the way ideologies are promoted and contested to maintain power, with a key concern the active role played by cultural and ideological practices to reproduce or transform existing social formations (Bennett, 1981 cited in Hall, 1990). Ideology is a set of ideas that work to serve the interests of the dominant group but come to be understood and taken up as 'societal common sense' about the way things 'naturally' are and should therefore remain (Therberge & Birrell, 1994: 327). Related to this and also central to feminist cultural studies is the notion of hegemony, concerning the control of cultural dominance and the maintenance of power and privilege. The culture-power relationship is however complex and continually shifting (Cole, 1994) as although ideology and hegemony are powerful forces of control,

hegemony is never complete and is therefore open to challenge and resistance by subordinated groups.

The relationship between the individual, ideology and power relations has been applied to the study of gender and sport, as it is an arena where masculine hegemony is promoted and preserved. Within the feminist cultural studies framework, sport can be analysed as a site of struggle and contest between various competing interests. Messner (1988) argues that organised sport has been a crucial arena of ideological contest in terms of relations of power between men and women. Birrell (1988) identified four themes central to this study of sport, which are still as evident today. These themes are the production of an ideology of masculinity and male power through sport; the media practices which reproduce dominant notions of women; physicality, sexuality and the body as sites for defining gender relations; and the resistance of women to dominant sport practices (cited in Birrell, 2000).

The ideology of male power and its production through sport is explored in detail by Messner (1988), describing how organised sports became a primary means of bolstering a faltering ideology of male superiority in the 20th century, and that this male dominance is maintained in a variety of ways. Certain sports provide support for male dominance by linking maleness with highly valued physical skills and the legitimised use of aggression and violence, positioning males as naturally superior to females (Bryson, 1994). This ideology is further bolstered by continued attempts to resist the entry of women into sport, through the patriarchal fear that women will spoil one of the few remaining male preserves (Birrell & Therberge, 1994a; Dunning, 1986). Bryson (1994) describes how masculine hegemony is maintained through men defining sport as male, controlling women's sport directly, and ignoring, trivialising and sexualising women's sport, strengthening male solidarity. The media play an important role in trivialising female sport and reinforcing dominant ideologies of both men and women (see section 2.2.4). This is evident in the lack of coverage given to female sports, and the type of coverage that they do receive. Pirinen (1997: 239) in her examination of the media treatment of female athletes in five 'traditionally male' sports, argues that media texts can be seen "both as an embodiment of specific discourses that constitute gender relations in sport, and as a social practice that reproduces these discourses". Women participants were portrayed as 'less' and 'other' than their male counterparts and sexually objectifying

women athletes (247). The media therefore contribute to culture-power relationships by reproducing male dominance in sport.

Although the material already discussed paints a bleak picture of the position of women in sport, power relations are never uncontested, and feminist cultural studies highlights how women can resist and pose a challenge to dominant sports practices. Yet there is also a complexity to this, as dominant forces 'resist resistance' (Birrell & Therberge, 1994b: 365) and the struggle for power continues. Researchers have studied this in relation to attempts by women to partake in 'traditionally male' sports and activities. Miller & Penz (1991) examined female bodybuilders and concluded that they have managed to 'colonise' this traditionally male preserve by redefining aspects of the sport as 'feminine', renegotiating the dominant masculine meanings of the sport. Female bodybuilders therefore present a threat not only to the male dominance of the sport but also traditional understandings of gender, whilst at the same time reinforcing traditional notions of femininity through the over-use of make-up, nail polish and hair products (Obel, 1996). This struggle for power in the sport is clearly a complex one full of contradictions and paradoxes. This is particularly relevant in the study of female footballers, as simply by participating in a sport that is dominated by men, masculinity and physicality is challenging gender stereotypes and attempting to shift the power balance away from men, yetn their participation is resisted by the dominant group wishing to maintain football as a 'male preserve'.

During the mid to late 1980s, there was an ontological and epistemological shift away from attempts to ground knowledge in any form of 'reality', proclaiming that pursuit of the truth is futile as there can be no one or whole truth to explain complex social phenomena. Feminists were initially sceptical (and many maintain theses reservations) about post-modernism and its political implications, as with no claim to truth and no apparent means to ground knowledge about women's lives, its potential for transformation and emancipation seemed limited (Francis & Skelton, 2001). The rise of post-modernism was seen by some as a 'crisis' in philosophical thought, with concerns that acknowledging multiple realities and identities could result in endless deconstructions and relativism. However feminists began to recognise the potential of this recent shift in thinking, viewing post-modernism as a challenge rather than a crisis, with many useful tools and refreshing new perspectives on identity, subjectivity,

multiplicity and dynamic power relations (Lather, 1991). One can identify what is being referred to as third-wave feminism into feminist research, which is an alternative to previous modernist theories critiqued for their constricting nature and inability to fully account for the complexities inherent in women's lives. Third-wave feminism should be considered not as a replacement to the revolutionary work undertaken by second-wave feminists, but as a progression, an attempt to move feminist thought and understanding towards the complexities of "shifting bases of oppression in relation to the multiple, interpenetrating axis of identity" and the political implications of these understandings (Heywood & Drake, 1997: 3).

3.2.5 Feminist Postmodernism and Post-structuralism

Postmodernism is largely referred to as the large cultural shift away from modernism; post-structuralism is understood here as the working out of this shift within academic theory (Lather, 1991). The emergence of post-modern studies challenged traditional ways of thinking, decentring the notion of truth by proclaiming that there is no universal truth, just different versions of reality (Birrell, 2000). This framework also moved away from a focus on wider structures of power – such as hegemonic masculinities and patriarchy as organising structures – to individualised accounts sensitive to multiplicity of meanings (Scruton et al, 1999) and more focused on the deconstruction of widely accepted discourses and practices (Weedon, 1999).

Post-structuralism is, like feminism, not a unified or fixed theory, but made up of a variety of often competing ideas concerning the nature of reality, and the researcher is left to utilise those aspects that are most appropriate to them (Finlayson & Valentine, 2002). It focuses on an analysis of social meanings, power and individual consciousness and how these are constructed through representations, language and discourse (Birrell, 2000). The deconstruction of identity disrupts traditional binary thinking that has dominated recent Western thought, such as male/female, nature/culture, mind/body, sex/gender and biological/cultural (Cole, 1994). These binaries have been criticised as they always result in a favouring of one side of the dualism, such as the domination of reason over irrationality, and hence, men over women. Gender is viewed as culturally constructed and maintained, and the assumptions that sex, gender and sexuality follow a fixed pattern can be deconstructed (Butler, 1990). Femininity and masculinity are not opposites that belong solely to female and male respectively. As a result, post-

structuralists conclude that many different subjectivities around 'femininity' and 'masculinity' are made available and variously taken up, even simultaneously and in contradictory ways (eg Cox & Thompson, 2000). Further, gendered identities, subjectivities and female sporting bodies have become the focus of research, as sites of contestation (eg Obel, 1996). In relation to gender and sport, this is useful in explaining how women may be variously positioned in different discourses of gender, as a feature of negotiating the difficulties surrounding their participation in sport, especially when their femininity can come into question. Halbert (1997) discusses how female athletes combine the masculine attributes required in boxing with a variety of 'feminine enhancing' strategies to manage their identity, disrupting binary oppositions of masculinity/femininity and demonstrating the potentially transgressive forms of sporting femininities.

Post-structuralism has been of use to feminists in identifying the multi-directional links between discourse, language, power and knowledge, and challenging previous ways of thinking about these phenomena. A discourse is a way of speaking, thinking or writing that presents particular relationships as self-evidently true, and within a particular discourse, only certain things can be said or thought (Paechter, 2001). Discourses structure the way we think about things, and although different discourses exist at any one time, and to avoid slipping into absolute relativism where all 'truths' or realities are equally valid, some discourses are more powerful than others, with dominant discourses reflecting particular values and interests of the dominant group (see for example Weedon, 1987). Power is important within post-structuralism, as discourses are intimately bound up with power relations, but also power is relational, inscribed in society and constantly shifting (Paechter, 2001). Within these theoretical frameworks it is generally considered that where there is power, there may also be potential for resistance; power can come from below as well as above, as groups interact within but also in opposition to dominant discourses. This is of particular use to feminists, in assuming that power is never totalised or unidirectional. Knowledge is associated with power, as dominant discourses can be taken as 'common-sense', to the extent that they become naturalised – such as the equations between masculinity and those attributes required for success in sport. Finally, all of these features are bound together with language; language gives meaning to discourses, as outside common language between groups they can have no meaning (Weedon, 1987).

Utilising this perspective, a more complex appropriation of the role of women in sport has been proposed by some feminists to view the involvement of women in certain kinds of activities as simultaneously enabling and constraining (Paechter, 2001). Aerobics is one of the few physical activities in which women are encouraged unequivocally to participate, but many feminists have criticised it for "maintaining dominant ideologies of women's powerlessness and sexual commodification" (Collins, 2002: 85). Women's physical activity in this sense is promoted as a way to attain the 'ideal' feminine body, and therefore sexual attractiveness (Therberge, 1985). As previously discussed, women bodybuilders limit their potential to challenge the male-dominance of the sport by continuing to conform with ideal notions of femininity regarding how they manage their body, limiting their muscular development (Obel, 1996), yet many gain a great deal of emancipation and feelings of power through the sport (Heywood & Dworkin, 2003). An understanding of this complexity allows an analysis of not only how women conform to ideals but also debates concerning the structure and agency of such practices, and how they can attempt to deviate from norms and challenge gendered arrangements yet continue to practice within the constraints of normative femininity and masculinity. Further, a the 'lived messiness characteristic' of third wave feminism is an attempt by some feminists to incorporate differing aspects of identity that can be both experienced and resisted and celebrated and abhorred simultaneously (Heywood & Drake, 1997: 8). In relation to female sporting identities, this encourages a movement beyond understandings of men and masculinity as oppressive symbols of patriarchal structures towards a more complex appropriation of female identities that can be 'male-identified'. This involves finding a way to understand that masculine and feminine identities do not have to be in conflict (eg Cox et al, 1997).

However, in accepting that there is no universal truth and their emphasis on deconstruction, post-structuralists have been criticised for the potential to lose sight of what they are trying to analyse and exactly how their analysis can hold transformative responsibilities if the objects of their study are nothing more than social constructions. Cole (1994) highlights this as a crisis of post-modern work due to the destabilisation of the object of knowledge. Associated with this is the meaning of 'difference'. Although the post-structuralists recognise differences within as well as between the sexes, the issue can be complicated depending how far difference is acknowledged. McLennan

(1992) discusses how several issues make it difficult to incorporate feminism and post-modernist ideas. Relativist lines of enquiry reject notions of objectivism, allowing feminists to oppose male-biased theories as objectivist and misrepresenting reality. Yet on the other hand relativism is discounted in their claims that feminist knowledge is superior to male knowledge and representative of the experiences of women, leading to a 'feminist objectivism' that does not fit with post-modern thought. In focusing on variance of experience and negotiating the problems women face in managing their gender, feminists should also take care not to disregard the influence of wider gendered systems of power and control that can play a major role in influencing women's experiences of sport.

3.3 Feminism, Women and Football: Positioning the Study

As previously outlined, this study aims to use a broad feminist framework in an attempt to take into account the different discourses that impact the experiences of women involved in football. Developments within feminist theory are useful in assessing the complicated position of women in a sport that has been traditionally hostile to their involvement, that females are playing in increasing numbers, yet are still significantly under-represented in decision-making and leadership roles (see for example Fielding-Lloyd & Meân, 2008; Williams, 2003). Due to the power of historically specific discourses, women have been traditionally excluded and subordinated in sport, particularly those activities closely associated with masculinity. Different aspects of feminist thought will be helpful in the attempt to analyse this complex positioning in relation to the structure of football in which they are involved. In particular, the success (in terms of participation figures) of the liberal feminist approach in increasing the numbers of females involved in football overlaps yet contrasts sharply with radical calls for separatism that highlight the marginalised position women hold in traditionally male sports, due to perceptions of difference and therefore inferiority (see chapter two). The study must attempt to find space within these debates to assess the current position of women in football and their potential to challenge existing gendered arrangements.

3.3.1 Liberal and Radical Approaches to Sameness and Difference

As discussed above, early developments in feminist thought were particularly significant in debates surrounding how women could be understood and wish to be treated as either

the same or different to men (Bacchi, 1990). These debates are however still pertinent to the role women play within the traditionally male-dominated sport of football. Williams (2003: 104) states that women's football "is at once similar to men's football and different", which is supported by widely contrasting views of women footballers in her research as to whether women and men play the same sport. As discussed above, gains women and girls have made in traditionally male sports such as football have been as a result of liberal advances. Liberal ideals challenge discourses of inherent biological difference that are so often associated with female inferiority, in an attempt to open up spaces for women to be given equal access. In terms of women's football, the equality of opportunity discourse has been strongly evident throughout its development as women have fought, both individually and collectively, to be given 'the same' rights as men to participate in football (see for example Lopez, 1997; Williams & Woodhouse, 1991; Williams, 2003). Policy changes that have recognised this, such as the lifting of the 1921 ban by the FA, could be perceived from this perspective as breaking down barriers that have prevented women and girls from playing football. The liberal agenda, based upon discourses of sameness, has been considered successful therefore in opening football up to women and girls.

However the radical feminist perspective would criticise the liberal gains made by women in football as superficial and failing to fundamentally challenge the deeply gendered structure and culture of the sport. Research has demonstrated how affirmative action policies have been problematic in the highly masculinised context of English football as they fail to address discourses underlying organisational definitions and practices (Fielding-Lloyd & Meân, 2008; discussed in section 2.3.6). Williams (2003: 13) questions the appropriateness of the liberal agenda for the development of women's football, stating that "the story of recent expansion is unthreatening to the football authorities is unthreatening to the football authorities because an increase in the number of players has yet to alter the essentially amateur nature of women's football". In the football context, it is apparent that there exists a conflicting and at times contradictory relationship between understandings of sameness and difference. Expressions of gender difference in approaches to the sport are combined with the desire for wanting to be taken seriously in the same way as men and boys are (Williams, 2003). Cox and Thompson (2000) demonstrated how women used their bodies to accentuate gender difference in certain contexts, but also used physicality whilst playing the sport. Scraton

et al (1999) found that female footballers used positive differentiation in assigning different values to their football experiences, such as participation and enjoyment. However 'alternative' values such as these are often used to trivialise women's sports as inferior versions of 'real' (men's) sports (see for example Therberge (1997, 2002) in relation to women's ice hockey). To indicate how discourses of sameness and difference can be combined, Nentwich (2006) suggested that women in work organisations often emphasised gender differences when considering any problems, but sameness when discussing their future aspirations. It is important therefore to acknowledge both liberal and radical perspectives in analysing the complex position(s) that women hold within the sport and the wider structures that they are a part of.

Tied closely to discourses of sameness and difference is the issue of integration and separation. Again, liberal and radical feminist positions draw upon opposing discourses with regards to this issue. Liberal ideals emphasise sameness between the sexes, and therefore propose that women should work towards making opportunities for themselves within existing sporting structures. Critics of this highlight that despite the success in increasing the numbers of women participating in sport, this involves integrating women into existing structures and the (often unquestioning) acceptance of male defined norms and values (Thompson, 2002). However more radical separatist structures for women to participate in sport not only limit the potential for women to challenge these male-defined norms, but particularly in highly visible and culturally powerful sports such as football, separatist experiences are very difficult to achieve. Indeed, in relation to football, Williams (2003) suggests that separation is not something that female players feel that they would like, as they want to achieve and be recognised within existing structures. As discussed in relation to sameness and difference above, it is important to understand how both radical and liberal perspectives can be drawn upon interchangeably in terms of integration and separation in women's football. Caudwell's (2006) study of two women's football clubs, discussed in section 2.4.4, demonstrates this. A separatist space in terms of league structures and the organisation of women's football is very difficult (and as discussed, perhaps undesirable) yet Caudwell (2006) demonstrates how separatist values can be promoted and exclusionary gendered practices resisted from within existing structures. Both liberal and radical feminist theoretical developments are seemingly important in assessing the complex and often contradictory position of

women in football as simultaneously integrated within (due to perceptions of sameness) yet situated outside of the wider football context (due to perceived differences).

3.3.2 Discourse, Organisations and Power

This study of women's day-to-day experiences of football however needs linking closely with the structure and culture of women's football, and this can be conceptualised in terms of competing discourses with varying power. Recent developments in organisational literature (see section 2.5.3) have begun to call for a multilevel and theoretically grounded approach to research (Cunningham & Sagas, 2008) that recognises that sports organisations are structured on varying levels (macro, meso and micro) that cannot be studied in isolation. The relationship between the individual and the structure is a complex one, and involves an understanding of how individuals are governed by but also resist specific forms of power, in discourse (Weedon, 1987). Institutions are constituted through various discourses, which structure female experience; significant actors within the institution work to maintain the dominant discourse, through the power of 'common-sense' or 'natural' ideologies. Women should be neither recognised as powerless 'victims' of oppressive discourses nor free from structural constraints (Cox & Thompson, 2000), and therefore institutions can be seen as simultaneously repressing and liberating (Paechter, 2001). This can be utilised in an attempt to recognise how female players are governed by but also resist specific forms of power within the structure of football, and how this affects their experiences and understandings. This retains a place for human agency in a study of power relations (Paechter, 2001) and can encourage recognition of the pleasurable aspect of power, considering how women tolerate what can in some respects be oppressive power relations.

In analysing the discourses that structure football, it is important to recognise the important work undertaken in the area of organisational studies and gender and in particular, sports organisations. Shaw (2006: 556) has illustrated how discourses are "influenced by, and influence, organisational practices and assumptions and the actions of individuals within organisations". Discourses of sameness and difference as discussed above can therefore influence how women are perceived within football, both by others and by themselves. These discourses are however not isolated at the individual level of experience. Knoppers & Anthonissen (2008), in their study of male and female senior

managers in sports organisations, demonstrated how gendered practices rooted in wider societal discourses resulted in the reproduction of male power and privilege through the values assigned to senior roles. This study needs to adopt a similar approach to recognising the interconnectedness of gendered discourses, day-to-day experiences and wider sporting structures in attempting to understand the complex positioning of women in football. It will also be important to assess how gendered practices can appear neutral, through for example constructing behaviours and values that benefit men in leadership positions as gender neutral (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2008; Fielding-Lloyd & Meân, 2008).

It is also imperative to adopt a framework that accounts for the contradictions between policy and practice within sports organisations. Knoppers & Anthonissen (2008) add that the context within which policies are implemented can be their failure, as they often do not take into account the multiplicity of discourses played out in everyday interactions, behaviours and perceptions. Hovden (2000) utilised a similar framework to demonstrate how although explicit selection discourses for national sport committees assumed equal opportunities for all regardless of gender, the subtexts of these discourses ensured most women were excluded from consideration. Further work by Shaw (2007) on the role of equality policy in sports organisations utilised a framework for analysis that recognised both taken-for-granted assumptions within and the 'deep structure' of organisations, in order to expose and therefore attempt to challenge existing inequitable practices and gendered structures. This is particularly important in the context of women's football, as Williams (2003: 6) suggests that "the organisation of women's football in England is informed by particular constructions of the social world which maintain the marginality of the sport". As this study aims to investigate how this impacts and is impacted by women's experiences and perceptions, the use of discourse in organisational analyses will be influential in exploring how women are positioned, and position themselves, in relation to the structure they embedded within.

3.3.3 Historical Specificity

The historical specificity of sporting contexts is also significant here. Any analysis of a current context is insufficient without a historical analysis to achieve a fuller understanding of how certain discourses are so significant and dominate social structures. Mennesson and Clement (2003) support this in their study of female

footballers and sexuality in French football, as an analysis of the current situation was insufficient in understanding how the female football environment appeared to facilitate homosexual practices whilst similar environments did not. What is considered as knowledge is also important, as knowledge is closely connected to who holds power. Dominant discourses are often interpreted as knowledge, yet they are merely a reflection of the dominant groups' beliefs rather than reflecting some kind of truth or reality (Paechter, 2001). Regarding football in the UK, its significantly heavy masculine roots and oppression of women as players up until the 1970's (Williamson, 2003) must be included in any attempt to understand how and why discourses in football today are maintained and are as powerful as they are despite the recent increase in female participation rates.

3.3.4 Complexity and Contradictions

It is important to focus on how power operates, including the ways in which power can simultaneously oppress and liberate (Paechter, 2001). Female footballers participate in a structure that is run by and for men, and continue to accept these conditions despite their (at times) oppressive nature. Also, the dominant discourse surrounding football excludes women as serious players of the game (Mean, 2001) and this has become dominant knowledge to some; however women's increased participation can be seen as resistance to the dominant discourse, contributing to the development of a counter-discourse that constructs women as legitimate football players. Identity can also be considered as a fluid, incomplete process, highlighting its complexity; women appear to have a range of subjective positions available to them (Weedon, 1987), such as embracing athleticism, or maintaining traditional ideals of femininity, yet women may interchange these identities depending on the context (Cox & Thompson, 2000).

Complexity and contradiction has also been incorporated into recent organisational work that has incorporated the importance of discourse in (re)producing gender. The multiplicity of discourses working (both complementarily and contradictorily) throughout the various levels of sports organisations provides strengthen and reproduce gendered practice *because* of their interconnectedness (Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2008). The recognition of this interconnectedness will be vital in analysing not only the strength of discourses surrounding women's positioning in football, but also the potential for women to challenge these discourses. The simultaneous acceptance of and challenge to

ways of 'doing gender' (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2008) through individual perceptions and understandings will also be imperative to this study.

3.4 Summary

This chapter has traced some of the major theoretical developments within feminist theory, and related these to the study of women in sport in general and football in particular. Gender inequality continues to be challenged using liberal 'equality of opportunity' policies, in education, sport and organisations, and improving participation rates for minority groups in football is tackled in a similar way. This continues despite the tensions associated with this liberal perspective, as discussed above and in chapter two, gender equity policies that 'add' more women to established male-dominated structures do little to challenge existing gendered arrangements, and can even mask inequalities by appearing outwardly equitable (eg Shaw & Frisby, 2006), whether successful or not. In tracing some developments in feminist theory, the challenges to these liberal perspectives have been outlined, and by introducing some recent developments in feminist and organisational theory, a potentially challenging and flexible way to approach gender inequity can be considered. Incorporating developments in organisational theory that recognises the inextricable interconnectedness of wider structures and individual experiences and the role of discourse in (re)producing gender will attempt to strengthen the theoretical positioning of the study to account for the complex role of women in football. The next chapter will extend this debate into methodological considerations.

¹⁸ Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 was a legislative move in the USA to exert "the rights of all individuals, regardless of sex, to participate in educational programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance. In effect, Title IX required that both boys and girls have equal opportunities to participate in sports and derive the benefits of participation" (Whisenant, 2003: 179). The liberal underpinnings of this legislation is clear; inequality in education and sport was a result of inequality of opportunity, and by passing the requirement for females and males to be treated equally in terms of access and funding, equity could be achieved. As a result of the legislation, girls and women currently enjoy greater access to sport and physical activity, with 2008 data demonstrating the highest ever participation by women in intercollegiate athletics programmes (Acosta & Carpenter, 2008). However, as has been discussed at different points in the study, Title IX failed to benefit the majority of female sports participants (Boutilier & SanGiovanni, 1994) and in some areas has lead to a decrease in the number of female coaches and administrators (Acosta & Carpenter, 2002).

¹⁹ The 'big three' sports that dominate the American sporting context – American football, baseball, and basketball, along with the 'one half' of ice hockey – can be concerning for parents as promoting a highly competitive, masculinised and health-compromising ethos of sport. Soccer is believed to provide an alternative to this, appealing to parents "who desired a game for their children that was allegedly non-confrontational, non-violent, 'multicultural', often coeducational, non-competitive and different"

(Markovits & Hellerman, 2004). This is a vastly different context to in the UK, where football epitomises masculinity and has little competition for the most dominant sport in the country.

²⁰ Socialist feminism attempts to provide a synthesis between Marxist and radical feminism by recognising both class and gender as mutually supporting systems of oppression. Both Marxist and feminist analysis can be drawn upon to understand the development of Western capitalist societies and the predicament of women within them (Hartmann, 1981). As socialist feminism has developed, attention has been paid to the work of black feminists to acknowledge how race interacts with class and gender, further addressing differences between women (Scruton & Flintoff, 2002); work also began to ask questions on differences between women in relation to age, class, sexuality and dis/ability (Dewar, 1993). In recognising these differences along the lines of gender, class and race, this contributes to a major strength of socialist feminism as it provides greater flexibility in providing analysis and potential solutions to overcoming oppression for all women (Boutilier & SanGiovanni, 1994). Within sport, socialist feminism focuses its analysis on the unpaid labour undertaken by women in servicing men's and children's sport, such as providing refreshments, washing clothing and transporting children to their sporting activities (Scruton & Flintoff, 2002). More recently, socialist feminist writers have shifted their study of emphasis from women's experiences to gender more broadly, paying specific attention to men and masculinities (eg Messner, 1992; Messner & Sabo, 1990). Although more traditional feminists would resist the work of men, arguing that this fails to remove the fundamental problems associated with previous male-dominated research, work along these lines has contributed to knowledge of male power and how this needs to be addressed to improve the situation for women, particularly in sport.

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 Introduction

This study utilises a feminist framework that allows for an in-depth understanding of the experiences of women in football structures in the UK, a context which is considered to be strongly male dominated (Williams, 2003). Further, the framework will encourage an examination of the multilevel nature of sports organisations (Cunningham & Sagas, 2008) to recognise as fully as possible the ways in which women's day-to-day experiences are influenced by wider gendered structures and practices. On the one hand it is important to recognise that given the gendered inequalities within sports organisations, the collective experience of women may be different to those of men. However it is assumed here that 'women' cannot be generalised as a social category, as they experience gender differently across social class, ethnicity and cultural background. This chapter will give an overview of the epistemological and ontological features of feminist methodologies, indicating the position of this study of women and football. There is some overlap here and further discussion of debates introduced in the previous chapter – this is however inevitable in adopting a reflexive approach to the research that incorporates a dynamic relationship between the theory and methods of the research process.

4.2 Feminist Epistemologies?

Epistemology concerns the nature of knowledge and scientific enquiry that informs research, including what can be known, what constitutes knowledge, and the relationship between knowing and being (Hall, 1996: 71). An epistemological framework specifies not only what 'knowledge' is and how to recognise it, but who holds and promotes this knowledge, and also the means by which competing knowledge claims are judged or rejected in favour of others (Stanley & Wise, 1993). Epistemology in social science has developed primarily both from and in contrast to Enlightenment thought. A critique of traditional forms of social enquiry is argued by some to be a part of feminist methodology (Cook & Fonow, 1990) as by recognising the limits of other methods, feminists can attempt to rectify these problems and develop a more appropriate form of enquiry. A brief critique will be undertaken here in order to demonstrate how this study is positioned within these debates. Feminists have joined post-modern thinkers in their critique of Enlightenment epistemology, by rejecting a male rationalist model as the only

model of knowledge, and confronting its dichotomous modes of thought and theorising (Hall, 1996).

4.2.1 Challenging the Enlightenment and Traditional Scientific Enquiry

Feminist methodology developed from a critique of Enlightenment thinking²¹, and although substantially shaped by its concerns, feminists are critical of many features of traditional scientific methods of enquiry. Enlightenment thought has dominated scientific enquiry, and its features underpin what has become 'common sense' ways of thinking and establishing truths in the West (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002). The dominance of this mode of thought in knowledge production has made it very difficult for feminists to challenge the roots of scientific method and lay claim to authoritative knowledge of their own. Traditional scientific thought, although not completely abandoned by some feminists²², has been heavily criticised for its masculine nature, emphasis on dualistic and binary thinking, and claims to objectivity. Scientific thought is often normatively equated with masculine thought. This can be explained in part by the relative absence of women, which has contributed to the assumption from both within and outside the discipline that scientific thought is equated with male thought (Keller, 1990). Furthermore, feminist theorists have contributed to epistemological debates by identifying Enlightenment rationalism as a distinctly male model of thought (Hall, 1996). This positivist ontology is problematic for researchers in the social sciences, including feminists, as it implies that gender relations and power structures such as patriarchy exist independent of people's knowledge of them, which ignores the complexities and contradictions that women face in their everyday lives. Also, any potential that women may have in resisting these oppressive structures is denied if the structures exist independent of them.

The subject-object separation²³ that emerged from Enlightenment thought encouraged scientists to pursue a 'reality' that was believed to exist independent of the researcher. Descartes' work in the seventeenth century had a powerful impact on how truth was pursued, dualistically separating mind (the consciousness of the researcher) from matter (its objects of knowledge) (cited in Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002). Dualistic thinking has become deeply embedded in the vision of Western science with mind/body, reason/passion, subject/object, culture/nature, and male/female being considered as polar opposites and taken for granted in modern science. In each pair, one is privileged over

the other, such as scientific reason being considered more legitimate than what is outside reason, such as passion, madness or superstition (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002). Although the relationship is complicated, and open to resistance, historically there has been a tendency for men to be associated with reason and women with emotion, and as a result of this dichotomy, women are positioned as inferior to men through being distanced from reason. Feminists therefore challenge this binary thinking as sexist and inequitable, and search to provide an alternative.

To summarise the position of feminists in relation to Enlightenment thought, it is useful to consider the dialectical tension that women in general and feminist researchers in particular find themselves in. Nielsen (1990) describes how women often find themselves in contradictory positions, having to conform to conditions that they oppose. When wishing to present themselves as feminine, women conform to prescribed but sometimes uncomfortable codes of dress (eg high heels, tight clothes), as non-conformity is considered deviant within traditional gender discourses. Feminist researchers are in a similar dialectical position, in being both in and estranged from their discipline (Westkott, 1990). Modern feminist researchers have wanted to establish authoritative knowledge, through challenging previous male-centred 'truths', but they do not want their research to be considered 'unreasonable' or invalid (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002). Therefore they may find themselves in the difficult position of how to claim authoritative knowledge, or even to be acknowledged as producers and holders of knowledge, without conforming to the very scientific ideals that they are trying to challenge.

4.2.2 Modern Humanism

Humanistic research allows for human individualism and creativity, deals with concrete human experiences, and requires the researcher to work towards a social structure in which there is less exploitation, oppression and injustice (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002). Feminists are clearly interested in these features of humanism, particularly its emancipatory nature and the idea of the human being "fully and freely creating herself and the world in which she lives" (Westkott, 1990: 62). Progress and emancipation has been central to feminism, but also intensely problematic (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002). A humanist notion of justice implies that somewhere rules exist that determine women's rights in universal terms – but this notion conflicts with the recognition that

rights and justice vary and are culturally, religiously and politically dependent. Care needs to be taken that 'justice' is not generalised, as no quest for justice is applicable to all and many different forms of inequality exist and can constrain women of various social classes, ethnicities, religious backgrounds and cultural locations. Assumptions of universal humanity from some common form of patriarchal oppression also overlook power relations *between* women, denying differences (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002). Also, humanistic research has been criticised by postmodernists for its assumptions that each individual possesses a unique essence of human nature that is fixed, unique and coherent (Weedon, 1987). Instead, it is proposed that identities are multiple and context-dependent (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002; Lorraine, 1997).

In her very useful discussions of feminist epistemology and science, Harding (1986, 1990) identifies three such approaches to research that feminists have developed and utilised. These are feminist empiricism²⁴, feminist standpoint theory, and emerging more recently, feminist postmodernism. Feminist standpoint theory and recent postmodern influences will be discussed in order to examine some of the tensions within feminism and epistemologies.

4.2.3 Feminist Standpoint Theory

Feminist standpoint theory developed out of work by Sandra Harding in the 1980s, to analyse the merits and problems of feminist theoretical work that attempted to locate knowledge in women's experiences (Smith, 1997). Harding (1990) describes this as her second feminist epistemological position, similar to feminist empiricism with roots in Enlightenment thinking. This position still uses science to get 'better' versions of the truth, but not by seeking direct connections between experience and reality. Standpoint theory ventures further away from scientific method but does not abandon it completely, and is therefore in tension with certain Enlightenment assumptions²⁵. The main premise of feminist standpoint theory is that rather than attempting to justify knowledge claims through science and reason, the unique standpoint of women and their experiences provide a basis for grounding knowledge, and they have a potentially more complete and less distorted view of reality. Such an approach has been useful in research seeking to document women's collective experience or voices within inequitable structures. With roots in Marxism as well as the Enlightenment, the example of labour and women's work is often used to illustrate this concept of women having a better vantage point.

Smith (1987) argues that women can provide us with a fuller understanding of 'work' as a concept as they experience both their own and dominant (men's) conceptions, as an examination of men's experiences would only provide a partial view. The ability of standpoint theory to incorporate women's experience and link this to a theory of knowledge is one of its major strengths and a unique contribution to feminist research. Promoting a single standpoint view from women as a group would contradict the diversity between women that this perspective attempts to recognise; therefore it is accepted that there is no universal women's standpoint, but multiple standpoints exist, and as a result feminist standpoint theory becomes complex as it has many varieties and dimensions and is constantly under reform (Harding, 1990; Heckman, 1997).

However as with feminist empiricism, standpoint theory has been criticised on a number of grounds, mainly due to its reliance on Enlightenment assumptions and opposition to recent shifts towards post-modern thought²⁶. A particularly important criticism to this study is the struggle over the concept of difference. Women are not a unified category, but are divided on other categories of existence such as their race, sexuality or class. Within this, lived experiences and perceptions are also multiple and fluid. Maintaining simplistic associations of men with masculinity and women with femininity reproduces binary thinking rather than challenging it. A major weakness of standpoint theory is that any one standpoint analysing commonality of experience must assume universality to some extent, and this potentially marginalises struggles that many women may face in respect to other categories of difference. In football, the tensions experienced by women moving into a male dominated structure in different areas, and bringing with them differing discursive resources, will create multiplicity in terms of experience; the commonality of being 'a woman in football' will encompass a great variance of positions, and therefore no female standpoint can exist in this context. Williams (2003) claims that there is little coherence amongst women in football as to what the future of the game looks like, therefore the methodological and epistemological grounding of the study must account for this variance and ambiguity rather than universalising 'women'. Flax (1990) adds to this that the notion of a feminist standpoint assumes that the oppressed are not in fundamental ways damaged by their social experience, and furthermore, can comprehend a reality that is 'out there' from a privileged vantage point.

4.2.4 Feminist Postmodernism and Post-Structuralism

Many features of postmodernism have been outlined in the criticisms of the Enlightenment. Postmodern feminists question the very stability of categories such as gender, race and class, rejecting the notion of an essential 'male' or 'female' reality structure and highlighting how these 'natural' oppositions are socially and culturally constituted categories (Di Stefano, 1990). Harding (1990) states that she is unclear how a feminism alternative to the Enlightenment project could completely take leave of its assumptions and still remain feminist, as the postmodern agenda undermines important feminist projects, particularly from a political perspective. However Flax (1990) asserts that feminism and postmodernism are inextricably linked due to the contradictory assumptions underlying feminism and the Enlightenment. Both feminists and postmodernists criticise the notion of objective, value-free research and are concerned with the subjective position of the individual (woman). Postmodern philosophers seek to cast doubt on the Enlightenment assumptions that prevail (especially in Western thought), which feminists are also engaged with. Post-structuralism is a theoretical appropriation of the postmodern philosophical shift (Lather, 1991); however post-structuralism is not a singular or unified body of thinking, as that in itself would counter the relative foundations and multiplicity of the theory itself (Finlayson & Valentine, 2002). Post-structuralism encompasses a variety of features, and some are more helpful to feminists than others; its diversity is part of its productive nature.

Postmodern thought certainly offers feminism freedom from the constraints of modern thought and scientific method whilst proposing means to open up fresh ways of thinking about gender. Ramazanoglu & Holland (2002) list the freedoms offered by postmodernism, including questioning connections between knowledge, rationality and truth; deconstructing binary modes of thinking; celebrating multiplicity; understanding the body and sexuality as socially constituted; and understanding power as productive. This study will explore the multiple relations of power that are inherent in a context where women are accepted yet simultaneously dismissed. The concepts of multiplicity and discourse will therefore be important, without specifically drawing upon a post-structural framework; this has been demonstrated in recent work in organisational studies (see for example Fielding-Lloyd & Meân, 2008; Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2008; Shaw, 2006, 2007). Links between discourse, language, knowledge and power are inextricable - it is in language that discourses are given meaning; some discourses are

more powerful than others, and power and knowledge are also bound together as the dominant power can promote their discourse as knowledge, which can become naturalised (Paechter, 2001). These are clearly useful dynamic and fluid insights into what have previously been regarded as fixed ways of understanding since the Enlightenment.

Some feminist writers are however quick to reject the significance of postmodern thought for feminism, some going as far as entitling it 'the last ruse of patriarchy' (Irigaray, 1985, in Harding, 1990: 85). Mainstream postmodernist theory has been remarkably blind and insensitive to questions of gender (Harding, 1990). Harstock (1997) is suspicious of the recent rise in postmodern influences, which she believes are undermining the possibility of discovering a 'liberating' truth just as previously silenced populations are beginning to speak for themselves. Concerns have been raised that postmodernism as a philosophical movement may be offering nothing more than a substantial critique of Enlightenment thinking and modernity, or simply another epistemological position looking for privilege. Ramazanoglu & Holland (2002) add that postmodern thought can undermine investigation of the social relations of everyday life (a key element of feminism), instead deconstructing texts, representations and discourses that can be at the expense of universal principles of justice and "the social critique necessary for feminist change" (Lorraine, 2007: 268). Although feminists welcome deconstructions, such as questioning the polar categories of man/woman, mind/body, or masculine/feminine, care has to be taken not to pursue this to an endless questioning of deconstructions that can fragment categories of women to the stage where no commonality exists and as a result, feminists have no basis on which to begin emancipatory research. The postmodernist position against subject-centred enquiry and theory make any semblance of feminist politics impossible (Di Stefano 1990), although analysing small-scale resistance to dominant discourses of power can form a challenge to existing gender relations (Paechter, 2001). Also, if feminists view gender relations through a postmodern lens, all perspectives of social reality are relative to their context, and all are equally valid, with none 'better' or 'more true' than others. This is clearly problematic, as women's experiences of oppression are viewed as no more accurate than men's perspectives; some criticisms of this from a theoretical perspective were discussed in the previous chapter.

For this study, discourse is conceptualised as “consisting of groups of related statements which cohere in some way to produce both meanings and effects” (Carabine, 2001: 268); discourses therefore have force, and are productive. In order to avoid reification however, discourses do not ‘have’ power, but are produced and reproduced and can become taken as common-sense or ‘natural’. However the post-structuralist notions of power as never totalising and complete but constantly shifting and multi-directional relations (Weedon, 1987) allow an analysis of the potential to resistance by subordinated groups to unequal power relations that appear as social conventions (Wodak, 2001a). Critical Discourse Analysts (eg Fairclough 1992, 1995) advocate that social practices are structured in a particular way, with an ‘order of discourse’ recognising different degrees of power. In any social situation there will be a dominant discourse, related to notions of hegemony, which stabilizes conventions and naturalises them to the point they acquire stable and natural forms and can be taken as ‘given’ (Wodak, 2001a). Yet as power is never totalising or complete, there will always be ‘counter discourses’, which resist the dominant discourse and allow for different positions to be adopted and represented by social actors. This is a particularly important concept to this study in terms of how individuals come to make sense of and experience gender difference as a social construction. An understanding of difference tied to female inferiority has a powerful effect on not just how women experience sports such as football but also how they understand their own position in relation to these common perceptions within a gender order. In recognising that counter-discourses can develop in resistance to dominant ‘natural’ assumptions regarding gender difference, the dominant discourse(s) can be criticised and deconstructed by:

“revealing their contradictions and non-expression and/or the spectrum of what can be said and what can be done covered by them, and by making evident the means by which the acceptance of merely temporarily valid truths is to be achieved. Assumed truths are meant here, which are presented as being rational, sensible and beyond all doubt.”

(Jäger, 2001: 34)

Power is however also exercised over access to discourse – counter or resistant discourses can often be heavily obscured by the dominant discourse (Jäger, 2001). Therefore the analysis needs to incorporate the wider societal context in order to fully access the complexity of the situation for females participating in increasing numbers in what is still a heavily male dominated culture of football. CDA has been criticised, particularly for adopting an explicit political stance, and tensions concerning how certain readings of texts are justified and based upon value judgements (see for example Titsher

et al, 2000). Whilst not embracing this position, the critical and historical perspective on relationships between discourse and power is particularly relevant for the analysis of discourse undertaken in this study, as will now be discussed.

Recent developments in organisational research have demonstrated the usefulness of discourse for examining gendered relations within structures, particularly in sport (see for example Fielding-Lloyd & Meân, 2008; Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2008; Shaw, 2006, 2007; Shaw & Slack, 2002). An analysis that incorporates discourse can be used to "expose the gendered nature of current configurations of practice that exclude women" (Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2008: 94). In particular, discourses that are used to describe valued skills within organisations tend to be presented as gender neutral, but often mask gendered subtexts that maintain male dominance and work to exclude women (Acker, 1990, 1992; Hovden, 2000; Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2008). In the context of football, this approach will be particularly useful in examining whether dominant discourses have a similar effect as has been discovered in organisational studies, particularly in suppressing issues of gender by appearing gender-neutral (Shaw, 2007). The most central discourses in football are associated with men and masculinity (Fielding-Lloyd & Meân, 2008) yet the recent and rapid increase in female participants (Williams, 2004) disrupts this dominance, in particular through liberal equal opportunity strategies designed to provide more and more spaces for girls and women to play this traditionally male-dominated sport (see for example the FA, 2006). Considering these kinds of strategies alongside the fact that those who govern football are still predominantly male (Williams, 2003) provides a context where multiple discourses are likely to structure the experiences of females involved in the sport. The liberal discourses of equal opportunity that exists alongside and in conflict with the centrality of male-dominated discourses in women's football need to be examined in detail. This will allow for an exploration of how these discourses impact the everyday lives of women involved in football. Moreover, an analysis examining discourse and power has the potential to expose any instability and therefore disrupt the gendered status quo (see for example Shaw & Frisby, 2006).

In summary, a range of feminist epistemological positions currently exist for researchers, and with the development of post-modernism, debates as to the extent feminist theory should embrace post-structuralist thought continue to prevail. Feminists

work to analyse gender relations, trying to understand how they are constituted and experienced, with the ultimate goal of improving the position women hold in society. This study supports the claim for the recognition of the richness and diversity of women's experiences. Feminism is a perspective, not a research method (Reinharz, 1992), and as such, a multiplicity of research tools are utilised by feminists in their vast breadth of work with this woman-centred focus. Feminist methodologies therefore differ according to the nature of the research, and the ontological and epistemological focus of the researcher, but remain loyal to their feminist foundational roots to give voice to the knowledge and experience of women and tie together theory and practice.

4.3 A Feminist Methodology?

Feminist approaches to methodology are varied and contradictory at times. Reinharz (1992) claims that feminism is a perspective, not a research method, and as such a multiplicity of research tools are utilised by feminists in order to fulfil the fundamental aims of feminist research. Differences occur due to struggles within feminism of how best to achieve these aims, so there is no feminist 'rulebook' of methods. Women are not a homogenous group and as a result, different methodological and epistemological approaches can be used by feminists in different contexts and to answer different questions. Cook and Fonow (1990) argue that the notion of a feminist methodology is difficult to conceptualise as modern scientific enquiry so closely associates 'methodology' with specific and systematic techniques for collecting and analysing information. However feminists, in attempting to move away from this andocentric bias in scientific research, have developed and asserted alternative ways to approach social enquiry that allow the position of women in social contexts to be acknowledged, examined and recognised as central to the research. Feminist methods are part of a larger intellectual movement that represents a shift away from traditional social scientific methodology – applying research models and strategies used in the natural world to the study of social phenomena (Nielsen, 1990). Alongside this, feminists maintain a strong ongoing criticism of non-feminist scholarship and the methods of enquiry that guide this scholarship (Reinharz, 1992).

In examining these different methodological features loosely implied by feminist writers attempting to define feminist methodology, five themes run through the majority of discussions²⁷. These include remaining woman-centred, such as adopting a 'view from

below'; a focus on collective experiences rather than the individual, to explore commonality of experience; challenging traditional objective method and embracing the position of the researcher as embedded in the research; the assertion that research should be *for* rather than simply about women; and that the fundamental aim or outcome should be to change the status quo (see for example Meis, 1999; Nielsen, 1990). These features will be returned to in highlighting the methodological framework to the study.

The notion of feminist methods is therefore less about selecting from a rigid set of possible techniques, but is more concerned with critiquing previous gender-blind knowledge and producing more women-centred knowledge. As such, feminists draw upon a range of possible techniques to aid in the production of knowledge to fulfil their foundational aims, and this can involve modifying existing techniques to better suit their research (Maynard, 1994). This parallels with the distinct feature of feminist research in that it combines its own woman-centred focus with a critique of existing non-feminist scholarship and methods that produce gender-biased knowledge (Reinharz, 1992). This chapter will now highlight methodological issues specific to this study, in working within a broad feminist framework that draws upon a multilevel approach to studying the significance of gender in sports organisations (Cunningham & Sagas, 2008) utilising the concept of discourse to illustrate the intricate and often subtle workings of gender (Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2008). This is intended to negate both the complexity of studying experience firmly positioned within a wider organisational structure, and maintain a woman-centred approach to give women a voice regarding an area within which they have traditionally been ignored and silenced. As introduced in the previous chapter, the grounding of individual experience as embedded in the context of football involves a theoretical and methodological approach that can account for this. For this study, this will entail not only recognising and examining the multiplicity of experience at the individual level, but also demonstrating how these individual (and at times, collective) experiences are varyingly influenced by wider gendered discourses throughout the levels of organisations involved with women's football.

4.4 The Role of the Researcher

As discussed above, feminists strive to challenge the norm of traditional objective, supposed value-free scientific method (Cook & Fonow, 1990), replacing this with more woman-friendly methods of research. This includes acknowledging that the presence of

the researcher cannot be ignored and pre-judgements and bias are inherent; this should however be utilised through adopting a more 'attached' method of enquiry that requires the researcher's personal involvement (Nielsen, 1990). Stanley and Wise (1993) give emphasis to the fact that the researcher's part in the process cannot be simply 'omitted', so should be embraced and fully utilised, including emotional involvement. The researcher must therefore be prepared to reflexively situate themselves within the research account, since their presence and involvement cannot be denied. By incorporating this personal account into the research it may illuminate the "conditions of it's own production" (Stanley, 1990). Further, the recognition that all knowledge is historically and socially constructed brings about the acceptance that knowledge is always partial and located (Clarke, 1998), and the researcher therefore plays a major role in locating and privileging this knowledge.

As a researcher, personality and experience inevitably shapes rhetoric and practice (Lather, 1991); feminists embrace the subjectivity inherent in the research process (eg Meis, 1999) but this does not mean that simply to acknowledge this is enough to overcome the potential tensions that can emerge. In maintaining transparency throughout the research process, there exists a degree of openness about the study, but this needs to be extended into 'reflexivity'. Ramazanoglu & Holland (2002: 118-9) suggest that this entails 'critical reflection' on a number of levels:

- Identification of the exercise of power, power relationships and their effects in the research process;
- The particular theory of power that enables a particular conceptualisation of power relations (hidden or otherwise) in this instance;
- The ethical judgements that frame the research and mark the limits of shared values and political interests; and
- Accountability for the knowledge that is produced.

Throughout the process of the research, my own experience, background and discursive resources have influenced the project in immeasurable ways. From the topic choice, formulation of aims and objectives, the process of approaching and describing the study to participants, discussion topics, analysis, interpretation and writing up (Taylor, 2001), attempts to access, explore and present the experiences and understandings of others have been through my own eyes. Denscombe (2002: 34) suggests that "researchers have

a personal history and a personal identity” that cannot be separated from the research process. In my case, I brought to both phases of the research a history as a woman with experience of football, which connected with participants in differing ways - Skeggs (1994) notes that despite similarities, there are always acute differences between the researcher and the researched. As discussed by Clarke (1998), I acknowledge that just because I had a shared membership with the participants, this did not mean that I could understand their experiences. Ultimately, interviews always take place within fluid and multiple power relationships. I was simultaneously ‘the same’ and ‘different’ to the participants, and in the interview situation, this is played out with varying negotiations of power. These are explored and reflected upon more fully below.

4.5 Exploring Experience Within Structures: A Two-Phase Approach

The research aimed to explore the position of women within the football structures they were immersed in. This directed the practicalities of the research to a mixed-method approach, in an attempt to gain both a brief picture of the overall structure of the football contexts, and explore in further depth how wider gender discourses were experienced within these settings. Unlike in more traditional scientific research, Maynard & Purvis (1994: 4) argue that feminist research differs from traditional scientific approach, which seeks to combine methods in an effort to increase the validity of data, or aggregate information to produce a single or unitary ‘truth’; in fact, “the differences generated from different research techniques are likely to be as illuminating as the similarities”. This argument is particularly relevant here, as the combination of survey data and in-depth interviews allowed a number of discrepancies to emerge, as explored in chapter five. Using a multi-method approach also answers a recent call in organisational literature for research examining gender to embrace varied methodological approaches in order to provide a more complete understanding, as an over-reliance on any one approach can skew the manner in which a construct or phenomenon is understood (Cunningham & Sagas, 2008).

4.5.1 Survey

As already outlined, the desire to locate the experience of the women in the study within the structures that they were involved, both at club and organisational level, required a

method that would give some overall indication of current structures. A questionnaire was therefore designed in order to:

- Provide a brief overview of how closely women's football clubs in the area are associated with men's clubs;
- Provide demographic data of the women's clubs in the area to contribute to the overall picture;
- Use open-ended questions to give an insight into any potential concerns or tensions that the respondents might have regarding their association with football structures, therefore highlighting areas for more in-depth study; and
- Make contact for phase two of the research.

Reinharz (1992) has noted that in feminist research, a multiplicity of methods are utilised to achieve the aims of the study. The questionnaire was designed with the intention of generating qualitative data to be explored more fully in interviews. Appendix 2 includes both the covering letter explaining the research and the questionnaire. The four sections were included to meet the aims above, and a section for 'any further comments' proved particularly useful for highlighting pertinent themes in the area, perhaps not covered by the earlier questions, and was used by a number of respondents. At the end of the questionnaire was the option to leave contact details to participate in the study further, which the majority of respondents also completed. The data generated through this phase was utilised alongside the interview transcripts rather than analysed independently. This involved theming the responses, particular in response to the open-ended questions, and the answers then provided discussion topics for the interviews, and suggested any emerging tensions to be explored further. The tabled responses are detailed in Appendix 4.

4.5.2 The Interview Process

From the completed questionnaires, ten clubs were selected for further investigation, reflecting non-probability sampling, in particular what Cohen & Manion (1994: 89) describe as "purposive sampling" in order to utilise cases specific to the needs of the research. This selection was not random, and was not at any point intended to be; the clubs were selected to provide a variety of different structures, sizes, and status. It is to be noted however that all clubs except one were what would be classed as grassroots

clubs as the completed questionnaires were overwhelmingly from this level, which left little alternative. A reflexive, semi-structured approach to the interview situation was utilised that provided a rough list of topics to discuss, but also allowed women the opportunity to talk about their own experiences and the issues that most interest them (Harris, 2002). The interview schedule is broadly detailed in Appendix 3, however the actual interview situation varied greatly as the aim was to encourage participants to direct the interview towards those topics most important to them. A loose structure allows the researcher to be sensitive to individual situations and allow flexibility (Berry, 1999) whilst trying to find some common ground across the differing participants. The interviewees did not all hold the same roles in clubs: some had experience in roles outside of clubs, some played, some had retired from playing and others had never played football, some coached, some were involved purely on an administrative basis; some covered all of the above. Therefore a different schedule was taken into each interview based upon the questionnaire responses, and to assist with this, the completed questionnaire was taken into the interview situation to refer to (by both myself and the participant). There was little consistency in the ordering of discussions, and schedules were also modified after interviews if new topics emerged as it the conducting of interviews is a learning process for both researcher and researched (Holland & Ramazanoglu, 1994).

The interview experience was one that I found enjoyable and insightful, and on each occasion I was under the impression that despite initial apprehension, all interviewees enjoyed discussing their experiences of football and their clubs with me. The pride they took in both their own roles and their club as a whole further supported this. In outlining the aims of the study, I explicitly introduced my own experience in football; this is not however to assume that relations of power were levelled as a result. Indeed, although I have been involved in football as a player for most of my life, I shared little with some participants who held roles in clubs but had never played the game. Although an 'insider' regarding women's football, I remained an 'outsider' to the participants own world (Taylor, 2001) and in my capacity as researcher, unequal power relations remained. Differences in age and background were ever-present, and I understood my position as an 'outsider within' (Clarke, 1998; Collins, 1991). However as the framework underpinning this study encourages power to be conceptualised as multi-directional, fluid and unstable, this was also evident in the interview situation. Although

power relationships are predominantly perceived in favour of the researcher (eg Denscombe, 2002) this was not fixed and it must be acknowledged that participants were also in a position where they could to some extent make choices over what knowledge they shared and how they presented that knowledge. In this respect, each interview situation was a unique interactional context that cannot be replicated and 'is always partial and located' (Rich, 2002). Power relations were also shaped by the information I provided to participants. For example, after introducing myself and highlighting my experience in football, which was intended to reduce the perceived distance between myself and the participant as an 'outsider', this often led to a discussion of my playing experiences before the interview had begun. Therefore at times it felt like I was being questioned, reflecting the dynamic relationship between the researcher and the researched. Another inevitable implication of this is that conversations around playing often generated some occasions where our paths may have crossed, which will have shaped the way in which I was perceived. So although none of the participants were known to me, they are likely to have built opinions of me very early in the interview situation. Shared experiences may also have led to situations where assumptions were taken for granted about my knowledge, such as "you know how it is, when...". Despite these tensions, I believe that having some commonality of experience with the participants (and sharing this in the interviews) was of great benefit to the process, and although influential relations of power remained, the informal atmosphere created rich and detailed conversations rather than question-and-answer sessions.

This outline of the interview situation is intended to reflect on the process with a critical eye (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002) in an attempt to distance this process from traditional value-free methods and acknowledge my own role in the interview situation. In bringing my experience to the situation, I inevitably brought my beliefs, attitudes and values, and these will also have impacted the interaction. For example, when listening back to the interview tapes, I was struck by the difficulty in preventing my values and discursive positioning from influencing conversational topic, direction and tone. Gendered language permeates football at all levels (Meân, 2001), both producing and reproducing male dominance. Terms such as 'man-on', 'linesman' and 'chairman' are indicators of the strength of discourses of male domination that are embedded in football. Although I had every intention to avoid this, on occasion I used these terms. Furthermore, the mere label of 'women's football' instantly differentiates it from

'football', and these terms were also used, thus framing the interview with discourses of differentiation. This is however even more difficult to avoid, as talking about 'football' would likely (although again this is in reference to my own meaning systems) be interpreted as 'men's football', such is the dominance and visibility in comparison to women's football. Language is considered to be constructive of meaning, rather than reflective (Weedon, 1987); in highlighting these issues, I hope to outline some of the tensions associated with language use in interview situations and acknowledge that any resistance to this gendered language demonstrated by the participants is particularly significant as it also represents resistance to the discourses imposed by my own language use. These tensions structure every social interaction, and are therefore particularly pertinent in a study of discourse.

4.6 Transcription and Analysis Procedures

All interview tapes were transcribed as soon as possible after the interview, whilst the interaction was fresh in my mind. This allowed non-verbal features and discussions before and after the interview to be briefly reported, along with notes concerning how I felt, and anything I noticed about the participant's behaviour. In understanding that interviews do not exist in a social background, but are embedded within their social and cultural location, contextual factors were also recorded and any potential influence on the situation was suggested. For example, one interview took place on 7th July 2005, the day of the London bombings and the day after Britain won the bid to host the 2012 Olympics. Both issues were discussed in this interview, and the Olympic bid in particular had an impact on the interviewee's understandings of youth sport talent development and the potentially significant role sport can play in people's lives.

Conventions of social research do not require that every feature be captured for every subject, as analysis is always a process of selection (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002). Decisions about what to transcribe were taken based on the theoretical underpinnings and what was required for the analysis; as the study is concerned with the study of discourse rather than interaction or exact language patterns, only words were recorded (unless a non-verbal sign such as a nod replaced a word). More detail would suggest both a concern with the detail of language and a certain degree of researcher-detachment from the process (Taylor, 2001), neither of which were relevant. Lapadat & Lindsey (1999) provide a detailed overview of the potential tensions between attempting to

represent oral discourse and a social interaction in text, and suggest ways of approaching these tensions²⁸. In applying such suggestions to this study, it is important to acknowledge that transcriptions are both a representation and in interpretation, and are not therefore a reflection of something that 'actually happened' in the interview situation, or even some kind of fixed beliefs of the participants. A transcription is always a construction, an interpretive act, as it cannot be a total record of talk (Taylor, 2001). As individuals respond differently in different contexts, and bring their own discursive resources, attitudes and values to the situation, the transcript is an attempt to accommodate this but will always be partial and unique. Transcripts were therefore utilised to record the understandings and experiences of the participants, but are not considered complete, transparent or a reflection of any kind of fixed or stable 'reality'.

4.6.1 Data Analysis

During the transcription process, notes were taken about potential emerging themes. Similar to Claringbould & Knoppers's (2008) use of analytic induction, themes were not predetermined (though the interview structure provided broad areas where these themes were located) but were noted down as they emerged from reading the transcripts. Full transcripts were then read and re-read, whilst listening again to the tapes, and every spoken word was themed as to leave nothing out. Categories were not imposed prior to the analysis, but in acknowledging my own influence, these were not categories that 'emerged' solely from the participants. My own role can therefore be understood as a 'producer' rather than a 'finder' of knowledge, as all research is a product of the experiences and views of both the researcher and the researched (Rich, 2002; Stanley, 1990). The interview schedule imposed certain categorisations, such as links with male clubs, coaching, perceptions of the FA etc. This therefore resulted in a combination between emerging and imposed themes – broad themes were imposed on the discussions by myself, but the key to analysing individual understandings and experience, difference and emergent issues was what was happening *within* these broad themes. Here, a great deal of contradiction and variance was evident.

The process by which the analysis was undertaken was based broadly on that proposed and utilised by Carabine (2001) and Rich (2002). In outlining the main stages involved, it important to acknowledge that this was not a structured or linear process, as the stages

overlapped, which involved a constant movement between theory, data and analysis (Wodak, 2001b) and continued well into the writing up stage.

- Developing familiarity with the data: This involved reading and re-reading the transcripts, listening to the tapes, and trying to accommodate both a broad understanding of what the interviewees were trying to say, and the individuality of discursive interactions, such as the use of anecdotes and reported speech. This stage continued through the analysis and writing up – original transcripts were returned to when using experts of data to try and ensure these were not taken out of context;
- Identification of key themes: As introduced above, this involved identifying themes within the broad areas that the interview schedule imposed. For example, coaching was a broad theme; within this was a variety of sub-themes such as gender difference, policies for increased female representation, accessing education, and proof of ability;
- Identification of inter-relationships between themes and discourses: These themes and sub-themes were then understood as overlapping and in relationship with each other, both complementary and contradictory. This ‘interdiscursivity’ also involved understanding positioning within broader discourses (Wodak, 2001b), such as healthism, sport-for-all and obesity. Again using coaching as an example, demands for proof of ability overlapped with women's informal experiences amongst male peers, and also drew upon discourses of male superiority-female inferiority in sport and understandings of gender difference;
- Identification of silences/absences: This involved an attempt to assess the dominance of certain discourses by looking for what is not spoken that might be expected. This builds on Shaw's (2007) examination of gender suppression in sports organisations, and the suggestion that as the articulation of gender is increasingly being studied, work must also recognise how gender is deliberately not expressed;
- Identification of resistances and counter-discourses: In the context of football in particular, male dominance is explicitly visible and the movement of women into this arena involves resistance to dominant discourses. How the women understood this, in what cases counter-discourses were more accessible than

others, and the potential strength of this resistance is therefore particularly significant to the study;

- Exploration of the effects of the discourse: It is important to develop an understanding of not just *what* discourses exist, but *how* they are produced, and most importantly to this study, what they *do* (Fairclough, 2001) in a given context.

An important feature of the analysis was the care taken to avoid analysing women and their experiences only in reference to their male counterparts – to do so would be to support and reinforce discourses that dominate understandings of women's football as existing solely in relation to men's football that is preventing it from being considered as a sport in its own right. Exploring diversity of experience within the game and the women in the study is an attempt to critique these dialectical understandings of difference/sameness whilst giving women a voice.

4.7 Representation

Representations of experience and understandings are always partial and located, and presented through my own reading of the data. Harris (2002) acknowledges that to 'present' the experiences of the football players does not mean that these can necessarily be 'reproduced', for a representation is always from some particular point of view. Stanley (1990) uses the term 'intellectual autobiography' which entails acknowledging that all research is a product of the experiences and views of both the researcher (the autobiographical component) and those involved in the research (whose biographies influence their accounts). Political commitments and emancipatory concerns shape how we select, conduct, interpret and present our research (Stanley & Wise, 1993; Griffiths, 1998). Despite the recognition of diversity and multiplicity throughout the research process, it was important to try and represent difference and commonality of experience. The relationship between broad and sub themes is again important here, as broad themes identified areas of commonality and shared experience, and within these themes difference, contradiction and multiplicity could be outlined. This was an attempt to balance the tension between representing difference and avoiding slipping into relativism that rendered any notion of political transformation impossible (see Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002) – commonality of experience was therefore not

'searched' for, but allowed to emerge within common themes but also alongside contradictions and complexities, highlighting areas where football and gender interacted more prominently. A further important recognition is that undertaking 'one-off' interviews provides only a snap-shot of an individuals life at that time and in that context; this is also applicable to the understanding of the wider relationships (club and organisational level in football) that the participants were involved in, as again this brief insight does not account for the constantly shifting nature of these relationships.

4.8 Summary

In tracing some epistemological and methodological developments and concerns for feminist researchers, this chapter has highlighted some of the main tenets of feminist-informed research and placed them within wider developments in the field. This is not to 'embrace' a feminist methodology, as it is unclear as to what this would look like or represent. The key challenge for this study was to engage with methodological debates concerning how best to analyse the experiences of women particularly in a male-dominated context, and demonstrate how the tensions highlighted were played out in the actuality of the research process. This study will utilise a broad feminist methodological approach, whilst drawing upon an exploration of discourse in the multilevel context of sports organisations. This will allow women to remain at the centre of the enquiry whilst placing their experiences firmly within the wider context within which they experience football. Further, in providing an open account of the process, it is not assumed that this presupposes any form of 'true representation'; acknowledging my own role throughout the study, from conception to completion, is an attempt to provide transparency in all stages and critically reflect on how my own identity and experience has shaped the study.

²¹ The Scientific Revolution of the seventeenth century brought about a new approach to knowing the world, forming the foundations of Enlightenment thought. This approach redefined science in a way that influenced the nature of enquiry that still shapes a great deal of research today. Foundations for Enlightenment thought included the view that knowledge is holistic, cumulative and progressive; that we can attain rational knowledge of society; that knowledge is universal and therefore objective; and that knowledge can lead to mental liberation and social betterment amongst humanity (McLennan, 1992).

²² Though a general overview of the attitude towards the Enlightenment by feminists *in general* can be outlined, that is not intended to be absolute or representative of all areas of feminist thought. Nielsen (1990) lists the scientific assumptions that are adopted by those social scientists who adopt this naturalistic approach, emphasising rationality, impersonality, prediction and control.

²³ Traditional scientific method proposes that validity in research can be increased if the researcher maintains a certain distance from the object of their research and remains detached throughout. Objectivity is a major feature of traditional scientific enquiry, and has been criticised as an ideal with a long history of identification with masculinity, researcher-researched separation and 'validity of accounts' (see Keller, 1990; Cook & Fonow, 1990). It is considered more important for feminists to ensure that their research is rigorous rather than being concerned about objectivity or value-neutrality, which can never be assured anyway (Maynard, 1994). The assumption that there is order in the social world, and that this order can be generalised across time, place, situations or conditions is a rationalist one that encourages the social scientist to develop universal laws about social behaviour (Nielsen, 1990) that are deemed inappropriate.

²⁴ Feminist empiricism is the closest feminist epistemological stance to traditional scientific enquiry. Its main belief is that sexism in scientific enquiry is a result of badly done science, and if this is removed, value-neutral work, or 'better science' can be produced (Harding, 1986). Feminist empiricism alerts us to 'social blindness', the distorted view through which we experience the world and broadens this view – making issues visible that previously were not. Harding (1990) describes how although this mode of thought accepts many Enlightenment assumptions, in accepting the validity of scientific enquiry, it does not uncritically replicate Enlightenment thinking. There are many successful outcomes of feminist empiricism projects. Research in this sphere has highlighted the distorted nature of science, making previously unseen issues visible and exposing andocentric bias in nearly every discipline (Reinharz, 1992). There are clear parallels between feminist empiricism and liberal feminist theory in sport here with regards to success and acceptance – liberal feminists have been more successful than radical feminists in working towards equal opportunities for women in sport rather than questioning and trying to change the structure of sport itself. However feminist empiricism has been criticised by feminists and non-feminists alike on a number of grounds, as discussed by Harding (1986, 1990). Firstly, it implies homogeneity between women, and fails to acknowledge the richness and diversity amongst 'women' as a group. Also, feminist empiricism is considered too conservative, and in accepting scientific norms and assumptions, researchers are not providing a radical enough challenge to the masculine nature of traditional scientific methods. Stanley and Wise (1993) add to this by claiming that feminist empiricists simply join existing 'male' scientific structures, inviting similar criticisms to those directed at liberal feminists, and can be criticised for accepting that a single social reality exists 'out there' that academics have better access to knowledge of.

²⁵ For example, standpoint theorists do not assert that there is a universal reality, but that reality can be perceived differently by different people in different situations. Objectivity, which rejects experience as knowledge, is abandoned and instead researchers acknowledge the subjective nature of experience as essential in creating 'reality'. Collins (1997) states that standpoint theory is an interpretative framework to help us understand "how knowledge remains central to maintaining and changing unjust systems of power" (375), using commonality of experiences and perspectives from within hierarchical power relations. A feminist standpoint also deconstructs the 'knower' as a socially constituted being rather than a stable, fixed identity (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002). The knowing feminist is then visible, and power relations between women can be understood as part of the complexity of power. A related concept is that knowledge is particular, not universal (Heckman, 1997); standpoint feminists recognise difference and diversity in women and their experiences, and this involves analysing power relations between women. 'Men/women' can then be deconstructed as universal categories, but a feminist standpoint asserts that women share common material subordination, that women as a group are excluded *across* their differences and this provides a basis for analysing common experiences and subsequently striving for change.

²⁶ Criticisms include standpoint theory's realist claims, which come under attack from post-modernists who believe that these theorists are ignoring significant influences in recent feminist theory. There are some (eg Flax, 1990) that believe feminism belongs in the terrain of post-modern philosophy due to its foundations and beliefs contradicting with those of the Enlightenment and its criticisms of modernist, masculine scientific method and thought. See Heckman (1997), Harding (1997), Smith (1997) and Harstock (1997) for a full debate of the tensions between standpoint and post-modern positions, and also Collins (1990) who comments on the struggle over difference between women.

²⁷ Although methodologies applied by feminists to their research can differ greatly, some have attempted to provide an overview of several inherent features. Various texts attempt to provide lists of features or 'guidelines' for feminist researchers (see for example Cook & Fonow, 1990; Linton, 1989; Meis, 1999; Nielsen, 1990). 'Guidelines' are however rejected, especially by poststructuralists, and it is important to assert that feminists draw on a range of possible techniques to aid in the production of knowledge to fulfil their foundational aims, and this can involve modifying existing techniques to better suit their research (Maynard, 1994).

²⁸ In utilising the transcription process, researchers must make reasoned decisions about what part the transcription will play in the methodology; ensure understandings of transcription are consistent with underlying theory/epistemological beliefs; understand that the transcription *represents* a record, and a record *represents* an interactive event; view the transcription as an interpretive act, and therefore selective and partial rather than transparent (Lapadat & Lindsey, 1999: 81; my emphasis).

CHAPTER FIVE: INTEGRATION/SEPARATION AT THE CLUB AND ORGANISATIONAL LEVEL

The following three chapters will present and discuss some key findings from both phases of the research. The three chapters cover findings in three major areas of the study: the variance of and within relationships between women's and men's football clubs; the relationship between the Football Association and women in football (both individually and as understood as a collective); and finally individual understandings and experiences of the women in relation to the specific roles they occupy within their own football clubs and the wider context. This is essentially a qualitative study, but the first results chapter includes a brief overview of preliminary survey work that was undertaken to establish a descriptive profile of the football environment in this context and identify potential clubs for the in-depth data collection conducted in the second phase.

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is designed to establish the framework for the subsequent in-depth analysis. As part of this, the chapter first reports on outline findings on the current 'status' of women's football by reporting on data obtained from the phase 1 survey of women's football clubs. As well as obtaining basic profile information on club size and composition, the survey investigated the extent to which the women's clubs were linked to the club structure of men's football, and also how respondents perceived their relationship with the Football Association (FA), i.e. the wider context of men's football. As will be seen, the survey revealed considerable diversity in how clubs were related to the male football structure, and the sample of clubs selected for in-depth analysis was chosen to reflect this. The second part of the chapter focuses on these clubs, initially offering an outline categorisation of the diverse positions that clubs can occupy in relation to the male football structure. The chapter then draws on the qualitative interview data to provide an initial account of the different types of male-female relationships that exist at club level and the gendered dynamics both between and within these differing relationships. This sets the scene for the extensive analysis of these issues in the subsequent results chapters.

5.2 Overview of Survey Results

There is much debate around women's football concerning the extent to which the sport should integrate with the well-established structure of men's football (eg Lopez, 1997; Williams, 2003). Issues in this area include the amount of ownership the governing body of men's football should have over the women's game; whether girls and boys should experience co-ed football, either in clubs or schools; whether elite women should be given the opportunity to play alongside elite men; and the degree to which women's football structures should replicate those established in men's football. The result is considerable variety in the way in which female football club structures have evolved.

The Phase 1 survey played an important role in providing an initial profile of how this diversity is manifest in the study area. The questionnaire (Appendix 2b) comprised three sections, covering demographic club data, male-female club links and perceptions of the Football Association. The questionnaire was distributed to 105 registered clubs across 9 counties in the Midlands region from county level up to the Northern Premier League (see Appendix 6 for the current football league structures for women in England). In total the survey was completed by representatives of 55 clubs, giving a response rate of 52%. The survey data is extensive and full result listings are given in Appendix 4. Here results are reported selectively to focus on those aspects of the findings central to the thesis' core themes, and those areas that were explored in more detail in the second phase.

The survey showed that respondents held a range of positions within their clubs: most were secretary, manager/coach or chair/vice chair, while a smaller number were treasurer, captain or player. Their period of involvement with their club ranged from 1–28 years, with most having been involved for more than 6 years. Most (75%) had played football, for an average of 10 years. There had been some movement in club affiliation, with 62% reporting that they had played or worked for another club prior to the one that they belonged to at the time of the survey.

The clubs that the respondents represented ranged from those that were long-established (12 clubs had been running for 10 years or more) to those formed relatively recently. Most clubs had been in existence for 6 years or more, but 10 had only been established for 2 years or less. Some clubs had undergone significant changes during their lifetime;

9 had changed name and 15 had merged with a different club, which is likely to also have involved a name change.

The clubs surveyed varied in size and composition. At the time of the survey clubs' membership, defined as all female teams including juniors, ranged from 18 to over 250, with the majority of clubs having 75 members or less. All clubs had at least one senior women's team, with 38% offering at least one senior reserve team on top of this. Most (62%) clubs contained junior teams in which females played. As might be expected, larger clubs offered the widest range of teams. Further to this, outline information was also collected on the management and organisation of their club. All clubs had a formal committee structure, usually consisting of at least a chair, secretary, treasurer and manager. In the great majority of cases these committees were for the female club only, although a small number of clubs indicated that they had one club committee that covered both male and female teams. Some respondents indicated that these committees were player-run; others did not comment as to who made up their committee positions. The coaching structure in clubs varied, but most stated that they had at least one coach for each team, and often more. In some cases, junior teams had a coach and a manager. There was little variance in the number of male and female coaches at clubs; most had a mixture, and 12 clubs (22%) had more female coaches than male.

Overall, there was a great deal of variance in club structures, relationships and governance. The questionnaire then investigated a number of aspects of clubs' relationship with the FA and the local football structure. The next two sections summarise the key findings in relation to each of these.

5.2.1 The Football Association and their role in Women's Football

The historical relationship between women's football and the FA has been volatile at best, and the lack of interest shown in the women's game until fifteen years ago has severely limited its advancement in terms of both access and the struggle women have constantly faced to be accepted as footballers (eg Lopez, 1997; Williams, 2003; Williamson, 1991). The development of the relationship between women's football and the FA has been documented in a number of areas (see section 1.2; also Williams & Woodhouse, 1991; Williams, 2003, 2004; Lopez, 1997). In 1993 the FA took over the running of women's football from the WFA. Since that time, participation figures,

especially for girls, have increased greatly (see Table 1.1, p3). The direct effect the FA has had on the women's football is constantly under debate; it is undeniable that this has increased the exposure of the sport, provided better access to resources and effectively centralised administration. Yet these benefits can be considered largely cosmetic, as little has been done to alter the provision of football, and integration involves the acceptance of an institution that historically dismissed the (female) sport (Williams, 2003). It is within this context that the survey attempted to access the opinions of the respondents regarding this debate, and uncover the extent to which women involved in football feel engaged with the governing body of their sport.

The survey investigated these issues by asking respondents to rate their local and the national FA on a scale of 1 (excellent) to 5 (very poor). The data showed that the perception of the FA at the local level was less favourable than opinions of the overall performance of the national governing body. At national level, 40% of respondents considered organisation and management by the FA to be above average ('good' or 'very good'); however, at local level only 29% answered with the same ratings. In both cases a majority of respondents felt that the FA was performing at only an 'average' level at best, and many felt it was doing so quite or very poorly (39% at local level, 19% national level assigned 'poor' or 'very poor' ratings).

When invited to comment on aspects of their club's relationship with the FA, most respondents identified both advantages and disadvantages, concurring with the view of authors such as Williams (2003) who consider that the role of the FA is a contentious area as the organisational body has brought both benefits and problems for women involved in football. In the case of the respondents here, these were experienced not just as players but also as contributors to the running of clubs. Tables 5.1a and 5.1b provide illustrative examples of the perceived advantages and disadvantages of FA governance that respondents identified. Full responses are detailed in Appendix 4.

Table 5.1a Advantages/benefits of women's football being run by the FA
(Respondents could give more than one answer)

Category (No. of respondents)	Answers (Illustrative open-ended answers)
Status/Profile/ Visibility (18)	Publicity/promotion; profile; more highly recognised; visibility, eg 'Would be less apparent if FA weren't involved, eg televised matches'
Organisational help/Structure (15)	Unified/organised/successful structure for all teams; co-ordinated approach; control; good communication links; monitoring
Developmental (14)	Better coaching education/opportunities; support; equity and inclusion, eg 'Developing coaching very supportive of female coaches, provides excellent courses to support & develop' 'get to enter FA Cup'
Financial/ Resources (11)	Financial support; funding/access; full time paid coaches; resources, eg 'Scope & finance available for development'
Links to men's game (10)	Same opportunities as men/seen as equal; run by same association; treated like/compared to men, eg 'Organisation & league structures more in line with males'
Acceptance/ Respectability (9)	More respect from male football; seen as equal; taken more seriously; acceptance by clubs/reputation eg 'Whole sport being kept under 'one roof' has to be an advantage - splinter associations never have same respect'
Knowledge/ Experience (7)	Experienced management; knowledge; professional, eg 'Fully understand what's going on'
None/Not sure (7)	None; not sure; not many; eg 'Have received no help whatsoever'
<i>No answer (8)</i>	<i>No answer</i>

Table 5.1b Disadvantages/problems with women's football being run by the FA

Assigned status/ Priority (16)	Men/men's football get priority; unequal support/treatment; slower development/ not taking responsibility; not taken as seriously as men's football eg 'Still seems to be very much a sideline to men's football although improved recently'
Male dominated/Sexist/ Traditional (13)	Don't listen to women; traditional/rigid; male dominated; lack of female role models/women with a voice; sexism, eg 'no process to be heard'; 'Set in their ways'
Elitist (11)	Don't listen to/make right decisions for/promote grassroots level; bigger/more popular clubs recognised/favoured; too elite, eg 'Only help out big local names, don't help out much with local teams'
No/Not sure (8)	None; don't think there are many; not sure, eg 'Can't envisage it being run any other way'
Organisation (7)	Haphazard development; poor communication; too bureaucratic, eg 'Regional levels are jumbled up which puts players off'
No understanding/ interest (6)	No interest/involvement; no knowledge/understanding eg 'Lack of understanding of female game- trying to be in line when the structure is different'
Financial/Resources (5)	Not enough financial support; not enough resources, eg 'Have promised to increase funding but hasn't happened'
Treated like men (4)	Treated like men; compared to men; want totally separate organisation, eg 'Opinions seems to always be, you want to play a man's game, you abide by exactly the same rules. Women have different needs and priorities'
<i>No answer (13)</i>	<i>No answer</i>

Most respondents identified one or more benefits to the relationship (Table 5.1a). The most frequent answers were those relating to status and profile (n=18), suggesting that these advantages are associated with being integrated into male football structures at all levels. It might however be argued that increased profile and status are what could be considered as 'passive' benefits (i.e. that the FA does not necessarily need to actively develop), arising automatically from being associated with the governing body of men's football. Association with the FA was nonetheless believed by respondents to bring a degree of respectability to women's football that helped them to be accepted as legitimate participants. Other more practical benefits were also identified – many respondents felt that there were benefits to organisational aspects of the women's game (n=15), and also in developmental matters (n=14). The integration/separation debate with reference to liberal/radical feminist standpoints is explored further below. In judging these benefits alongside the perceived disadvantages (Table 5.1b) it can be seen that at an early stage this data is beginning to highlight the tension between the increased opportunities and status gained from a liberal perspective, alongside the more radical criticism that this does not necessarily result in any great alteration to existing male-dominated structures.

When asked about the disadvantages of their club's relationship with the FA, (Table 5.1b) respondents highlighted how the most frequently cited problem was regarding the status and profile of the game (n=18). Despite being proposed as a major benefit, the fact that this status was significantly lower in relation to men's football was a particular point of tension. Additionally, the FA was felt to silence women both through the lack of female representation in the governing body, and the belief that they as women (and especially women situated at the grassroots of the sport, distanced from the elite clubs/participants that was in several cases considered as the FA's primary interest) were not being taken into consideration (n=13). Further, the perception that the FA were 'elitist' in their focus (n=11) suggests a tension within women's football, in that the top level of the sport was seen as being favoured over the grassroots level, despite the fact that this was where the vast majority of women and girls participate and that the game still holds a strong amateur status (Williams, 2003). It should however be noted that only three respondents were from clubs above the Combination level, with most participating at the regional grassroots levels of the sport (see Appendix 6 for league structures). Some respondents believed problems emerged through the FA treating women as 'the

same' as men (n=4), suggesting an apparent and potentially complex contradiction in this area, as being treated as 'the same' was also presented as an advantage by a number of participants. A lack of consensus between women involved in football concerning whether the future of women's football involves further integration or reverting back towards separation (Williams, 2003) – framed by understandings of gender difference and sameness – is evident here, and will be returned to in more detail in later chapters. Further questioning asked for potential improvements/future developments that respondents would like from the FA, but as little extra information was presented and most suggestions were in response to the disadvantages discussed above, these responses are not discussed here but are detailed in full in Appendix 4.

5.2.2 Male-Female Club Relationships

The questionnaire sought information on the proportion of female clubs linked to a male football club, and in those that were, investigated what this entailed and how women viewed the relationship. The aim was to provide an overview of how closely associated the club structure of women's football is with the male club structure, and to obtain an initial insight into the dynamics of this association. The majority (73%) of clubs in the study were linked with a male club; among those that had no links, the overwhelming majority (87%) felt that links were unlikely to be forged in the future, mainly because they did not want or need to be linked. The remainder of the section concentrated on those clubs with links, and attempted to obtain a clearer picture about what exactly these links entailed, and how satisfied the respondents were with the arrangement.

The forty clubs who described themselves as linked to a male club were asked to indicate what type of support they received (Table 5.2). The most common type of support was practical, with 24 clubs (60%) being regularly provided with a pitch. In terms of financial support however, 70% received no direct assistance. This may be an important indicator of the level of active commitment shown by male clubs, as providing financial assistance in terms of a monetary subsidy would involve directly donating to the club, at a financial cost to their own operations. Providing access to existing facilities, incurring little or no extra outlay, may indicate limited commitment and require minimal alteration to the male club's structure to allow for female players. This is not to detract from the value of men's clubs providing access to necessary facilities; nonetheless, some respondents expressed concerns in this area, as became evident when

they were asked about the advantages and disadvantages of being linked to a male club (Tables 5.3a & b):

Table 5.2 Support that female clubs (n=40) receive from male clubs to which they are linked

	REGULARLY	OCCASIONALLY	NEVER	UNSPECIFIED
Use of pitch	24 (60%)	6	10 (25%)	0
Clubhouse/social facilities	24 (60%)	4	12	0
Playing kit	17 (43%)	9	14	0
Use of training facilities	20 (50%)	4	16	0
Help with sponsorship	9 (23%)	14	16	1
Coaching/other staff	12 (30%)	9	18	1
Training equipment	10 (25%)	8	22	0
Transport	7 (18%)	9	24	0
Financial grant	3 (7%)	8	28 (70%)	1
Other	Joint insurance, notepaper, pay for kit to be washed, physio, charity cup			

Table 5.3a Benefits/advantages of this support to female clubs

Category	Benefits/Problems
Status/Attention (19)	Attraction of players; better image/publicity/exposure/profile; marketing/awareness/generate support through PR; use of name; status; taken more seriously, eg 'Carrying name of pro club sometimes a benefit when talking to media'
Practical (16)	Free facilities; pitch; transport; good quality pitch and training facilities; kit; clubhouse after home games; indoor facilities; have benefited with practical help but not financial
Development (15)	Attraction of players; coaching and support/courses; shows progression for players; helping to develop; creates role models for youngsters
Financial (14)	Free facilities keeps cost down/saves money; financial benefits; fund-raising; improved opportunities to obtain grants; easier external sponsorship; better marketing, eg 'Introduced to people who can help with all aspects of fund-raising'
Organisational help/Stability (9)	Enables both social and sport side of club to run smoothly/stability; knowledge and experience; eg 'work together/all one club - any manager can help any team; well-run club'; good to have someone to help
Involvement (5)	Good community support/links; matchday involvement; all one club, any manager helps any team; feel part of club
None (4)	Not much/very little; none; more of a benefit to men's club

Table 5.3b Problems/disadvantages of this support to female clubs	
None (21)	No/none; not to date
Practical (9)	Pitch; sometimes can't train at facilities; low priority with kit suppliers; have to have volunteers to upkeep promotional stuff – difficult to do, eg 'Occasional match postponement when men's teams have wrecked pitch on a Sat' 'Would be nice to play on 1 st team pitch sometimes rather than at training ground'
Financial (5)	Administration [of male club]; getting sponsorship; conflict of interest between media company and club (financial ties); been turned down locally for grants as it was felt that male club should help us, eg 'Leading businesses sponsor men's teams and assume that they in turn help us' 'Sponsors expect to get something in return from male club'
Expectations (3)	Expected to help out with men but they give no support; pressured by men that we do not put enough back in financially; formation of ladies team by men's manager has lead to some problems – men's team seem to think we are in competition for his attention & training facilities etc
Status (2)	Low priority with kit suppliers; end up promoting male club more than they promote female team
Communication (2)	Players told one thing by manager then receive call from club saying otherwise; lack of communication, don't come to committee meetings
Other (2)	Non-practical support not given but expected; sometimes support on sides can be abusive, with negative comments

The great majority of respondents from clubs that were linked to a male club identified benefits to the arrangement. Some clubs suggested financial benefits, despite the lack of direct financial assistance (n=14). These included receiving free or reduced rate facilities, with some also reporting that being linked to a male club helped them to gain external sponsorship or funding. Only four respondents felt that they received either very few or no benefits from the relationships. This positive picture was reflected to some degree in the data about disadvantages in the relationships. Few respondents reported problems: most who answered this question said that there were none (n=21). Several did however report practical issues, such as problems with the pitches, which emerged as the most common complaint. It appeared that although facilities were provided to three quarters of the clubs, these were not necessarily adequate. Overall, more clubs were satisfied (22) than not (17), although not a great majority. The response to questioning about the improvements that respondents would like to see (Table 5.3c), although limited in detail, is helpful in demonstrating how apparent satisfaction may mask a more complex situation and in some cases may simply reflect that little is expected from such relationships.

Table 5.3c Respondents' views on potential improvements to links between their club and the male club	
None/none expected (20)	No/not really/not at present/happy; difficult to get more help; already integrated; don't expect support; are invited to weekly meetings & get there when can; eg 'don't have a bad relationship and every effort has been made to improve things, just think that ladies football isn't supported v well by male clubs'
Financial (7)	Financial support; would like more help with transport to cut costs; help to find sponsorship; don't understand how self-funding we are, eg 'Keep trying but boils down to money' 'Don't see women as earning profit for club so reluctant with amount of financial support given'
Communication (6)	Communication could be improved; get together more often
Involvement (5)	More involvement/committee links; would like to get a fairer deal, eg 'Their four teams get priority over one women's team in everything from refs to pitches'
Practical (3)	Better support in terms of kit and playing facilities; help with transport to cut costs
Development (3)	Improve links between male club and youth set-up; help with qualified coaches
Support (3)	To be more socially linked; male players/committee members coming to matches, eg 'Need to accept and encourage women's football more'
Promotion (3)	Dedicated weekly page in the programme; tv; raise profile

These findings begin to suggest that although the survey attempted to gauge how satisfied and happy the respondents were with their relationship with a male club, there is an inherent difficulty in that there is no indication as to what their satisfaction is measured against. What is expected from relationships could not be effectively investigated in the survey, yet is crucial to an understanding of the dynamics of male-female club relations. 'Satisfaction' may therefore disguise a whole host of potential relations of power depending on what the women expect, how they interpret their own position within male football clubs, and women's position in football more generally. This is explored further below in the in-depth qualitative studies of individual women's experiences in a range of club contexts.

5.2.3 Summary

From the questionnaire data it became clear that not only were the majority of clubs linked to a male club, but that within this were complex relations of power. Although most respondents indicated overall satisfaction with their relationship and reported more benefits than problems, open-ended questions suggested that this might mask a more layered and nuanced experience. In some cases, satisfaction appeared to be judged

against relatively low expectations, and what began to emerge from some of the data was that this can vary between those involved in football, and can result in very differing understandings of equality and the position of women in football. The more in-depth phase of data collection was designed to explore this and other issues in this area.

5.3 Conceptualising 'Links' and Male-Female Club Relationships

This section introduces the clubs that participated in the in-depth stage of the study, and categorises them broadly in accordance to their structural differences and similarities. Issues of separation and integration are explored both in terms of clubs' structural links to men's football, and the differing ways in which the participants understood and made sense of these relationships for both themselves and members of their club. 'Links' is in itself a vague and broad concept, and a term that cannot be defined concretely as a measurement or indicator that will be relevant to clubs or individuals within this relationship. 'Links' was a term used in early phases of the research, and after success with the pilot stage of data collection, seemed the most broadly acceptable term to be used in both the questionnaire phase and the interviews. The intended use of this term, as explained to respondents at the outset, was any association with a male football club, from merely carrying the same name, through different degrees of assistance in practical or supportive terms, to full integration as one 'football club' and any other relationship that may fall in between. Interpreting the term in detail, and the connotations it holds, a 'link' denotes a connection, but at the same time, implies a degree of separation – the two clubs are portrayed as separate entities. The different manifestations of this resistance to separation are discussed below, but here clearly highlight the difficulty of finding and using broadly accepted terms.

Ten clubs were selected for further exploration on the basis of their variance in structures, size and relationship status. The characteristics of the clubs and interviewees are detailed briefly in Tables 5.5 and 5.6, and more fully in Appendix 5. Initially these clubs were categorised as either independent, linked or partnership (the term used to describe one integrated/mixed club rather than two separate 'linked' clubs).

Table 5.4 Club Demographics, Summer 2005

CLUB	CLUB SIZE	RELATIONSHIP WITH MALE CLUB(S)	OTHER INFORMATION
Independent#1	250+ affiliated women and girls. U4's through to senior women's team, new teams to be added for forthcoming season	No links to male football club, but all players (junior and senior) pay to be members of a private sports club to use their facility. A boys and men's football club (with the same name) are also affiliated to the same sports club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formed 1999 as senior women's club Junior section added 2003 Intentionally female-dominated hierarchy – 30/35 positions held by women, mostly players Close links with local schools – players/coaches deliver sessions to provide links to club
Independent#2	Senior team has one squad, juniors has U14's squad only	<u>Women's team under 'umbrella' of local male club</u> for last 2 years, also runs separate girls team that has no links to boys club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior team set up through interviewee's work to reduce crime through sport, played at male club ground but trained at community facilities Junior team also loosely linked to community work, played/trained on council facilities
Linked#1	Approx 18 registered players - one senior squad (had two the season before but <u>struggled for players</u>)	<u>Very 'loosely' linked to male pro club</u> <u>Previously linked to local male club</u> with junior girls teams, senior team broke away and joined new club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Had same name as local male pro club but no 'relationship' as such – played on school/council facilities, receive no practical support. Funding awarded to male club for female section was not distributed to them All positions in hierarchy held by players, had 3 different male coaches in previous season
Linked#2	Approx 16 registered senior players	<u>Linked to local male club</u> for last 8 years (with male senior, reserve, youth & boys teams) <u>Previously linked to different male club</u> , moved to different facility and retained male/kit before joining current club and changing name/kit to match male club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paid £100/year to use facilities at male club (changing rooms/clubhouse/pitch) but often had to play on reserve pitch which was a short drive away One player attended male club meetings once a month to feed information Same name/kit as male club All positions except 1 in hierarchy held by players - chair who was a players mum Had no coach at time of interview, had advertised
Linked#3	Approx 16 registered senior players	<u>Recently joined new male club</u> (local club with senior men's team only) Were made to leave <u>previous male club</u> 1 month prior to interview as could not be accommodated on pitch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Club committee positions held by players and 2 husbands Added new male club name to theirs, intended on changing name and kit previously after 1 year

Linked#4	200+ girls/women affiliated, 3 senior teams (dropped down to 2 for the next season due to lack of players) and junior teams from U8-U16	<u>Linked to local male club</u> with large junior boys section where they use all the facilities <u>Keep name from previous relationship with male pro club</u> and still play in their kit but no other links	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initially formed as supporters club in 1966, soon became involved with local male pro club that all players supported as part of community programme but played on alternative facilities Joined new male club in 2003 to use facilities but did not change name/playing kit, therefore retain links with both clubs Hierarchy made up of players/ex-players/parents, intentional balance between men/women
Linked#5 (Academy)	U12's, 14's, 16's and senior team (extra senior team and U10's for forthcoming season)	Very close <u>relationship</u> with local male pro club, funding from them to run centre of excellence for both junior and senior teams, <u>started out of male club</u> 6 years ago so no previous relationship Senior side only formed 1 year ago	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academy started as part of community section of male pro club to develop junior talent in area Were intending on becoming full-time for the upcoming season which involved girls playing for academy only (previously played for local clubs too) Part of male club hierarchy through holding position on community committee
Partnership#1	From U9's through to senior women's team	<u>Run as one club – boys, girls and women's (no male senior team)</u> <u>Formed out of male club</u> 16 years ago so no previous relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mixed club with one committee (dominantly parents) but each section (boys, girls, women) have own representatives Whole junior club played at same ground, senior women's team played at a different ground
Partnership#2	16 teams (boys and girls), girls go from U10's through to one senior team	<u>Linked to local boys club for 14 years (two men's senior teams not considered part of club)</u> , <u>referred to as 'junior' section</u> <u>Formed out of male club</u> so no previous relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whole club has one committee, but run as three sections of club – girls, boys, women's Two senior male teams but considered separate Whole club played at same facility
Partnership#3	U10's through to senior team	<u>Linked to local male club</u> <u>Formed out of male club</u> so no previous relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whole club has one committee, help each other out as much as possible Teams all played at same ground but trained in various places, inc public parks in the summer

No links

Juniors running as one mixed club (under same committee)

Large club with large junior section

No juniors at club

Male professional club links

Moved clubs

'Linked but separate' senior status

No male senior team

Formed from within male club

Mostly player-run club

Table 5.5 Interviewee Demographics, Summer 2005

INTERVIEWEE	NO. OF YRS AT CURRENT CLUB	NO. OF YRS IN FOOTBALL	ROLE AT CLUB	JOB OUTSIDE OF FOOTBALL	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Independent#1a	5	12	Secretary, occasional player	Shoe industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business background, utilised in club • Had sat on a number of local committees but eventually quit to spend time with own club • During study, left club to move abroad with work • Level 2 qualified coach
Independent#1b	5	14	Secretary, schools coach, team coach, player	Unemployed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recently made redundant, currently unemployed • Responsible for school-club links and coaching in schools • Level 2 qualified coach
Independent#2	2	10	Secretary, coach, player	Employed by the police in youth project, football club a part of this project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Found out not long prior to interview that current funding for employment was stopping • Qualified to coach a variety of sports through job • Interview took place 7/7/05, day of London bombings and day after London won the Olympic bid (both events discussed in interview)
Linked#1	1	1	Secretary, player	Football coach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youngest interviewee at 21 • Level 2 qualified coach
Linked#2a	4	17	Manager, coach, treasurer, player	Admin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joined club as player-manager but had been playing less and intended to give up playing before next season
Linked#2b	8	8	Secretary, player	Petrol station worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sits on local FA committee as club representative • Involved with FA in league restructuring

Linked#3	6	11	Treasurer, <u>player</u>	Nurse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trying to help keep lower county league running in hearing it may have to fold due to lack of organisation
Linked#4	28	35	Secretary, co-ordinator, 'A' team manager	<u>PE teacher</u> (secondary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sat on various local committees over the past 20 years, including under the Women's Football Association prior to FA takeover Had held most roles on club committee over years Also qualified referee and <u>level 2 coach</u> Runs football teams at school
Linked#5 (Academy)	1	15	'Officially' treasurer/secretary, but does admin for academy, coach, <u>player</u>	<u>Employed at male pro football club</u> through football in the community, girls academy part of this	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Had played for several clubs prior to Linked#5 <u>Level 3 (UEFA 'B') qualified coach</u> Work involved coaching outside of club to both girls and boys of a variety of ages
Partnership#1	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u> <u>(0 playing)</u>	Secretary	<u>Admin</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applied to join local girls league committee as a number of representatives had recently left
Partnership#2	<u>8</u>	<u>8</u> <u>(0 playing)</u>	Treasurer, CPO, fixture secretary	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Had fall out with current male chair of club and planning on leaving, looking into starting up own club
Partnership#3	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u> <u>(0 playing)</u>	Secretary, CPO	<u>Primary school teacher</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Also runs school girls football team Occasionally represents club at league meetings

Secretary

Player

Never played

Employment links to role at football club

Only been at one club

Qualified coach






Experience of being involved in football hierarchy outside of club (FA/league committees)

5.3.1 Club Categorisations

After considering each club as independent, linked or in partnership, it was decided that due to the variance amongst clubs who were 'linked' to a male club, categories had to be revised to account for this. In exploring relationships in more detail, it was decided that clubs that were linked could be further categorised in an attempt to account for the complexity of situations within this grouping, and how being 'linked' actually covered a broader range of positions with little coherence at times. The 'linked' category was subsequently split into three categories to begin to allow for the variance that could occur within this category (Table 5.6). The categorisation of clubs needs to be considered as an attempt to broadly conceptualise similarities whilst still acknowledging difference and the inconsistency of relationships within each grouping. The categories are ordered according to the degree of involvement that women's clubs have with a male football club (the practicalities of these relationships are detailed in table 5.2). A symbolic illustration is also given to further demonstrate the kind of relationship within the category in a simple representation.

In grouping clubs in this way, it is not to propose that there exist rigid categories that clubs fit into wholly. As will be demonstrated, the opposite emerged as there is a great deal of overlap between different positions, and clubs can be positioned in such a way that separation and integration can exist simultaneously. Similarly, although the ordering of the discussion represents a continuum of separation through to integration, it is again not to suggest that the clubs in the study occupy fixed positions from a finite range, or that movement between the positions is linear. The ordering of the analysis is simply to enable the discussion to explore the differing relationships discovered in this study, and how these relate both to each other and to the wider debates concerning separation and integration. The potential for fluid movement, multiple and often contradictory positioning and overlapping across differing positions is demonstrated throughout the analysis and is fundamental to the overall debate. The main features of the clubs as introduced in table 5.4, and interviewee demographics, are given in more detail in Appendix 5.

Table 5.6 Broad club categorisations

Category	Main features
<p>Independent (Independent#1 and Independent#2)</p> 	<p>No links to a male football club Have found own facilities Financial independence Strong participatory environment developed Recognise importance of own identity as female club Rejection of attempts by male clubs to become linked</p>
<p>A: Linked and separate but static (Linked#1 and Linked#2)</p> 	<p>Links to a male football club, but remaining a separate club Very little or no integration with male club structure Very little or no involvement in the club, feel that they are a separate and detached part No formal committee links Very little or no attempt to alter the situation – relationship involves a degree of permanence Financial independence Both clubs had previously been linked to a different male club</p>
<p>B: Linked and separate but evolving (Linked#3 and Linked#4)</p> 	<p>Links to male football club, but currently remain a separate club Demonstrated attempts to improve their situation More fluid than above – intention to move towards a partnership Financial independence No committee links at present but indicate a desire to make link Neither club currently held name of male club, but for differing reasons Use same facilities Both clubs had previously been linked to at least 2 different male clubs</p>
<p>C: Within male club structure but separate (Linked#5)</p> 	<p>Only one club in this category, contrasting situation Close support and backing from male club Independent section within club structure – a part of club, but a separate part Financially independent although receive an FA grant through the male club Evidence of donations from club – more than use of facilities Strong feelings of involvement Represented on male club committee, opinion there heard Very little or no integration with male players Same name Do not use same facilities</p>
<p>Partnership (Partnership #1, Partnership#2, Partnership#3)</p> 	<p>Integrated at all levels, joint structures including committees Financial integration – ‘all one pot’ Joint facilities – ownership rather than hiring out Strong junior focus Senior male team either only loosely linked or separate part of club Mixed-club, run as one club, cross-over between male/female sections Female section formed within male clubs so no previous relationships</p>

5.4 Dynamics Within and Between Club Categories

Issues that emerged within each category, and between the different categories, will now be explored through reference to three themes that were identified by the women interviewed as significant outcomes of their relationship with (or distancing from) a male football club. These were:

Financial arrangements:

- Direct financial assistance
- Issues with external funding
- Financial control

Club development:

- The future of the club
- The type of environment developed
- How the male-female club relationship was/might be developing

Perceived status:

- Priority within the relationship
- Issues regarding access to facilities
- Position within the male club

In the account that follows, the attention paid to these issues varies for different categories of club, reflecting differing levels of significance reported by interviewees. Category labels are used with capitalisation when applied to clubs (e.g. Independent#2) and without capitalisation when referring to interviewees (e.g. independent#2).

5.4.1 Independent Female Clubs

Survey data showed that the most respondents described their club as linked in some way to a male football club. Only two interviewees described their clubs as 'independent'. The experiences of interviewees at Independent#1 and Independent#2 will be explored in an attempt to understand how existing as an independent female club is possible, how this is interpreted, and the perceived benefits of this status.

Financial Arrangements

In terms of financial arrangements, retaining separation was considered a benefit for two reasons; firstly clubs maintained control of their own financial situation and resources, and secondly this prevented financial exploitation and uneven distribution of funding.

"a lot of clubs have like, they're trying to collect all this money together, and I'm like well, it shouldn't really be that, it should, I want them to have, like the best footballs, the best goals, I don't want them turning up with like set goals all taped together and looking like a right trumpy mess, I want them to look as professional as possible so that, any money, or any fundraising we do, always go back into like, put it back in the kids or the coaches really ...financially I just think, if we run our own business, we spend it back in the club, and it will not go to somebody else"

Independent#1a

Financial independence was perceived as a major benefit to separation; however as established below, financial independence was not an issue unique to clubs who are structurally separated from a men's club. These interviewees did however recognise that being financially autonomous was an advantage of their separatist status, and allowed their clubs to maintain control of this area. In this vein independent#2 described how she resisted advances from local male clubs to integrate with her female junior team:

"I know that er [boys club] were trying to set one up, that's, that's one of the things, cos they wanted me to link into them, but when I actually sat and spoke to em, I got a call from [boys club] and a call from [boys club], and because they knew that we'd put in for Charter Standard²⁹ they wanted me to take my team to them, and become [boys club] and [girls club], you know, mixed, and I was like, no thank you very much, you know, I've not built this club up for five years for someone else to take our name, and use the Charter Standard as you know, a way of, and I though, you cheeky b...maybe it was a way for them to sorta get a girls team quickly, you know, because I know if you have got a mixed club, you obviously get more funding, and things like that, but I though no, I'm not having any of that, I don't care."

Independent#2

There is an understanding here that male clubs can benefit financially from being integrated with a girls team. However there is more concern directed towards how male clubs can automatically 'acquire' an established girls club without having to not only establish a girls section themselves, but also not being required to demonstrate a genuine commitment to developing female football. This is likely to be affected by the fact that independent#2 did build up her club herself, as part of her employment (see Table 5.5); feelings of ownership are likely to be stronger in this case, and being in the position to acquire facilities elsewhere encouraged her to resist the notion that integration is necessary. Ownership and control is therefore important to the independent#2 not just in terms of financial arrangements but also in her determination to retain the club as her own, despite having acknowledged that becoming a mixed club would have improved access to funding. Financial independence was therefore achieved, due to their separate status. The desire to retain ownership and control of their own club was more significant, particularly at Independent#1:

"we've been approached by so many of the men's teams, to join them, four, I think have approached us...to join them, so we must be doing something right, if they want us, to join their clubs, but every time they wanna take away our name"

Independent#1a

"I think what's good with the girls, is that we've got like our own brand name, everybody knows [her club], and if we joined, obviously it would have to be a different name, yeah...we looked at going up to [boys club], we looked at going down [] Road, we looked at [boys club], but, we didn't feel that any of them was, good enough, cos we've got our own identity, and we didn't want to lose it"

Independent#1b

The club size and status created a strong position for the interviewees to resist advances from male clubs to make links, contrasting the situation at clubs where links are understood as necessary (discussed further below). The interviewees succeeded in establishing their independent club in the wider context, believing their name to be recognisable and something that they did not want to relinquish.

Development

A significant aspect of the independent clubs was that all interviewees felt that they had created spaces where their club could develop and promote alternative values. Hargreaves (1994), in her discussion of female-only sport clubs, similarly describes how separatist spaces can allow women's teams to create and maintain their own traditions and values away from the dominant male culture. Retaining independence and separation allows individuals at these clubs to foster the type of environment they understand to be the most beneficial for developing girls in football. At both Independent#1 and Independent#2, success appeared to be understood more dominantly in terms of development and in promoting alternative values such as involvement and participation. Both interviewees at Independent#1 alluded to this, and described how they had developed a close 'family' environment in which to cultivate and maintain these values:

"I think our main success is because we all, we all, like, there's a fair few of us who started it who all knew each other, who were fairly close, but now, everybody knows someone, and I think its just cos we're that, close-knit, we are all like a big massive family"

Independent#1b

"I'd say we're successful in running a big family, erm, we've had a couple of teams who've done the league and cup double in their first season which I also think is successful, erm, but what we've tried to do is erm, for example, I keep saying like the under eights, but they're our newest team, there's thirty girls there, and we could quite easily pick an elite twelve, and say right that's our team, but we as a club have tried to split them into three groups...we've split all three equally, so the idea is, rather than having one elite team, I'd rather have three teams. Now whether that's gonna be successful in the future or they're gonna win trophies, only time will tell but, I do feel like we've recruited more players cos we've been able to give everybody a chance to play, whatever

their ability, it doesn't matter if you can't kick a ball, we still get them involved. And that's what I think it should be"

Independent#1a

Although 'achievement' in terms of success is still evident, and is difficult to avoid in competitive sport, it is mentioned as secondary ('*also* think is successful') to the participatory 'family' environment this respondent feels her club has been successful in developing. This is demonstrated by her resistance to an elitist model in her club in favour of providing football opportunities for as many girls in the local area as possible. This liberal understanding of equality of provision existed *alongside* normally oppositional radical notions of difference and separation that were drawn upon in describing how girls should be provided their own space in order to ensure priority. However one particular situation highlighted the difficulty in preventing this alternative environment from being impacted by achievement-orientated discourses from outside of their own context:

"we do the under eights friendly tournament, 'friendly', first introduction to football, so I wrote to all the five clubs who have our age group. One club put three under nines in it, three under nine teams, who were already playing league football, one guy put under tens in it, and these are two guys who have been involved in girls football for longer than me, twenty years one of them, and I said, not directly, I thought I'm not gonna stop them playing cos the girls had turned up, and its not fair to make them suffer. I said erm, do you think that's really a good idea, he said yeah, its alright innit? And then all he wanted to know was the results. I thought, you muppet, you're not interested in, you just want your club to be seen that you went into this friendly league and my god you won everything! ...I think well I know what you're doing and I think its wrong, so in the end you just try and take a step back and say right we just do, we'll do what we thinks right for our club, and then that, that will prove that its been a good steady way to build the girls up into football, you know what kids are like at seven and eight, our lot put it in the wrong goal! They're all cheering, really fooled the opposition that did! But we just were making it fun, and they're like, 'I don't know what you lot are teaching these kids'"

Independent#1a

This explicit emphasis on 'fun' for junior girls in football can conflict with wider discourses of achievement and success *outside* of this environment. Promoting alternative discourses of participation and enjoyment is therefore limited to the context of this particular club, as acknowledged by the comment 'we'll do what we think's right for our club'.

Interviewee independent#2 also demonstrated how her criticism of over-competitive aims conflicted with the participatory environment she is attempting to develop at her club:

"one of them was in the dressing room and was like 'what if we lose ten nil?' and I says I'm not bothered, you're just here to get a bit of experience"

"you find some of the teams, well, you'd think it were the premiership, you know what I mean, it just seems to be all about winning and losing"

Independent#2

A particularly striking example of the interviewee's promotion of enjoyment over success was a situation where two more talented girls were dominating her team, and although this proved successful in terms of winning matches, this appeared to counter the participatory environment she was trying to develop:

"not last season just gone but the season before, we had actually won the league, but I didn't, I didn't enjoy it at all, because we had erm sort of one or two girls who thought that they were David Beckham and Michael Owen³⁰, yeah they were very good players but they sort of started trying to run the team themselves, from the pitch, and then the mums and dads were trying to, and I thought, what am I gonna do, how am I gonna get rid of em, you know, cos they really are spoiling it, and erm, just, like none of the girls could get the ball cos they would dribble right the way up the pitch and score a goal, you know what I mean, all the time, so erm, I spoke to [], my work college, I said you know I've got to get rid of these players, they're upsetting everyone, I'm gonna lose everybody because of these players. And he says obviously you can't really 'sack' em, he said sub em, sub one for the other, so we did this in one match...in the end it did work, they did go to, they went to [club], so them two left, and I got five back that had left because of them. So I knew I'd done the right thing...And this year we came, er, joint third in the league, but everyone's smiling, no-one isn't enjoying it, so, I mean I even lost sleep, cos I was, I didn't know what I was gonna do, I mean at one time I was ready to pack in like, and the secretary, who's worked with me for five years, with [junior team], and she says to me don't let two girls upset you and stop you doing what you love doing"

Independent#2

Her personal values are clearly directed more towards enjoyment and participation in a harmonious environment, and running an all-female team allowed these values to be promoted and controlled. This is highlighted in how she managed to modify the situation and return the focus of the club to participation, even at the sacrifice of success. This does not imply that a separate environment for girls would never be associated with competitive success, or even that this should be sacrificed in favour of participatory values. What is significant here is the control the interviewee felt she had over her own team environment which allowed her to maintain the development of her own alternative values away from dominant male norms demonstrated elsewhere in football.

Despite advocating the benefits of their independent female environment, both interviewees at Independent#1 did however demonstrate a desire to develop their female club into a mixed club:

“we are looking at starting our own boys section...my ambition is to be a ‘Super Club’³¹. But we run it under our own, er, way of running things rather than inherit a boys’ club that’s already got their set up”

Independent#1a

This approach to integration involves a mixed-sex club developing from *within* their girls club; the established norm would therefore be a female one, and could potentially counter the problems relating to equality that can often emerge from liberal ‘equal access’ policies that simply add females to existing male-dominated structures (discussed further below). Interviewee#1a did however illustrate a significant hurdle to her club’s independent status and control over their development, in that this clashed with the aims of the governing body to develop girls’ football by integrating females into clubs where possible:

“County FA are putting in obstacles now, cos we won’t do what they want us to do...they’ve tried to force our hand twice to two men’s teams, they tried to make us join [male club], and then [male club] junior boys, and they’re just basically blackmailing us into doing it now, telling us they’re gonna take our community status off us if we don’t join them”

Independent#1a

The interviewee’s perception that the FA is pushing her female-only club towards integration suggested that retaining separation is difficult due to the inferiority often assigned to women’s football, and that independent#1a may not have as much control over the development of her club as initially expressed. Williams (2004: 120) claims that football administrators see independent women’s clubs as ‘an extremely low priority’ and withhold support, with little recognition of the potential successes of this type of club. This is clearly evident here, and at one point it is even accepted that they would end up sacrificing their independent status and joining with a male football club, despite the interviewee’s concerns about sustainability and the (limited) commitment male clubs show to women and girls:

“It’s [becoming linked to a male club] gonna happen cos the FA are gonna push it, but, what frustrates me is these teams are not sustaining girls in sport, because the teams that had, the men’s teams that had girls teams years ago haven’t got any now, and its like erm, its like incest, they have them for two seasons and then they drop them out, and then

another one picks them up, and these teams, yeah, they've only been established for a couple of seasons and then they're out of the system"

Independent#1a

The FA (2007) state on their website that "becoming an FA Community club³² should be the ultimate goal for hundreds of clubs at grassroots level...gaining the kite-mark has already been a significant factor in assisting clubs funding applications by providing evidence of a commitment to providing a sporting facility for use by the entire community". Clubs are encouraged to acquire Community Standard which involves providing opportunities irrespective of gender (and religion/ability), through the suggestion that this improves the chance of receiving funding. There appeared to be a significant tension here between the developmental aims of this interviewee who runs an independent female club, and the governing body of football. This questions the appropriateness of a male governing body overseeing the development of a female sport (an issue introduced in the survey data above and discussed further in chapter eight). Concerns are further advanced by the failings of links at the elite level of women's football, as discussed in section 1.2.3. However despite these failings, maintaining separation from the male club structure of football emphasises difference in relation to the visible male model, which contributes to the construction of the female version as a weaker alternative. This issue also highlights how challenging these understandings of inferiority is particularly difficult when functioning outside of those discourses that support it, as participating in a separate sporting structure may allow women to be more personally empowered, but has no potential to challenge the existing gender order in sport (Bryson, 1987; Messner & Sabo, 1990; this was explored in chapter two).

Perceived Status

Being separate and independent was understood by independent#1a to create a position where girls could hold priority status at their own club, in their own space, without being in the shadow of male teams:

"there was a local club, that used to have a girls team, and they used to put them on the mankiest pitch, in the corner, covered in dog whatever, you know out of sight out of mind but they could say they had a team, and I think no, I want to be the priority, not the bloody wicked stepsister sitting in the corner that doesn't get anything, with the manky kit that the lads don't want any more with mould on"

Independent#1a

Here the interviewee demonstrates how her independent club is better positioned to give priority to females than established male clubs who 'have a girls team'. Again this indicates a high level of perceived control, in that the interviewee feels her clubs' separate status creates the opportunity where priority for girls can be achieved. However despite their independence, interviewees at Independent#1 were not able to acquire their own facilities and therefore had to make a link with a privately-owned sports club in order to access those resources required to survive as a football club. This underlines how existing as totally separate female football club was not possible for Independent#1, and being linked to the wider sporting structure created a relationship that conflicted with her aims to make girls a priority:

"they [Sports Club] don't let us hardly ever use the senior pitches, that's for the blokes"

Independent#1b

"they [Sports Club] got another two full pitches and two mini pitches, off the back of being a club that offers everything. Yet we can't train down there, cos the dog shows are on, and its like, you've just had two hundred and fifty grand to build extra pitches for girls teams, and we can't train on it six months of the year cos its got caravans on it"

Independent#1a

The female club's perceived low status is not simply in relation to other (male) teams who also play at the club, but also other commitments that the sports club has that take priority over the girls. Again there is reference to the fact that the club benefits financially in terms of funding from having females affiliated at the club, but that the girls and women do not directly benefit from this as they are prevented from using the extra resources. Also, despite having financial independence, they do not have control over the external funding awarded to their club, which parallels with Linked#1 (described below). In the case of Independent#1 therefore, separation is achieved in respect to the environment fostered at the club, but a degree of integration is enforced structurally due to the necessity of resources.

In summary, the two clubs in this category were similar in that they both offered football to girls only, and for this reason, maintained a degree of control over their own clubs not just in terms of day-to-day operation but also in the type of environment that can be created and maintained. However the clubs differed in their potential to run entirely independently, indicating the difficulty of remaining totally separate from male-dominated sporting structures. Independent#1 were not able to exist in total separation; due to the size of their club, the need for suitable facilities enforced links with a sports

club, where problems with access to resources and connected perceptions of low status were experienced. There is also the strong indication that operating as an independent female club is in tension with the FA's aims to integrate female teams into male clubs (supported by their Charter/Community Standard initiatives) and therefore results in a problematic conflict over the development of independent female clubs.

5.4.2 Linked Category A: 'Linked and Separate' but Static (with limited attempts to integrate)

Two clubs in the study, Linked#1 and Linked#2, had similar relations with a male club in that they were (by their own admission) 'linked' to a male club, but still remained significantly separate (see demographic descriptions above, Table 5.4). In terms of integration, the discussions with the interviewees at the respective clubs suggested that despite being linked to a male club, they were not integrated, creating a relationship where the women were 'borrowing' from the male club but functioning as a separate (but not independent, due to the links) football club in their own right. However the perceived necessity of links creates a position for women where there is no alternative to accepting existing and often-enforced relations, and control over their own club can diminish. Liberal feminists have advocated for women to be given the opportunity to join existing sporting structures (Thompson, 2002); however as will be explored in this section, critics of this agenda have highlighted how this approach unquestioningly accepts men's sports practices and organisation (Scruton & Flintoff, 2002) and does little to challenge the male dominance of such gendered structures (Weedon, 1999).

Financial Arrangements

Neither Linked#2 nor Linked#1 received financial assistance from the male club that they were 'linked' to, and interviewees at the respective clubs described how they funded themselves mainly through subscriptions. No financial benefit was therefore deemed to result from the relationship, but linked#1's experience suggests that FA initiatives to encourage integration between male and female clubs creates the potential for exploitation, and financially independent clubs can still 'lose' money:

"we had all the problem with [male club], that they got funding for the women's team which is obviously us, and didn't give us a penny, of our funding, they didn't give us transport, they didn't give us training facilities, we were meant to get all that as part of the

funding, kit, I mean we're meant to have the same kit, training kit, bags, whatever, we didn't get nothing, so [manager] then decided, we're not affiliated with them anymore, but we are, cos obviously we've still got the name [male club] Ladies, so we're still seen to be with them, but we don't, obviously they did us out of nine grand, or the chairman did us out of nine grand, so its like, we could have had so much better, so we make do with what we get, we fund ourselves"

Linked#1

The last sentence here demonstrates the complexity of issues surrounding agency when women are integrated into existing male structures. Despite describing at length how they have been exploited financially, there is little desire to challenge the situation. In this respect, relations of power are severely unbalanced with the interviewee and her club not only being restricted access to financial and material resources but also in feeling that this imbalance cannot be challenged. This continued:

"when they found out that they weren't, they'd had our cheque and we, it weren't even like they gave us a thousand pound, they just kept it all. I mean we were meant to have, they were meant to provide us with so many tickets for the match...there's literally nothing the team can do, it's up to whoever's running it, which is [coach] and that, and if they're willing to just let it go then we'll let it go...I don't think [coach]'s got it in him any more, he's had enough, he really has had enough, he says 'I'm not bothered, we'll just run it ourselves'"

Linked#1

The awareness that her club have been exploited financially is evident, and despite being angered personally at this, the lack of an alternative to accepting this exploitation, even as a collective, allows it to continue:

"J: Do you get anything from the men's club?

linked#1: No...just the name.

J: Do you ever feel like, chopping it completely?

linked#1: Erm... I don't know, I mean they say, yeah, we did have a meeting with all players whatever, and they've said leave it, we've got the name anyway its ours, they can't take it away from us, so...we're set up, we can do what we like... I don't think they're that bothered, I mean they don't help us, they don't do nothing for us, it's not as though, it's not as though if they weren't there, we'd fold"

Linked#1

Having a name as a visible link to a male football club brings a certain degree of status to the women's club, that encourages people to 'automatically assume you're affiliated with a big club, when in a way we are, but, not close enough' (linked#1). This benefit is tied to a drive for success in achievement terms, in that better players will be attracted to the male club name (explored further below).

The separation/integration debate is complex here – on the surface it appears that the interviewee retains very little control over her own club, corresponding with critics of liberal agendas who question exactly how much ownership and control women have over their own sport and sporting experiences if they integrate into established male structures (eg Lenskyj, 1994). However the enforced separation due to the lack of help and interest provided by the male club may actually allow the women at Linked#1 to maintain a large amount of control over their club, not just in retaining financial independence and control over material resources but in creating the potential to preserve a female-only culture for women to experience football, similar to the independent clubs above. The comment ‘they don’t do nothing for us, its not as though if they weren’t there, we’d fold’ highlights how despite the implied integration in the name of the women's club, they actually run independently, and are therefore not reliant on support that could be withdrawn. Again, integration and separation is experienced simultaneously, and despite suggesting links, Linked#1 is actually much more of a separate entity than their name implies.

Development

In the case of Linked#2, financially the relations are perceived to be satisfactory by the two interviewees at the club, in that they feel they receive adequate material benefits in return for their financial donations. However discussions surrounding the development of girls’ football was their main concern, that there had been little attempt by the male club to integrate the women's team into their club:

“they just don’t seem to have any oomph to develop anything, for girls. I mean, you know, fair enough, it’s their club, maybe it is a boys’ club, I dunno, maybe we’re just lucky that however [player] got us in at the time she did we were just very lucky, but I think it’s a just shame that there isn’t that link there that they want to see us develop. Because they can see...we’ve steadily climbed, and this year we’re gonna finish second. So it’s a shame that the progression that’s been seen on the pitch hasn’t been followed by them going ‘hey, you’re actually getting really good, lets get on the bandwagon’”

Linked#2a

The separate and inferior status the participant feels her women's club is assigned is highlighted strongly in the comment ‘it’s their club, maybe it is a boys’ club’. ‘Their club’ is a strong indicator of their separate status, despite being more linked than Linked#1 above as they utilised the facilities at the male club. This is further emphasised by the feeling that they are ‘very lucky’ to be part of the club at all. When questioned

whether her concern about the lack of development drive had been brought to the attention of anyone at the male club, she responded: "I don't think we'd want to ruin anything". This suggests that existing between full integration and independence can be problematic in that links are always at risk of being severed, reflecting a lack of control; in response to this, women at the club may feel unable to question their status or push for more help as this would put the relationship at risk. Women can be denied a voice in this type of relationship and again offered little alternative to accepting their perceived inferiority. There exists here a delicate balance between separation and integration, where the women's team are understood as a part of the male club, but a very separate part. This contradictory situation can position the women interviewed as trying to maintain this balance, preventing attempts to move the club further towards either integration or separation but maintaining an ambiguous position in between.

In discussing future football ambitions, it was however indicated that links could assist with the development of Linked#1. Integration was understood as assisting with the interviewee's achievement-orientated aims in bringing status to her club through the association with a male professional football club:

"if we were just called [male local club] like we were, how many players are gonna be attracted to come to [male local club]. And decent players, fairly decent players, where if you got the name [male pro club] Ladies, they automatically assume you're affiliated with a big club, when in a way we are, but, not close enough. And its [male pro club] Ladies, so you'll get, you'll get people who think 'well I'm decent, I can play', and they'll turn up, instead of getting people who think well I just wanna play football"

Linked#1

Having the same name as a visible male football club is seen in this case to be beneficial as it will attract not just an increased number of players to the club, but high quality players that will contribute to their competitive success. The extent to which the clubs are integrated is therefore not important; involvement is *not* necessary but carrying a recognisable name that *suggests* some parallels with their successful male counterparts is. With regards to the integration/separation debate, the exposure provided by being *associated* with a professional male club does not imply *integration*; clubs can therefore portray integration yet retain (often enforced) separate structures. Further, integration can be portrayed on the part of the male club, without it actually happening, in order to 'tick the boxes' regarding gender equity provision and attract external funding that they are not required to spend on developing an equitable football environment. Linked#1

operated as an independent club, yet implied integration by retaining the name of a professional male club, and enduring what are potentially extremely unbalanced relations of power in order to maintain this link. This resonates with the concern highlighted by radical feminists that integrating with male structures can result in inequitable experiences for women and girls in sport as male-dominated structures and practices continue unchallenged (Hargreaves, 1994).

Perceived Status

The 'linked but separate' status of Linked#2's relationship with a male club and its implications was further highlighted in discussions of the status the women at the club felt that they were held. In terms of access to the facilities at the football club, in particular pitches, priority was often cited as a frustration:

"when we can't have the main pitch and we have to play on [reserve pitch], cos everybody grumbles, they don't like playing there cos its too wet, but it's not much of a problem"

Linked#2b

"our fixtures have been, well they feel like they've been really strung out this year, we've had quite a lot of cancellations and since Christmas we hardly seem to have played really...if there's the slightest dampness on it they don't want two games on it, or if they've played on a Saturday they don't want it used on a Sunday. But the [reserve pitch] is just a bog, so if its not allowed to be played on [main pitch] then quite often its too boggy on the [reserve pitch] as well, so we can't play at all"

"It's [reserve pitch] not too bad when the goalposts are up, that's really good

J: The goalpost fell down?

linked#2a: No, they just, they had the crossbar taped on at one point"

Linked#2a

The quality of facilities provided to the women's team is cited as a problem, in that they rarely get to use the pitch designated for use by the senior male team. The alternative was a reserve pitch, away from the ground and that the interviewees perceived as substandard and perhaps even unsafe (although conflictingly also described as 'not that bad'). The fact that the senior women's leagues in the UK all have fixtures scheduled on Sunday afternoon is an indicator of how the female structure of football is fitted in 'around' the more established structure of men's football, so a women's team who use the facilities at a male club are automatically assigned last place in the order of play over the weekend. The structuring of fixtures in this way further reinforces the inferiority that can surround female teams, both in terms of priority at clubs and the status of women's football in general (Williams, 2003). In terms of sharing the pitch with a boys team, both

interviewees felt that they had made progress with the male club in that they had been given priority over junior male teams at the club:

“the problem on the [reserve pitch] is that [local team] boys use it as well, and we did have one week where we actually went down to the [reserve pitch] and they were already on it. We were like ‘you can’t play on this, we’ve got a County Cup game, what are you doing?!’ so we had to have a bit of a discussion, and they moved, they moved halfway through their game...we’ve got in place now that they check with us if we need it, and we’ve got first choice on it, so that’s a step forward, but like I said the [reserve pitch]’s a bog really so its not great”

Linked#2a

“like with the pitches. ‘*Please* can we have it [main pitch] more!’ Going down there before to ask, like with the [reserve pitch], having to wait until after Christmas, ‘*please* can we have it, cos we’ve got a cup game’...they try to give us preference if we’ve got a cup game”

“It’s not so bad with the boys, it’s mainly the men. Occasionally if we’ve had a clash of fixtures, they’ve actually changed the boys around, which has helped”

Linked#2b

There is here a slight inconsistency with the lack of voice expressed earlier, in that linked#2b states how she does ask to be given priority on the main pitch ‘more’. Despite this, their low priority regards pitch access is accepted by both interviewees to the point that they *expect* very little in regards to priority; being given priority ahead of junior boy’s teams is perceived as a ‘favour’, and linked#2a describes being assigned first choice on the reserve pitch as a positive step despite detailing its significant drawbacks and the fact that the only other teams that use it are boys teams from a different club. This issue was introduced previously in the survey data, in that satisfaction with club relationships, as in this case, can be greater if the women have low expectations. Again this reflects criticisms of ‘adding’ women to existing sporting structures, in that the male-dominated nature of structures remains unchallenged (Thompson, 2002) and women have to fit around existing arrangements. In the case of football, the lack of facilities available to women outside of established male clubs appears to influence the extent to which women accept substandard conditions and low status, as they often have little alternative. The naturalness of male access to football resources and structures serves to maintain the naturalisation of men and boys with football and reinforce the role of women as inferior ‘tenants’ at clubs. Interviewee linked#1 also stated how her women’s team was also prevented from playing on the male senior pitch in the passages of talk above, and had to find facilities elsewhere. Access to facilities and the quality of facilities provided to women’s teams is highly demonstrative of the low status assigned

to female clubs, in particular when they are seen as 'hiring out' facilities to a separate club rather than being integrated into the male club.

To conclude, despite these clubs receiving different support from their male clubs, they are conceptualised here together due to the similar status they are both understood to hold; linked but with no integration, and with minimal attempts or intentions to integrate. Neither club had representation on the male club committee, which further emphasises separation and severely restricted the female voice in the relationship. Both clubs represented a strong example of why the liberal feminist agenda has received so much criticism; in both cases here, females have simply been 'added' to an existing male-dominated structure, and have had to accept existing arrangements within this structure. The interviewees demonstrated this by their perceived inability to alter (or even attempt to influence) existing gendered relations, even in the situation as described by linked#1 where no practical or other provisions were gained from the relationship.

5.4.3 Linked Category B: 'Linked and Separate' but evolving (working towards more integration/involvement)

Discussions with interviewees at Linked#3 and Linked#4 indicated that their 'linked' clubs were more integrated in certain areas than the two clubs examined above. They both also indicated that further integration was something that they desired *and* were working towards for their clubs. In both of these cases, the women's clubs had moved from one male club to another in an attempt to improve their situation, reflective of how their inferior status was not unquestioningly accepted in previous relations with a male club. When discussing why clubs were linked, both interviewees highlighted the infancy of the structure of women's football, in that clubs 'need' to borrow facilities from the more established structure of male football:

"a ground would be the problem, that's where you have to have the links...I think it only came about because we needed a pitch"

Linked#4

"Facilities, I think its facilities, erm, for starters if you wanna play in the women's FA Cup you gotta have all these facilities, you've gotta have clubhouse, separate changing rooms, barriered off area. To have these, you've gotta go to a men's senior team football club, that have got these, and then they're gonna want you to change your name to their name anyway, so, that's how you get the link int it"

Linked#3

Facilities were of great concern here, and the two interviewees above clearly demonstrate how they understand the only way to access the required facilities is through an established male club – they see no alternative. Participant linked#4 also described her club's failed attempt to acquire their own facilities, further emphasising the perceived necessity of links to a male football club.

Financial Arrangements

The analysis of Linked Category A above highlighted how joining an established male club as an established women's team can create the potential for conflict and tension between the two clubs, both in terms of access to financial and material resources and females constantly being judged against male norms. However both interviewees in this category believed that they could 'sell' the financial benefits of having a women's club, to not only benefit from the relationship, but also as a basis to move further towards integrating their women's team into the male club. In these two cases, the male club initiated the links; Linked#3 moved to their new club after hearing they were interested in having a ladies club, and linked#4 described how their relationship took form because of both their necessity for facilities on their part and the male clubs desperation for a female section to boost their community status:

"one of our teams started to play there, then a couple of our junior teams started to play there, and then they sort of said, well how about the whole club moving there, and they got lots of funding because of that, they've got their community status now, they wanted a women's team badly, cos they're one of the biggest community status clubs, I think in the country"

Linked#4

Financially, this reflects the circumstances in the case of Linked#1 as described above; however the relationship is portrayed differently here with linked#3 in particular not only acknowledging this concept but also perceiving this as a positive situation which they also benefit from:

"they said to us, what can you offer us, and we were saying, cos they've actually got plans as well to get a second pitch, to extend the clubhouse, to get new brick changing rooms, so they've got loads of plans, so we've said you can use us to get extra grants, for having a ladies team, and also we'll bring extra revenue behind the bar"

linked#3: "we'll keep our own identity, its just they can use us to get money, grants and things, which we've quite happily said do it, go for it
J: Do you think you'll get the benefit of any of that?"

linked#3: Well, if they get a second pitch done, that'll be even better, because if we ever do get a reserve team, we'll have to play them somewhere else anyway... if they've got two pitches, at least then you've got the options. So that'd be good"

Linked#3

Participant linked#3 here suggests that she understands there to be value in having a women's team at a men's football club, and utilises this to her own clubs advantage. The relationship here, in contrast to the previous analysis of the situations at Linked#1 and Linked#2, appears to be on a more reciprocal (albeit tenuous) basis and the value of her women's club is used in an attempt to further their own needs. The interviewee appears satisfied with this situation, stating how they insisted on keeping their own name and therefore their own identity, reflective of how male dominance is not totalising as women can utilise some power for their club's benefit. In terms of integration, there appears to be very little; separation is retained, particularly in the case of financial independence, which was again believed to benefit both the male and female clubs:

"We'll always keep our own financial things, and our own committee, erm, I mean its just a lot safer that way, plus the fact that's something they want as well, they wanted to make sure we were self-sufficient, before we went to them...its just safer, that way they can't go and rip us off and we can't go just, bludging money of them"

Linked#3

However despite being reflective of a more (although still far from) equal balance of power between the clubs, it was still suggested that in remaining as two separate clubs, the delicate balance of separation and integration still had to be carefully managed. Linked#3 in particular described how she felt those at her club would have to work at the relationship in order to maintain the benefits:

"My husband, he'll aim to get on the men's committee, obviously we'll give it a few months and once they get started he'll approach them and see if he can sit on as a representative. I think it's a good idea because then that way, if there's anything needs doing down the clubhouse, like people manning say the tea and coffee stall during a game, or something, you get to find out at committee meetings don't you and you can offer your services, and that way, you're keeping the feeling good between the two clubs"

Linked#3

'Keeping the feeling good between the two clubs' not only suggests that the interviewee feels that they need to successfully manage their position, but also reinforces the separate nature of the women's and men's clubs. This contradicts the rest of this passage, which implies that integration was something that she would like to develop, in having a women's club representative on the male club committee. Akin to Linked#2 above, it

seems that despite recognising the benefits they reap from the situation, the relationship is still fragile and it is the female side of club that need to put in the effort to make the relationship work, which may again restrict the voice of the female club.

Development

At Linked#4, it was felt that recently the relationship between the two clubs had been shifting towards integration structurally (they had in the past year put representatives from the female club onto the male club committee) and were developing together:

"at the moment we are developing a partnership with [male club], so more, we were kind of landlord and tenant, but now we're on their committee, and we are kind of moving forward together"

"we're gonna have places on their committee, and run as a partnership, whereas before they felt as though it was their club and they were just hiring it out to us"

Linked#4

The 'landlord-tenant' analogy is fittingly applied to describe the relations between clubs in this situation, where a women's team joins an established male club primarily for the material benefits in terms of facilities. Specifically in the analysis of Linked#1 and Linked#2 above, the type of male-female club relationship was understood not as a partnership, but more of a 'hiring out' of facilities, maintaining their inferior status (as in a landlord-tenant relationship) and the significant power imbalance that accompanies this type of relationship. Here, linked#4 believes her club to be moving away from an unbalanced relationship towards a more equal 'partnership', criticising separatism due to the power imbalance this maintains. Yet, as suggested above, power relationships are likely to be more difficult to challenge and break down when 'moving' to join an established male club; the committee is represented as still 'belonging' to the male club ('their committee'), and the movement of female representatives to that committee may not necessarily result in equal treatment due to this ownership by the male club.

In a similar sense to the example given by linked#1 above, linked#4 expressed the benefit of carrying the name of a professional male club that they were previously linked to, despite the support from this club diminishing considerably over recent years. The club were attempting to become more integrated with a local male club, but kept their previous name; this was believed to improve their status in the area and again assist with fulfilling achievement-orientated ambitions by attracting quality players:

"the name attracts a lot of people to us...for us its [being linked to a professional club] been very good, because it gets us players, and it gets us top dollar players, you know, from right, very young players"

Linked#4

The implications of the links between achievement-driven understandings of success and the perceived necessity of links to a professional male football club were discussed above with regards to the situation at Linked#1. The context is very similar here, as links are retained with a club that do very little to support them purely for the perceived kudos that comes with holding the name of an elite male club.

Perceived Status

Again it was demonstrated that 'joining' an existing male club could be fraught with problems resulting from women's clubs having to adjust to existing practices and be positioned in an inferior status. Linked#3 had only joined their new male club one month prior to the interview, so had not experienced this. However linked#4 described how she initially felt that her club were the ones that had to adapt and 'fit in' to the established male club structure:

"some of our teams seemed to go in [to new male club] as though we did own the place, and we didn't, at the end of the day, we had to fit in, and, oh I don't know, instead of peacefully sorting out a dispute, it turned into...we did have one or two, who we haven't got now, very forceful people who should have took a step back maybe"

Linked#4

This comment strongly portrays the difficulty women's clubs can have in attempting to integrate into existing male clubs – in this case they were not well received, believing they 'had to fit in'. The language use by linked#4 also reflects a separatist attitude towards the two clubs; there are frequent references to 'they' and 'we' (this is contrasted to the different use of 'we' at partnership clubs, as discussed below). Further in the interview, their perceived lower status emerges, despite the belief that her club is moving more towards a more integrated 'partnership' status:

"I still feel a little bit of resentment in some areas...that we're there, and you know if they want a pitch and we happen to be on it, even though we're paying, equal amounts of money"

Linked#4

This highlights the difficulty women can have achieving equal status for their female players, and even understanding what this might mean to them. Even though the interviewee understands the female section to be an equal in financial terms, acceptance as an equal is more difficult, further supporting the suggestion that a 'separate but equal' partnership is difficult to establish in this situation and that integration into a male club does not necessarily result in equality of experience for females. This is due to the fact that integration still involves the movement of women and girls into an established male club structure which as previously discussed, is based on the notion of sameness between the sexes (Weedon, 1999) and can lead to an unquestioned acceptance of dominant male practices (Scruton & Flintoff, 2002) as there is little space for alternative frameworks to be developed.

Although structurally linked in similar ways to Linked#1 and Linked#2, as 'separate but linked' clubs, the two clubs in this category differ in their perceptions of their status as more reciprocal and their desire to improve their situation in contrast to the perceived lack of ability to do this at clubs Linked#1 and Linked#2. Yet despite this, the apparent inferior status of Linked#4 at their male club remains enforced due to their separatism and that it was the female club who joined an established male structure. The position of Linked#4 is further complicated in that they retain the name of a local male professional club that they were previously well supported by, but now receive nothing from in the way of practical support. There are clear overlaps here with Linked#1 with regards to the importance placed on the perceived status that can accompany the name of a male professional football club. This complexity highlights how rigid categorisation is not only undesirable but also unattainable, as relationships can exist in multiple and fluid forms that can shift across and overlap categories.

5.2.4 Linked Category C: 'Within male club structure but separate' (an academy club, closely supported and under the same committee but structurally separate).

Discussions with linked#5, who worked and played at an academy club that operated alongside a boys' academy as part of a professional male club, were at times based on different beliefs and meaning systems than those at other linked clubs above. She believed that full integration with the male structure was not only unlikely but also not necessary beneficial for her club.

Financial Arrangements

It appeared therefore that separation was intentionally maintained (or perhaps still enforced but perceived positively), due to a greater understanding of the disadvantages that integration can bring in terms of reliance and becoming dependent on external support, both financially and in terms of resources:

“none of us are paid by the football club, so if anything ever happened in terms of, like if they went into admin, in realistic terms if we’d been paid by them we’d have been the first ones out the door, but we weren’t, so, we’re safe basically, and the women’s and the girls, like I say they don’t get any money, from it, so like I say they won’t be affected, and neither would our jobs...the girls is pretty much safe, which is one advantage they have over the lads cos the lads aren’t at all, and the academy staff for the lads aren’t either, cos they’re paid directly by the football club. So we’re a lot, safer”

Linked#5

Retaining financial independence is not perceived as a lack of assistance in this respect, but reconstructed as an advantage in that the female section is at much less financial risk than the male section that relies on funding from the professional football club. Here is a clear benefit of separatism in that it can avoid the risks associated with reliance on established structures, particularly in the case of male football clubs who often struggle financially to generate enough income to cover their costs.

Development

When discussing her ambitions for the future of her club with linked#5, achievement-based notions emerged strongly:

“just keep moving forward I think, you know we’ve got the structure underneath the women’s to help support it... [the] women’s team [to] get promoted, er, try and do a bit better in the FA cup this year, and go for the county cup final, I think, you know, but for the girls, just, try and get a few more of them in the England squad”

Linked#5

Being not just integrated into a male club, but also well-supported, was considered vital to develop in this way:

“we’ve seen an opportunity to try and keep the girls together, and like I said, push a women’s team into the top level, and hopefully, with the support and everything and the staff that we’ve got, we should be able to do that, which, you know, as a local club its harder to do, erm, but if you look at all of the women’s teams that are involved at the

higher level, they've all got the backing of their men's club...we need to have a team, and we should of, in six years, have a team that's competing with Arsenal and Charlton"

Linked#5

The desire to succeed at the top level of football is clear ('we *need* to'); undoubtedly this reflects the club's academy status and associated talent development objectives, but what is important to this debate is the recognition that support and backing from male football clubs is imperative. This goes beyond the understandings of the other interviewees at linked clubs portrayed above, that just holding the name of a male club can assist with their achievement-orientated ambitions – good support is seen as vital. Therefore despite intentionally retaining separation in financial terms, the development of the club and achieving her ambitions was strongly associated with being provided with a good supportive structure and backing at all levels. Despite initially implying integration, the interviewee did subsequently describe how the female academy was separate and not integrated into the club, but received close support and were involved in the club. Involvement is therefore not the same as integration, as in this case, the former exists without the latter, providing yet another dimension to the separation/integration debate. A side note here is to refer back to the recent case of Charlton Football Club³³ withdrawing their financial support for their women's academy, as discussed above and in section 1.2.3 (also see Leighton, 2007). The recognition that Charlton are one of the top women's clubs is associated with them having the backing of their male club; recent developments however suggest that even at this top level, 'links' can be fragile and problematic if they include financial dependence. This is discussed further in chapter eight.

Perceived Status

Participant linked#5 proceeded to describe how part of her job was to ensure that the girls' academy was run in as similar way as possible to the boys' academy, particularly in terms of the quality of and access to material resources. This placed a strong emphasis on notions of sameness:

"J: Is it run in a similar way to the way the boys academy is run, is that the idea?

Linked#5: It is, on our part, yeah, we make sure that its, because the way we see it there should be no difference between the girls and the lads set up, the girls should get just as many opportunities as what the lads do, so, I spend a lot of my time trying to make sure, that, everything we get for them, is, to the highest standard"

Linked#5

In contrast to the separate clubs, here the interviewee believes the girls should be integrated in order to have the *same* opportunities as boys. Independent#1a in particular above demanded more than equal access for the girls in her club, which was believed only to be possible in a separatist club environment. Equality is understood by linked#5 predominantly in terms of equality of access to resources; however alongside this portrayal of sameness was the understanding that the girls' section retained separation from the boys' academy. There was the belief that the female section was both closely-linked and well-supported by the male club, despite not receiving financial assistance:

"We're, we're probably one of, the, closest, linked to the men's, out of, out of all centres that we know, in both sections of the [county], so, erm, we are, we're lucky in that respect, and we wanna keep going, its positive, and I think that the club appreciates what we do a lot more now, and so, I'm happy"

"the club got on board with it basically, the chief executive now is very much for it, he asks us what we need, you know he talks to us as well, like I say there's no money that changes hands, but, there's a lot more support, loads more, its much better now...we've been asked by the club what we would like in an ideal world, for training, for the centre, for the college, for the women's, what we'd like"

Linked#5

Communication appeared to be strong between the male club and the academy, and the interviewee felt that it is a positive relationship, with satisfaction reciprocated as she feels appreciated and acknowledged. Despite being asked what she would like 'in an ideal world', and believing boys and girls should have access to the same quality of resources, the inferior status of this section of the club was still difficult to avoid:

"in terms of facilities and stuff, we can't get down here [male academy pitches], there's no way, but, its understandable in terms of there's two pitches here, one at the top, and there's two behind there, there's under eights all the way up to seniors, and in all fairness, the women's game isn't professional at the minute, so obviously the lads here are, are gonna take priority, so in terms of that, then that's fine, I can appreciate that, there's no money involved in the girls... I can find other facilities that are just as good, but they're just not located here"

"[improvements...] just in terms of the facilities and stuff, you know, trying to be seen as on, a little bit more of an even par, although it'll never be exactly the same"

Linked#5

Here, linked#5 opposes her earlier comment regarding a drive towards equality in describing how it is not equality that she is working towards ('it'll never be exactly the same') but improving the situation for girls to the greatest extent possible. Again when

considering this in relation to the understandings at Independent#1, independent#1a believed that separation is more beneficial than mixed environments where boys are naturally assigned priority. This concern materialises at Linked#5, as despite attempts to provide girls with 'the same' opportunities and standard of facilities, the inferior status of women's football in general automatically situates girls teams at the club as inferior and prevents equal access. The lack of priority assigned to her female teams is justified through using her understandings of naturalised male dominance and their 'right' to the sport, in that it is 'understandable' and 'obvious' that the junior male sides will take priority because they will earn revenue for the male professional club.

What emerged throughout the discussions was that although working towards integration in certain areas, linked#5 appeared satisfied with retaining a certain degree of separation whilst simultaneously feeling a part of the club and obtaining the benefits of being associated with an elite male club:

"it just makes everybody feel part of the same thing, I mean last year the, the girls, the women's team sorry, got loads of tickets for the games, I mean they went to loads of games last year, to be part of the club, they had presentations on the pitch at half time, erm, there was announcements, and, you know, the club got on board with it basically, the chief executive now is very much for it, he asks us what we need, you know he talks to us as well, like I say there's no money that changes hands, but, there's a lot more support, loads more, its much better now"

Linked#5

Interviewee linked#5 therefore stands apart from the other women at linked clubs as she perceives her relationship with the male club as satisfactorily balanced between separation and integration, as gaining the benefits of being involved in the male professional club whilst retaining their independence and control. Coupled with this is still a degree of acceptance of an inferior status, but this is perceived as a more general inferiority assigned to women's football that is an inevitable outcome of the relative infancy of the sport and its amateur status. This understanding promotes acceptance but does not prevent the interviewee from feeling she has a voice at the male club, demonstrating that the balance of power between male and female clubs is not always understood as too precarious for women to speak out, as in the linked clubs above. The context is here however significantly different – the interviewee held a paid role in the football club, and the academy status of the club framed understandings in terms of talent development and success, attributes that might encourage the male club to provide support. These values are closely associated with professional male football clubs, and

therefore create some common ground that bisects both the male and female clubs and perhaps encourages acceptance of the female section. The positioning within or against certain discourses is never fixed but complex and constantly shifting and highly context-specific. This is highlighted through how linked#5 simultaneously felt well supported and integrated into the club, a separate and equal part yet still at times accepted an inferior status within the relationship.

5.2.5 Partnership Clubs

Three interviewees in the study rejected separatism for their clubs, instead using terms such as 'partnership' and 'the club' when describing the whole club, both male and female sides. Their clubs were structurally very similar (see Table 5.4), with all three having a strong junior focus and being developed from within a boys' club rather than joining an established male club. Committees presided over the operation of all sections of the club, with the exception - perhaps significantly - of a senior male club. Interviewee partnership#3 provided an example of this in how she understood her club to be a mixed football club, actively resisting the fact that they were two separate linked clubs:

"we do help each other definitely, if for instance we were at a meeting and erm, if I said, I need a referee, can anybody help us, somebody from the boys section would do it for me, and vice versa, you know, so we do all help, each other...I wouldn't let it get to two separate clubs, no, not at all. When I first took over it was, this is the boys section and this is the girls section, and I just said no, you can't have that, I said at the end of the day you're all one team, club, you know, so over the years they've got more together, been gelled together, so I wouldn't have it that way, no, I don't think its right"

Partnership#3

Financial Arrangements

The financial arrangements at the three partnership clubs emerged as a significant indicator of the extent to which these male and female clubs were integrated. Interviewees at all three clubs talked only briefly on this issue, but demonstrated clearly how their clubs were integrated financially as well as structurally, for example "it all goes in one pot and all comes out of one pot" (partnership#2). This indicates a major difference to those club structures described above where financial independence was intentionally or unintentionally maintained. As outlined in Table 5.6, all partnership clubs had either no senior male team at the club, or if they had one, it maintained a

separation from the female/junior sections. This could potentially encourage integration as it was acknowledged how senior male teams can contribute to financial imbalances:

“they [senior male team] was separate, then they erm, joined with us, but it was then, erm, financially they was like, they had coaches to go to the away games, their referees, was like, two linesman, you know, and it was like, parents was saying, oh, our kids are paying match tax, the men are taking it all for this”

Partnership#2

Here, even in strongly integrated clubs, partnership#2 indicates that financial integration with a senior men's team can create problems regarding the distribution of the funding, and ensuring that all players contribute equally. In order to be successfully integrated to minimise conflict, particularly in financial terms, it appears that in this case separation must be maintained from senior male teams. The brief attention paid to financial concerns by interviewees suggests the smoothness by which the integrated clubs operate in this area. Discussions around facilities further heightened the integrated status - the language used by the women involved at these three clubs demonstrated joint ownership:

“we’ve got our own ground, we’ve got a mini pitch, and two full size pitches, then we’ve also got another venue as well for the ladies...they’ll train where we all are, at our own ground”

Partnership#1

“we are lucky because most of the Sunday sides get on at the club ground, so you know, we haven’t got fees up there”

Partnership#2

In all of these three interviews, feelings of ownership, involvement and equality were demonstrated repeatedly, and although only a small insight into junior level football, it seems likely that the strong inclusive aims of the women at these clubs contrasted sharply with the clubs who became linked with male clubs out of necessity and considered themselves to be ‘hiring out’ facilities. Also, a junior focus and a concentration on integration at this level rather than at senior level did appear to contribute to the ease in which integration was perceived to have been achieved at these partnership clubs.

Development

This area was not discussed often by these interviewees; however partnership#3 did feel that they were developing as one club:

"were trying to, get some backing, to develop the back of [school], into us own ground, and up there we'll have like four pitches, we'll have the men's senior pitch, we'll have two pitches on the top of the mound, we'll have brand new changing rooms, six changing rooms, all fences, floodlights for the main pitch, an all weather five-a-side pitch...our ladies team play on our men's senior team pitch on a Sunday"

Partnership#3

As well as demonstrating ownership of facilities rather than 'borrowing' from a separate club, it is described here how this integrated club were intending on developing their facilities together. The club is persistently referred to as 'we' and the facilities as 'our', strongly indicating integrated ownership of the club. Even the men's team is described as 'our men's team', and although the pitch is described as their (male) pitch, perhaps a subtle indicator of a slight degree of separation, the women's team also play on the same pitch so do not have issues regarding priority (discussed below).

Perceived Status

With regards to the status of females at their clubs, integration encouraged the interviewees to understand their status as equal to that of the male teams at the club:

J: Do you feel that boys and girls get equal treatment at the club?

partnership#1: In the club? Oh yeah, yeah

J: Is that quite important

partnership#1: It is, yeah...why should I give one team more than the other team, so, no everything's, everybody's equal and its all football"

Partnership#1

It is also evident how the interviewee in particular feels about this, in demonstrating how she personally took responsibility and fought for this integration, and was heard. The basis of this integration is equality; 'everybody's equal' suggesting a rejection of difference and a more liberal understanding of equality based on the premise of sameness between boys and girls. Priority is therefore assigned to all members of the club equally, regardless of sex, and this is considered an important aspect of their club's status. 'It's all football' further rejects differentiation, in particular the contrasting labels of women's football and men's football that can construct women's football as 'other' and therefore inferior. Partnership#3 described a similar approach towards integration at her club:

"everything we do we do it together, all meetings we have together, we have a meeting once every four weeks, and everybody, well, we have meetings as one club, we don't do anything separate as such"

"I think we do really well, I think, and I think it helps us, because we actually run together as a club, with the boys, and the girls"

Partnership#3

This is again reflective of a positive attitude towards integration, in contrast to the analysis of clubs where women's teams had joined an established male club. The perception of a 'football club' with boys and girls sections rather than separate male and female clubs was not just referred to directly, but also constructed indirectly through reference to 'kids', 'junior section', and 'we' and 'our club' by interviewees at all three clubs where integration was well established (this is discussed further in section 6.4.1). However despite integration at junior level contributing to an equal status for girls, partnership#2 described how she felt the ladies team were assigned lower status in relation to the senior male team:

"we're not allowed on the men's pitch...everybody else can use it except the ladies (laughs) innit? This is what I mean, you know, there's a lot that needs to be done to get ladies to have as much rights as men, everywhere, it's not just at one club"

Partnership#2

Although established as a partnership club, and attempting to distance themselves financially from senior male teams, Partnership#2 still suffered from priority problems similar to those described above by the interviewees at linked clubs. This is judged to be a problem for women's football in general, rather than specific to her club, but highlights how clubs described as fully integrated at certain times can still experience problems.

In summary, all three 'partnership' clubs were discussed in the most gender-neutral terms in the study, through the promotion of integration and equality of experience where possible. All interviewees at these partnership clubs were positive about not only the environment they believed they provided for girls to experience football but also about their integrated status. There was little discussion in terms of development at all three clubs; this is perhaps at least in part due to the satisfaction demonstrated by all interviewees with regards to their current situations – development would likely continue in the same vein without the desire to push for improvements or changes. The clubs shared common features in some respects, but still showed variance within the category. Partnership#2 demonstrated how equality at the club was not fixed or stable, as

their status did shift between equal and inferior positions. A perceived 'equal partnership' status can therefore still be volatile and unpredictable, even in what is in this case a strongly integrated environment where the interviewee demonstrated a significant determination to provide equality of experience to both boys and girls. It is important here to reiterate the fact that two of the partnership clubs did not have a senior male team closely involved with their club, which may contribute to the perception of equal status without encountering the situations described above where the senior male team dominates facilities. However even at Partnership#3, where a senior male team was part of the club, there was no perceived lack of priority. This again reinforces the fluidity of these issues and the context-specific experiences of the women in the study.

5.5 Summary

In conclusion, relationships between men's and women's clubs vary significantly between and within individual contexts; the initial term of the use 'links' was problematic due to both the instability of relationships and a limited agreement in terms of what this actually meant to the individuals positioned within the discourses. Being 'independent', 'linked' or 'integrated' are not mutually exclusive categories and as highlighted, there existed a great deal of overlap between and across these concepts. A number of issues emerged from these categorisations that hold significance when attempting to understand the dynamics of relationships between and within categories.

Firstly there emerged a significant tension between the perceived *necessity* of links and the belief that links were *beneficial* and actually desired by the individual women. There appeared to be great variance on this issue and what emerged further was the association of this with how the women understood success; a perceived necessity of links with a male football club was strengthened if this was closely tied to high ambition in terms of achievement-based success. Getting to the elite level of women's football and winning trophies was understood as requiring high quality players being attracted to clubs, and it was with these ambitions that association with a male club (even if this was only implied), particularly one with a high status, was considered vital. Only in one club was this considered a result of receiving better quality support and strong backing – for all others, the name alone was believed to bring a certain degree of status as representing a link to the highly visible and successful model of male professional football. In contrast to this, the two independent female club interviewees conveyed understandings of

success that were critical of the 'win at all costs' mentality that they believed dominated the male model of football, instead focusing on involvement, participation and enjoyment. Their distancing (albeit not totally) from this structure that they were critical of allowed space for the development of these alternative values away from male norms.

More general understandings of separation and integration also cut across the different categories, and what emerged how these terms were not mutually exclusive but often existed in clubs simultaneously. These feelings shifted with regards to the different issues discussed with each interviewee, again highlighting the fluidity of gender relations. Crossett (1995) highlighted this issue in relation to women's position in golf – the highly exclusive nature of the sport means that despite women proving their ability to become members of golf clubs, they are not fully accepted into the culture. Also, attempting to develop an understanding of integration and separation in terms of how best girls and women can experience football is considerably problematic. Not only does the complexity of this debate and the instability of relationships render any 'recommendations' both undesirable and unattainable, but there appeared very little consensus as to what could or should be expected from an 'equitable' relationship and experience. This highlights the precarious situation women in football occupy. A lack of unity amongst players and those in leadership positions concerning where women currently sit in relation to the male structure, and what direction this relationship should move in (Williams, 2003), limits the potential for women to collectively challenge existed male-dominated structures as there is little consensus as to what form this challenge would take.

Regarding the different positions occupied by female clubs in the study, the range of positions available between integration and separation potentially demonstrates the problematic nature of 'links' that denotes an association between two separate clubs. The key difficulty in this broad and ambiguous area (linked categories A-C above), where clubs are neither independent nor fully integrated into a male club, is control. It is in this 'middle ground' between separate and integrated status where relationships appear unstable, female clubs repeatedly relocate in order to improve their situation rather than work at existing relationships, links are often ambiguous and retaining a balance between their own satisfaction and that of the male club can deny the women a voice. Tension therefore appeared the most prominent in this area; the more settled club

environments where control was demonstrated most visibly were in those clubs whose structures were as far towards the edge of this 'middle ground' as possible. This is illustrated in the case of Independent#1; here control over their club environment and development was expressed strongly, yet their 'borrowing' of facilities involved a shift away from their separatist position that was accompanied by conflict and contradiction in terms of perceived status and priority. However at Linked#5, who retained a separate status yet received strong support and backing from a male football club, the balance between separation and integration appeared significantly more manageable and controlled than at the other linked clubs. This is likely to be due to a combination of factors, including its academy status and the intention to retain a degree of separation rather than it being enforced or undesired. The significant variance of relationships demonstrates the potential difficulty in attempting to develop universal equity policies, an issue which is returned to in more detail in chapter eight.

As has become clear throughout this chapter, categorising club relations can be problematic due to multiplicity of experiences and significant overlaps across categories. For example, the issues surrounding club name was important to clubs in all 4 categories, bisecting issues of success and ambition, status, a desire to integrate with and replicate the male model of football, and independence and identity. Despite this, the categorisation provided a useful framework within which to explore gendered dynamics and relations at individual clubs, and compare how different structures affected the day-to-day experiences of the women at the individual level. The fluidity of categories does however necessitate a focus on the multiplicity of positioning, which structured categorisations can mask by encouraging the 'fitting' of clubs into distinct categories. As it would be artificial to impose this categorisation on more detailed findings, discussions in the following sections will be thematic in order to fully portray the complexity and contradictory nature of interviewees' experiences.

²⁹ The FA offers a Charter Standard scheme that is an award that all football clubs can apply for, not only mixed clubs, which indicates that an FA-recognised standard has been achieved. Criteria states that all managers must be Level 1 qualified (see footnote in next chapter); volunteers must be CRB checked; evidence must be provided of the acceptance and promotion of Codes of Conduct; there must be commitment to opportunities for under-10's and a commitment to promote schools liaison and equal opportunities for all (FA, 2006).

³⁰ David Beckham and Michael Owen are two of the most instantly recognisable England players, perhaps demonstrating the 'ultimate' standard of football. David Beckham in particular is perhaps the most

celebrated figure in English sport, a global icon, and not just a footballer but also an instantly recognisable commodity (see Cashmore, 2004; Kelly, 2001).

³¹ A 'Super Club' is what is referred to as (although I found no official mention of this by in FA literature, more than one participant used the term) a football club that has provisions for all members of society regardless of age, gender, race, and ability. This therefore involves not just offering football to girls, boys, men, and women, but also having provisions for disability football. This seems to be a more informal term for 'Community Club' below.

³² A 'Community Club' status is the next level up from Charter Standard, and clubs applying for this award must be able to demonstrate that they "have a high quality, multi-team set up with excellent social, training and playing opportunities for all" and "provide opportunities for players irrespective of age, gender, religion and ability" (FA, 2004). The suggestion that this should be the 'ultimate aim' for football clubs (FA, 2004) demonstrates the liberal underpinnings of FA policies to improve equality of opportunity for minority groups by offering financial incentives if this 'equality' is demonstrated. The FA (2004) tentatively suggest this by stating that "although gaining Community Club Status cannot guarantee funding from the Football Foundation for facility improvement, gaining the kit-mark has already been a significant factor in assisting clubs funding applications by providing evidence of a commitment to providing a sporting facility for use by the entire community". The potential problems associated with not just the offering of financial incentives but the liberal belief that encouraging the provision of opportunities to under-represented groups will achieve 'equity' is discussed in chapter nine.

³³ The case of Charlton was introduced in chapter 1; in June 2007, the male professional club withdrew funding for the female team and academy after they were relegated from the Premier League, in order to cut running costs. However in research by Arnott (2006), Steve Sutherland, chief executive of Charlton Football Club and chair of the club's women's committee, was quoted "We've just done the biggest sponsorship deal in our history - £6.6 million with Spanish construction giant Llanera SA...they insisted that our women's football set-up was fully incorporated into the deal. There's no doubt at this club that success like our women winning the FA Cup last year was an integral part of our package in approaching sponsors...It is seen very favourably that we have a fully integrated women's outfit - from development to academy to university to reserve and first teams. Women's football is not a drain on our expenses - it is a crucial aspect of this club." Clearly this was before the club entered financial difficulties after being relegated, but the decision to stop funding to the male team contrasts significantly with these statements, perhaps most importantly demonstrating the fragility and instability of links, even when they are perceived favourably by the male club.

CHAPTER SIX: NEGOTIATING GENDERED DYNAMICS

6.1 Introduction

The previous section outlined the context of the study, by highlighting the differing club contexts in the study, and began to explore the gender relations within those differing contexts. The analysis will now examine how women variously negotiate the gendered dynamics within an increasingly popular sport for girls and women which has been traditionally and persistently hostile to female involvement. Of particular interest is the role of the governing body of football, the Football Association, in developing the game since taking responsibility for women's football in 1993. This takeover occurred 72 years after the FA banned females from football league clubs on the premise that "the game of football is quite unsuitable for women and ought not to be encouraged" (cited in Lopez, 1997: 6). This widens the issues of separation and integration, and the associated concepts of difference and sameness explored in the previous chapter, into the broader context of football within which women occupy an increasing yet still significantly smaller space than men, that will be demonstrated to be experienced at times as both detached and integrated.

The growth of women's football, in particular the recent increase in girls participation figures, is primarily a result of liberal feminist discourse that centres on equal opportunities. Yet as women's position in sport has become recognised as increasingly complex and embedded in male dominated institutions, critics have questioned the weakness of the liberal concept of equality as accepting male-defined norms and failing to acknowledge broader structures of power (Scruton et al, 1999: 99). In relation to football, Williams (2004) suggests that periods of increased female participation have not encouraged the reform of football itself. This section will examine how the growth in participation has been facilitated, and how this is combined with the strength of football as a male preserve to create a complex and often contradictory position for women in what is their own game; retaining a degree of independence but still under male control, and at once integrated but separate.

In exploring issues of separation and integration, the organising framework of gender difference sits alongside these concepts. Difference tends to dominate most understandings of gender (Sunderland, 2004), particularly those sports that require the

display of physicality, influencing women's experiences in several ways. Firstly, discourses of difference can be drawn upon to trivialise or inferiorise women's accomplishments in that they fail to reach male-defined standards (Therberge, 1997); secondly, success in 'traditionally male' sports can be interpreted as a failure at being a woman (Wright & Clarke, 1999); and thirdly, emphasising stereotypically feminine qualities to compensate for this can then sexualise female athletes as an object of the male gaze (Obel, 1996). This paradox for women in terms of difference and sameness is played out particularly strongly in the highly visible and male-dominated context of football, and highlights the complexity, fluidity and instability of such concepts in terms of the meaning systems women draw upon to negotiate these issues. It is important to reiterate throughout the chapter that within this instability lie spaces where women are challenging unequal gender relations and resisting dominant discourses that polarise femininity and masculinity.

6.2 Increased Participation and the Growth of Clubs

6.2.1 Developing, Maintaining and Accommodating the Growth in Participation

The significant role of the Football Association (FA) in the growth of football for women and girls since the takeover in 1993 has been championed in both literature and government reports (eg Woodhouse & Williams, 1999; DCMS, 2006). Whilst there has undoubtedly been a rapid growth in the number of girls playing organised football over the last ten years (Table 1.1), it has been suggested that the claim that the FA is responsible for this de-emphasises the large contribution by volunteers who effectively support the grassroots of the sport (Williams, 2003). The pertinent issue that emerged throughout interviews was that while interviewees felt that the FA were claiming the credit for the increase in participation levels, they reported very little direct assistance. The women therefore had to be individually motivated to develop their clubs and described how individuals had to work hard at attracting players to clubs for their continued growth. Club Independent#1 had experienced an unprecedented growth in their junior section, from ten junior players in 2003 to over 220 in 2005, and was particularly active in recruiting new junior players from local schools:

"the girls that coach in the schools with [], do the youngest age group, so they're guaranteed, that when they turn up, not only are they gonna see them, there gonna be coached by that girl, who coached em at school, and they're straight up to the girl, like

hold their hand, and to me, young girls wanna do that, so that's where it's a bit more comfortable cos it is females that are doing the young kids, it doesn't, it seems a lot better that way"

Independent#1a

"If you don't coach in the schools, there's no development of the club, cos your not getting the younger ones come through...that's the hard part, the hard parts getting them, like you say, to our club, because obviously they like going down with their mates, and some of them aren't interested in football"

Independent#1b

The indication here is that although interviewees demonstrated how girls today are increasingly provided opportunities to play football in school, accessing football clubs can be more difficult. This suggests that liberal policies to provide opportunities are not enough for girls to overcome the barriers associated with participating in a traditionally male activity, such as feeling different to their friends (eg Scraton et al, 1999), that is required to participate in football outside of school PE lessons. Peer support can open up this access and female club coaches can help bridge the gap between schools and clubs. Williams (2003) also found that girls' transition between schools and clubs relies heavily on volunteers, which is strongly supported by the data here. 'Active recruitment' was undertaken by the women working at clubs, with those who also held paid roles as teachers often providing a bridge between schools and clubs. This is indicative of how women are transferring knowledge, skills and competencies gained from contexts outside of football in order to facilitate their clubs' development. This further highlights the absence of the FA: interviewees made no reference to any resources provided by the FA to assist them, such as training or guidelines. Taking it upon themselves to recruit girl players allows the women to take responsibility for their clubs development, but also places a significant burden on their time (discussed further below and in chapter seven).

It became clear through the discussions with the women that increased participation has been facilitated largely by volunteers, whose unpaid contribution is vital for the growth of women's football. A significant base of volunteers are working very hard and giving up large amounts of time to set up and develop clubs:

"you've got to have the time. And you've got to put the effort in, to become a successful club, because, to actually start it up, is a lot of hard work, a lot of hard work...a lot of volunteers, erm, a lot of time and effort, from quite a few people"

Independent#1b

However the lack of reference to external support may be having a positive effect on the type of environment fostered at clubs; there appeared to be a collective support mentality where parents were happy to contribute in any way they can, with their commitment reflected in how they often remained with clubs when their own children had stopped playing. Because volunteers dominate the organisation of clubs, this appeared to encourage co-operation and shared responsibilities. This collective approach emerged through several discussions:

“as we’ve almost took the running of the teams off parents, erm, they’ve, we’ve found that a lot have come in, oh ‘do you want kit, do you want posters doing, do you want us to do a website for you’, I mean there’s two parents, one makes football strip, the other makes football fabric, the two guys have got together and kitted out fourteen squads”

Independent#1a

“we have quite a lot of parents that can turn their hand to this that and the other, you know, when we made this, when we made this erm, this building into these changing rooms, we had a kitchen put in and everything, the amount of parents, that, gave up their time, erm, one dad made all the benches, stuff like that, so all we had to buy was the materials, and he made all the benches, and you know, you just get, because they, they know, its gonna make it look fantastic, they know their kids are gonna benefit from it, so you know, they do it, and it’s all, all fantastic”

Partnership#2

Again, volunteers are drawing upon resources from outside of football, typically their paid work, to facilitate the development of football clubs and therefore opportunities for girls. Participants experiences tended to support Williams’ (2003: 104) claim that “increased participation by young women and girls has been facilitated by volunteers at competitive level whose unpaid contribution is vital for the growth of the sport”. This is of course common to all grassroots sports clubs, especially at junior level, where parents and other volunteers staff clubs. The significant issue here is that although within the FA-run structure of football, the volunteer effort that is facilitating the growth is individually motivated. Volunteers are taking it upon themselves and utilising experience gained from external contexts, as there is no reference to FA support in terms of information that might help with this. Further, not only are volunteers facilitating the increase in participation, particularly at junior level, but they are also working hard within clubs to ensure that they can accommodate this growth.

A further point to make on the ‘growth’ of football for women and girls is that this growth is predominantly at the junior level of the game. Official (FA) participation rates (Table 1.1) demonstrate that the rapid rise in registered girl participants has not been

matched for women; in fact, this may actually be more indicative of a plateau at this level. Although not discussed in great detail, interviewees at all linked clubs with no senior teams (Linked#1, Linked#2 and Linked#3) indicated that they struggled for players, and linked#1 described how they had had enough players for a reserve team the previous season but due to injuries and a lack of players, had only one senior team at the club at the time of the interview. In another example, Linked#4, a large club with a wide range of junior teams, had recently combined their three senior women's teams into two due to a lack of players. The problematic generalisation surrounding this 'growth' is discussed in chapter nine.

6.2.2 The Role of the Football Association in Relation to the Growth in Participation

The significance of volunteer contributions was further highlighted by interviewees' perceptions of how the governing body were contributing to the growth of football for women and girls. As indicated by the survey data (chapter six and Appendix 4), there were some concerns over how women were assigned an unequal status by the governing body in comparison to their male counterparts (even those playing at the same or lower level). Interviewees were however overwhelmingly critical of the role the FA played in the growth of women's football and their perceived lack of support. The perception that the FA as the organising body of football were not properly interested in developing women's football was indicated by numerous interviewees. Linked#2a believed that this was a result of target setting, in that the local FA's were more interested in meeting targets than providing developmental support:

"I've never felt that they [FA] were that interested to be honest, all you're seeing is our league saying, 'oh, god, we're gonna have to make changes to the way we're run, because the FA are saying that we have to fit in with this, that and the other...' 'there you go, we've got a league, it's got ten teams in it, just go and sort yourselves out'. That's not about developing women's football, that's about putting a rubber stamp on a piece of paper, so the FA go 'you did it, have a gold star'. That's not supporting us at all"

Linked#2a

This demonstrates a significant problem associated with liberal equity policies that focus on quantity rather than quality, in that they require minimal support or commitment (see for example Shaw, 2007 and chapter 2). The perceived lack of interest also works to further distance women's football from male structures, as this belief that initiatives are followed up by local FA's merely to satisfy demands from above rather than aid the development of the sport detaches the governing body from the women involved in

football. There was also concern that women's football was assigned an inferior status in comparison to male football:

"better coverage and promotion, that's, that's what I'd like, just to be, cos I don't feel like we're on a, we're not on an equal, we're not on an equal with men's football"

Partnership#3

"they [FA] promote it but not to the same standard as they promote the men's...they really need, to obviously promote women's football a bit more, get, what top flight players we have, get them out and about, in schools and whatever else, and be encouraging the ladies, or whatever age group they go to, to get stuck in, and play football"

Linked#1

Further, some interviewees demonstrated the concern that some FA initiatives that required changing league structures could actually be hampering its development, as teams could fold as a result of having nowhere to play or being unable to cover the distances required to play in newly formed leagues.

"[club] struggled to actually get to us on Sunday, so teams like that would fold, and that then starts hampering the development of the football. Cos obviously its not just [club] that are then missing out, its other teams...they struggle with the travelling and everything else. So the development will take quite a knock, unless they look at how they're restructuring it in certain areas, and come up with a solution. Before that's resolved, everybody's unhappy"

Linked#2a

"the FA have tried to get, because there's not enough in [city], get counties around us to make this county league up. But that's still not gone, its probably gone backwards more than it's gone forwards, you know...their divisions are gonna get shorter cos teams are gonna get promoted, and teams are gonna be dropping out cos they've got nowhere to go"

Partnership#2

"the fact that we've relegated two teams out of [] league, both [county] teams, and now, I mean they should get the county league up and running but in reality, they're relegated to extinction"

Linked#3

There is no evidence here that clubs have actually ceased to exist because of FA decisions, but the concern that this may happen highlights the dissatisfaction that the women in the study felt towards the FA in that they may actually be causing it to 'go backwards' through inappropriate and unwanted initiatives and changes. This issue is discussed further at the end of this chapter.

6.3 Detachment of Women's Football from the Wider Context

Despite FA attempts at integration, a lack of external support was seemingly contributing to an increased independence and detachment of the club level of women's football, especially at the grassroots. The women constructed this detachment in two major ways – firstly by describing how their clubs were run self-sufficiently, both financially and structurally, and secondly by criticising the lack of interest they believed was paid to their clubs and women's football in general from wider football structures. This contributes to the debate concerning the extent to which women really 'own' their sports and activities. In the case of football the mass of participation relies heavily on volunteers, therefore at the level of organising play, women dominantly do control their sport (Williams 2003).

6.3.1. Internal Cycle of Control

Due to the heavy reliance on volunteers, it was common for clubs in the study to maintain player-run committees, with parents also contributing significantly in clubs with large junior sections. This avoided reliance on external support, allowed women to take control of their own sport and was believed to be beneficial for the type of environment they wished to create:

"usually, its something to do with people who have played for the club, who become managers, really. You tend to find the ones that come from outside, don't stay, that long, cos it's the people we've kind of brought through the club that stick with us"

Linked#4

"if it's a parent of a player, you can find its quite a better standard of coaching than someone who takes them for the coaching, takes them for the game and that, and then goes away, then you get the parent of a player that's a family atmosphere, and that's what we really want to generate"

Partnership#3

"most of them [coaches] are first team players...we're targeting our under fifteens, to see who's interested, in coaching, to go with the tiny ones, and you keep that circle"

Independent#1b

Deliberately maintaining a cycle of internal staff is here believed to encourage commitment, a family atmosphere and role models for junior players. This is portrayed positively in the first two quotes by constructing 'outsiders' as problematic, thus supporting their decision to use parents or other individuals that are already involved with their clubs. The final quote here demonstrates the cyclic governance and leadership

at Independent#1. This self-reliance not only provides a space for women to fulfil decision-making and coaching roles but also appears to detach their clubs from male football structures and potentially oppressive gendered relations of power due to the women taking control of their own clubs and as a result, making a space for themselves where they can control their own sport.

6.3.2 Financial Detachment

Detachment was further demonstrated in the financial self-sufficiency of *all* clubs in the study, in financing themselves through subscriptions, fund-raising initiatives and funding applications rather than becoming reliant on external financial help. Again fundraising involves internal members of the club, keeping this within the club set up and limiting 'outsider' involvement, thus allows control to be maintained.

"the club survives on the subs...we [also] do a lot of fundraising, that then goes into the pot, and that will pay for, like the trophies, things like that, we'll do that throughout the year. We've just got charity status, last month, so anything that we get now, we can take the tax back, things like that"

Partnership#1

"we do at least five events for the kids a year, and all the coaches, run it, so we've got our own disco, where we hire the hall and we have er, its like we'll do one for Halloween, we might do one for Easter, we'll do, well we might do one during the summer, it could be a fund-raising night, a quiz night"

Independent#1b

Financial independence was demonstrated to be a result of a lack of availability of and access to external funding, both by male football clubs (previous chapter) and the FA:

"the fact that they're [FA] funding local clubs to us to start girls football, got no problem with competition but why do they get funding and not us? 'You gonna give me seven hundred and fifty grand to start a boys team'. 'Oh no!' I says 'well why are you giving them money to start a girls team?' 'Oh well that's different, they're a community club and they need our help'"

Independent#1a

"there's some support [from the FA] for combination sides³⁴, there's financial support which we've never had before, but there's not a lot, of support from them really, not at combination level...a bit higher, there seems to be a lot more, there's not a lot, of promoting it, or, I mean we get some money towards travel, if we go over a certain amount, but that's the only support, that I've noticed"

Linked#4

The language used in these discussions reflects insider-outsider understandings, with 'we' frequently used in the quotes about financial self-sufficiency conveying a sense of ownership of their club and pride at how their clubs manage to survive financially without assistance. In contrast, 'they' is used to describe outsiders (the FA and other clubs). This is significant not just as a separation between women's football and men's football, but as exemplified at grassroots level. FA contributions are dominantly to the elite level – funding is given to female Centres of Excellence, based in male elite football clubs (Williams, 2003). Funding is therefore being returned to the male structure of football, as criticised by interviewee#1a above. Significantly, the lack of financial support received from the wider football context, in particular male football clubs, was not considered in negative terms by the interviewees, and at times this was even considered a positive aspect of the relationship due to it allowing them to maintain financial independence and control. In particular, interviewee linked#5 felt financially 'safe' in not being dependent on the professional male football club that her club was linked to, in contrast to the male junior section that were believed to be more at risk by not being financially self-sufficient.

6.3.3 The Football Association and Integration/Separation

In assessing the current status of women's football in relation to the governing body, it is important to acknowledge the historical context; in that the FA has traditionally excluded women at all levels. In 1971, UEFA made calls for national governing bodies to take control of women's football in their respective countries³⁵, yet the FA made only minimal commitment (Williams & Woodhouse, 1991). In other countries, particularly in Scandinavia, football associations were much more progressive and responded to UEFA by accepting women into their national federations (Brus & Trangbaek, 2004; Fasting, 2004; Hjelm & Olofsson, 2004). This gives a strong indication of the relative unwillingness to integrate women into the FA, and of resistance to female participation in order to protect football as what Williamson (1991: 72) describes as a "time honoured male preserve". The desire to maintain football as a male preserve throughout the long history of football in the UK must be acknowledged when attempting to understand the current relationship between the Football Association and women's football.

Lack of support

The responses to survey questions concerning the advantages and disadvantages of the FA's governance of women's football highlighted some apprehensions about the extent to which they actually supported the women's game. There was particular concern over the priority assigned to women's football, in that respondents felt unequally supported and not taken seriously at times. Interviewees strongly believed that the Football Association played a major role in maintaining the detachment of women's football from the wider context it was a part of, despite their attempts to integrate women's and men's football since it came under the wing of the FA in 1993 (DCMS, 2006). It was suggested in some cases that relying on an internal cycle of volunteers to run their clubs was enforced by a lack of external support from wider football structures. In particular interviewee#1a felt that as an independent female club, they were very poorly supported:

“they [Sport England] said right you’ve been short listed, you’ve definitely got a regional award, a thousand pounds, but you can come to London for the national award ceremony, and we’re thinking, great...and then we won, the national award! So we got four grand, to spend on what we like, and I thought well that’s Sport England, who thought we were doing something right, we didn’t get kiss me bottom or anything from anybody at the FA...the FA have used us as an example for many things, but they won’t actually support, or shell out very much, but they like to say, well ‘we’ve’ done this, with this team”

Independent#1a

The concern that the FA consider independent women's clubs as an extremely low priority, and offer little support to these type of clubs is described by Williams (2004: 120) as ‘arrogant’; in not recognising the success of independent female clubs, the potential challenge they may pose to the acceptance of male-defined norms is regulated when this could be celebrated and encouraged across the grassroots level. However this situation is contradictory – although the women predominantly perceive the lack of help from wider football structures as problematic, as it reflects unbalanced relations of power, this imbalance shifts responsibility for the running of the club in the favour of the women. This shift can then be utilised to develop their clubs on their own terms, encouraging ownership of their sport.

Resistance to fully integrating women into hierarchy

Williams (2004) states that a consistency in women's football from the 1920's to the present day is the lack of influence of women in decision-making roles at the top level of their own sport. The DCMS report into the current status of women's football (DCMS,

2006) expressed concern at the under-representation of women within the FA, stating that "there is little female representation, particularly from those who have gained knowledge and experience from playing and coaching at the highest level" and that "there was not one woman on the FA Board and that there was only one female member of the 90-strong FA Council" (paragraph 29). Data here supports this claim of female under-representation, and suggests further that the lack of women in decision-making positions is not just prevalent at the highest organising level of the sport, but that there is also a reluctance to properly integrate women into regional football structures that have a closer influence on the development of the game at grassroots level. In addition, when women enter decision-making positions, women can find the male-dominated nature of structures and practices very difficult to challenge, as will now be demonstrated.

Male domination and female tokenism

Interviewee#1a critically described at length her experiences on various FA committees. Her account of how she became involved on several FA committees as a 'token woman' representative highlights the strong and traditional male-dominated culture that women can find very difficult to manage:

"I joined our county FA, as the token woman, and its, it scared me to death, it really did...I used to be a director, erm, but what happened, because I was the only female, they just kept involving me in more, and more, and more things ...I joined the girls league as an FA liaison officer, so the idea was that I'd go, I went to the meetings at the London FA and I'd feedback information directly to the league, erm so I did that, and within a week they said would I chair the girls league, so I said yeah, ok, I don't mind, they said well that now automatically means that you're on the county FA committee. That then automatically means you're chair of the women's committee, which now means you're a director...I got a tie! I had to go to a special ceremony, and they gave me a tie! And there was fifty-eight blokes, and me, I went up to get me tie, and were like, errrr, can I sit next to you!...I've never been to a free masons but I imagine it was something along those lines"

Independent#1a

Here, it is suggested that encouraging women onto committees is more tokenistic than an attempt to actually integrate women into the structure. The fact that the same female was invited onto numerous committees further strengthens this claim, as a genuine attempt to increase female presence would be demonstrated if several women were invited onto committees to represent different clubs and encourage a collective female voice. In addition, the male-dominated and traditional culture that women have to adapt to in order to hold decision-making positions further distances them from their governing

body, demonstrated through the belief that committees are like the 'Freemasons'. The awarding of a tie to new members is a particularly strong symbol of masculinity that works to underline the dominance of men and masculinity on FA committees, and highlights the strength of football as a male preserve. This can not just restrict women from contributing to their own sport whilst in these positions, but also lead to independent#1a actually leaving through frustration at the lack of influence she had and returning her focus to her own clubs:

"I thought I could sort something out, with the county FA, but to be honest I got to the stage where I got really frustrated, and if I'm truly honest and selfish, the club was suffering, cos I wasn't spending the time with them that I thought I probably should have been. So in the end I made a decision, and the club, the club had to take priority...I had a good feel of what the clubs were looking for, what was right for girls and women's football, so they just wanted that voice on it. So you could blame me in a sense because they're not developing as quick as they should because they've now not got any female voice on it. I'm sure they've got a bloke on there, speaking for the women"

Independent#1a

This 'tokenism' is interpreted as having a female voice, as she felt she could represent the needs of girls football, but the commitment that this required was too great and the participant blames herself for the resultant silence of women after she left. The struggles women face accessing the hierarchy of football continue to create obstacles for women even when access is gained; this can then limit women's influence to the extent that they leave the structure completely, which allows male-domination of decision-making to continue. Organisational literature has been invaluable in demonstrating how gendered practices are embedded in sporting structures, and women assigning blame to themselves for their under-representation on boards can mask the role of men in this process (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2008). Independent#1a blames herself for leaving the committee and the resultant lack of female voice, when she had previously described significantly gendered practices that maintain male domination and work to exclude women, such as the awarding of a tie to new members. Linked#4 also stated that in her experience, there was a significant gender imbalance in the Football Association, and that this represented a lack of interest in women's football by those individuals that governed the sport:

"I sit on the FA women's committee, [county] women's committee, and that's men, that was all men, and none of them were anything to do with women's football, till a few years ago, so that was interesting (laughs)...everybody else is from boys and men's football, on the women's committee, which is just a joke, isn't it...there must be a committee of about fifteen, hardly any of them ever come cos they know nothing to do with women's football,

but they just happen to have been opted onto this women's committee. And this is what's wrong with women's football"

Linked#4

Maintaining a significant male domination and limiting the number of women on committees allows the FA to resist change, and the cycle of male control is reproduced. This control is retained over both women's and men's football. This was a specific concern regarding the FA governing women's football, that those in decision-making positions were the wrong people to be controlling the women's game. A further example from interviewees' personal experience reflected the resistance to change this:

"we went to an AGM, and erm, they had a new, somebody had died or something, so they'd got another position vacant, if there's any nominations, this chap comes up and said yes, I thought right, some young blood's getting on, and he says, 'I'd like to nominate Fred, I've known him, man and boy, for seventy-three years...' (laughs) Yeah he did, he wheeled him out. You know, and they're on committee's telling us what we should do with girls football, it isn't gonna happen, I mean they're lovely guys, but..."

Independent#1a

This demonstrates how practices of election reflect an 'old boys club' mentality, the strength of which excludes women and prevents any change to the male domination of football committees, even the ones that are representing the needs of female players. Claringbould & Knoppers (2008) suggest that standards of competence for decision-making position are generally male standards as men are in charge of selection processes; a gendered practice that is evident here but is also supported by the traditions of masculinity that football is so closely tied to. The process of election and re-election was criticised by linked#4:

"I used to go to the AGM's, you're not allowed to speak, they're over in three minutes (laughs), they all totter up, and they all re-elect themselves, and then they go, I mean sometimes they say no you're not allowed to speak at the AGM. Well that's gotta change, hasn't it, that's ridiculous"

Linked#4

Improving the gender balance was a desire for the future of women's football, but notably it was stated that involving more women who had experience of the game was more important than liberal ideals of 'putting' women into the structure, again resisting tokenism and reflecting a desire to use the experience that women had to further the development of their game.

"I think...maybe more women from the women's league, rather than more women in particular... they've [players] seen it from the ground level, they know what's going on then"

Linked#4

"you need to try get involved people who have been through women's teams, and, elect them from there, that know what they're talking about... they should be trying to highlight more women's figures through, getting them to pay a bit more attention to them, they know what they're talking about. Whether that'll ever happen..."

Linked#3

The major concern is therefore that the people who govern the women's game should be knowledgeable, and that this is lacking in the current context. This male domination throughout the levels of football administration not only reflects a significant gender imbalance, but can also lead to a conflict of interest between male administrators and female participants (Williams, 2004) – explored further below.

A lack of female voice

Linked#4 demonstrated particularly strongly how she was involved on a committee that could contribute to discussions, but had no vote so influence on the outcome of decisions that concerned her sport.

"we had like erm a side committee, that ran parallel to that, of clubs, and people who worked for the FA that did have something to do with women's football, and we ran parallel to this women's committee, but we had no clout, cos they made the decisions, and they were like all the boys leagues people, nothing to do with women's football...[The local FA] had us co-opted on to this committee, so we weren't actually real committee members with a vote...I have a say, I don't have a vote. The chairman, unless I'm chairman of the [county] women's league, whoever the chairman is, of the [county] women's league, has the vote, they're the one person, that sits on this committee"

Linked#4

This is a significant example of the limited extent to which women have been integrated into football – linked#4 states that she was on a committee but not a 'real member' with a vote – suggesting that this committee was a tokenistic gesture to accommodate women but not involve them in decision-making. The fact that women are denied a voice with regards to the decisions that are made about their sport is particularly concerning, and suggests that under the governance of the FA, women actually have little control over their sport. This was also highlighted by linked#2b, who also sat on a local FA committee where at the time of the interview, decisions were being made about restructuring the women's regional leagues to replicate men's' structures:

"I can't see any opinions that we've got, I can't see them stopping this [restructuring of women's league] from going ahead...I don't know whether or not it was voted on a couple of years ago or not, or whether it was just to do with, the FA have said this is what's gonna happen, and that's it. It would have been nice to vote on it"

"they [FA] want the power, the 'we are the boss' kind of thing. It's like a big firm, a big company that you're working for, they're pulling the strings, and you've no choice, you've got to go along with it. Either that or you just don't do it"

Linked#2b

A significant lack of female power is evident here. The interviewee concedes that 'they', the FA, make decisions that the women have 'no choice' in and have 'got to go along with' – the FA are believed to be in total control ('they're pulling the strings'). Independent#1a held a similar perception:

"They've [FA] got complete control, you've got no choice, you wanna play football, you have to affiliate, you have to do what they tell you to do, regardless, and that, I think is erm, frustrating"

Independent1#a

The status of women's football within the Football Association is therefore strongly reflective of an insider-outsider position, in that they are involved but denied a voice. Therefore despite the detached status demonstrated earlier, the perceived position of women's football supports claims that women's football remains heavily influenced and controlled by men (Scruton et al, 1999) and that the strength of football as a 'male preserve' restricts the space for women to pose any great challenge to existing gendered arrangements. This was highlighted with poignancy by linked#4:

"a friend of mine was on it [local FA committee], and the times she's come out of a meeting, and she'd get patted on the back, and they'd say 'never mind my dear, we agreed with what you said, but you can't change things' (laughs) and after doing that for a while she said 'well that's it, I'm just not sitting on it any more, it's a complete waste of time' (laughs)"

Linked#4

This resistance to change maintains a cycle of male domination in the hierarchy of football that continues despite the significant increase in female participants. Women are integrated into the sport, but only to the point that they remain unthreatening to the existing gender order (Scruton et al, 1999), and without a channel to voice their input, male dominance is maintained and reproduced. Further, women's drop-out highlights how exclusionary practices not only prevent female representation from increasing, but

can actually cause it to decrease; this limits the initiation of collective re-gendering processes deemed necessary to bring about a challenge to gendered practices in male-dominated organisations (Hovden, 1999).

Informal gendered practices

These overtly male-dominated practices are also strengthened by the prevalence of more informal gendered practices within the FA that help to maintain and naturalise discourses of male domination. Shaw & Frisby (2006) discuss how organisational practices that are deeply gendered can work to exclude women, but are often portrayed as 'the way it is'. Independent#1a offered an example of this, but also demonstrated how she recognised and was attempting to challenge the gendered practices:

"the county FA's for example [county] sent a fine, to a ladies team, that said 'he did this, on this date, he is fined this amount'...So as the women's representative I've said surely shouldn't you do something about that, it should be he or she, oh its up to the county FA, well if you haven't even got the power to get them to send out a fine without 'him' on, it doesn't give you an awful lot of confidence about what they're really channelling their time doing. And that, I found, pretty frustrating"

Independent#1a

The gendered language use on the part of the FA represents the strength of male domination within the practices of the organisation. The presentation of a tie, a symbol of masculinity, to independent#1a on joining an FA committee is a further example of traditional gendered practices that continue to prevail. The challenge posed to this is however encouraging, and represents how these practices can be challenged if 'the way it is' is understood as a result of discursive and historical constructions rather than accepted as inherent. This is in contrast to organisational research that suggests that gender and gendered practices are often rendered invisible, therefore are allowed to continue (see for example Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2008). In this situation, independent#1a recognises how gender influences the decisions made in the football hierarchy, which she expresses the desire to challenge, despite feeling frustrated.

The lack of control evident above is a wider reflection of the situation explored in the previous section, whereby women's clubs were a part of male football clubs yet remained significantly separate, demonstrating the multilevel nature of football structures. Women's football under the FA is perceived by female participants to be integrated only to the extent that the FA retains control over the sport. Women are not

fully integrated or treated as equal members (although the sport in general is in some respects treated as 'the same', as explored further below), as is demonstrated in the significant under-representation of women in decision-making positions and the lack of a female voice. Again this has parallels with certain club contexts where women's sections are incorporated into male football clubs but assigned an inferior status, and women feel that they are not in the position to challenge this status. Therefore at both club and organisational level, women's football can be considered to be integrated into existing male structures, but only to the point that control is relinquished and a degree of independence is sacrificed in return.

In summary, female football clubs can therefore be considered to be detached and distanced from the wider football context both in respect to having an internal cycle of volunteer staff, being financially independent, and feeling distanced from the governing body that control, administer and direct their sport. This detachment appears greater for the grassroots of women's football, allowing women to control their sport more at this level (Williams, 2003), although separatism continues to preserve the dichotomy between men and women (Hjelm & Olofsson, 2004). Concurring with the findings of the previous chapter, it appears that integration and separation are not mutually exclusive categories, and in the case of women's football as a local context within wider football structures, the sport is being integrated yet remains both in material and ideological terms a distinctly detached and therefore separate fragment. Discussions will now move to how women perceived themselves and their sport in relation to debates of sameness and difference, to demonstrate how the wider structure of football is inextricably connected to women's day-to-day experiences and understandings and as such the multilevel nature of sports organisations such as football need to be acknowledged.

6.4 Deconstructing Difference and Sameness

Fundamental to the paradox above are understandings of difference and sameness. In analysing gendered discourse, 'difference' is a concept that overarches arguably all understandings of gender to some extent. Sunderland (2004) states that the 'gender difference' is "a significant 'lens' for the way people view reality, *difference* being for most people what gender is all about" (p52, original emphasis). She continues to suggest that difference is employed particularly where women are concerned, therefore associated with this is a 'male as the norm' discourse. This is tied to the criticism that

'sameness' between the sexes, and the provision of equal opportunities based upon this, reproduces existing gendered structures and practices (Weedon, 1999) as 'gender sameness' is more commonly understood as 'women are the same *as men*'. The point of reference is therefore not only predominantly male (Bacchi, 1990), but this male norm is often understood as fixed and stable (Weedon, 1999), and asserting women's sameness contributes to the maintenance of the 'male as the norm' discourse. Yet 'different' to the male norm is often associated with inferiority, especially in such a male-dominated context such as football; maintaining difference is therefore vital in protecting the male dominance of football.

Situating understandings of sameness and difference within the football context, Williams (2003) suggests that women across the globe assert their right to play the 'same' game as men, yet the strength of football as a traditionally male preserve severely restricts the potential for women to be accepted on equal terms. This tension has been ever-present in the experiences of women in football; historically women have attracted criticism for a lack of skill, but if they were skilful, they were attacked for their lack of femininity (Pfister et al, 2004). This paradox for women remains as pertinent as ever in the current climate of football. A major issue of the research that runs throughout this study is the extent to which women in football are integrated into existing structures, and the implications of this. Detaching women's football from the context of 'football' is problematic due to the visibly dominant and masculinised football culture in the UK, so it is difficult to envisage a 'female' alternative without the point of reference being the existing male-defined norm. It is therefore likely that attempts at separation and the promotion of alternative values will still exist within established structures (eg Caudwell, 2006), creating a complex relationship between separation and integration. Further, Williams (2004: 124) found that most women players in her study did not want to play a different form of football, "either as an alternative to the male game or as a critique of the values of competitive contact sport", supporting liberal ideals of integration. As understandings of sexual difference have shaped the arguments of various parts of the women's movement (Bacchi, 1990), the growth of female football particular at junior level predominantly in liberal terms of equality and sameness needs to be situated within a more widespread struggle for acceptance associated with perceptions of difference. The issue is therefore not about difference *or* sameness as dialectical categories, but about recognising the complex interplay between the two, and

the dichotomies that can polarise sameness/difference therefore need to be deconstructed to explore the extent to which these discourses can be experienced simultaneously, to different degrees in different contexts and to both maintain and resist existing gender relations in football.

Supporting poststructuralist notions of multiplicity and fluidity, there occurred a vast inconsistency both between and within the interviewees' understandings of sameness and difference, further emphasising the complex and contradictory meanings that surround this debate and the difficulty in developing any kind of single coherent account concerning what 'women's football' actually is and what kind of position it holds within, outside of and in relation to 'football'.

6.4.1 Junior Level – Sameness over Difference

Despite these inconsistencies, there was an indication that at junior level, there was a greater desire to promote sameness than at the senior level. Difference is so strongly associated with female inferiority that playing down these differences and providing the same opportunities to girls and boys was understood within the liberal framework of sameness. Yet this was not a consistent or unified acceptance of sameness as positive, as even individual interviewees varied in the extent to which they drew upon discourses of sameness. To illustrate this, the growth of football for girls will be explored in this section, to demonstrate how understandings of this were dominantly framed by understandings of sameness but despite this, differentiation remained an essential concept that interviewees found difficult to fully reject.

Mixed Football/Interaction at Junior Level

Differentiation on grounds of an individuals' sex in football is hard to avoid due to current FA rules prohibiting boys and girls from aged eleven from participating in the same match (Williams, 2003). This is justified through essentialist thinking and biological reasoning, with the FA suggesting that there could be a risk of injury to girls after the age when there is a noticeable difference in the power, strength and speed of males and females (DCMS, 2006). Attempts to challenge this ruling and the grounds on which it is based have been persistently rejected³⁶, dominantly framed by issues of integration/separation in women's football – equality is based on a male-defined norm

and 'natural' differences between the sexes. This essentialist thinking is clearly very hard to challenge, and although mixed football from a young age was considered by interviewees as an important challenge to differentiation that privileges boys over girls, discourses of biological difference still emerged:

"when we do schools coaching, its always mixed, its very rarely separated girls and boys cos most of our coaching's in primary schools, erm, they still play together at that age, when you do secondary school coaching then its separate, girls and boys"

"up to about year fours you can get away with it, year fives and year sixes, the physical differences are starting to show, yeah, and the lads at that point as well have been playing football for one or two seasons in clubs, so they've got a little bit more of an advantage, so, I mean there's lots of girls leagues now, but not, not you know, in lads, you'd say out of fifteen lads that you have in a school, twelve of them'll be playing for a local club, and three'll not be interested, but in girls you'll get two or three that have played in a local club, and the rest have never played before, and are bothered about breaking their nails (laughs)"

Linked#5

The movement from mixed to single-sex football at the age where girls move from primary to secondary school signifies a shift from gender sameness to difference in preparation for adolescence, a time when girls' and boys' subjectivities are heavily influenced by socially defined and oppositional norms of masculinity and femininity (Coleman and Hendry, 1999). Linked#5 above supported the FA legislation concerning separation rather than challenging it by drawing upon popular gendered discourses in explaining why she coaches boys and girls separately. The first relates to innate biological differences after a certain age, which underlies the FA's upper age limit of eleven for mixed sex football. The second highlighted the fact that boys still have greater opportunities to play in clubs, which puts them at an advantage due to experience, and the third, utilising populist notions of femininity, is how girls of secondary school age are more concerned about their appearance than playing sport ("bothered about breaking their nails"). Despite being involved in coaching both boys and girls, and talking at length about her role as providing increased opportunities for girls to play football, the difficulty in understanding this outside of dominant discourses of gender difference suggests the liberal agenda is inappropriate as the basis of an equitable environment for girls to experience sport alongside boys.

However the interviewees who described their clubs as in 'partnership' with a male club (see section 5.2.5) can be understood to be resisting gender differentiation by considering their boys and girls teams as one junior section of the club. For example

partnership#3 described how her club actively and positively attempted to create a mixed footballing environment, and significantly, recognised the value of this:

"I think we're lucky, cos what we, erm, in a sense, we help each other, we, last year we run, a fun day, and we actually do it on, the school donate the field, for the day, and the seniors, men's and ladies, actually come, and each junior team is allocated a time slot, and the erm, the ladies and the men, do the training sessions, with the juniors, they mix. So you could have the ladies training with the boys, the men training some of the girls teams, and, they get a lot out of that. The seniors get a lot out of that, cos obviously they're coaching the younger players, but the juniors think its great, cos these people that they go and watch, play football on a Sunday afternoon, Saturday afternoon, they're actually giving them, they're giving them, that coaching"

Partnership#3

Here the interviewee believes her club is taking positive steps to integrate boys and girls (and at times, men and ladies) and as such, limit separation despite single-sexed teams being enforced by FA legislation. However this is still a complex relationship as boys and girls are still discussed separately at times, reflecting the difficulty with completely overcoming issues of separation:

"I think it helps us, because we actually run together as a club, with the boys, and the girls, I think it actually, it pulls the community, because, erm, a boy that's playing for one team will have a sister that's playing for another team, in a girls team, and they know that, its all, one, not going off to, to play for [team], or going to play for [team], you know, its, your all playing under one banner, and the fact that, I mean we have been lucky, we do, we do run well, as a mixed, team, and mixed age groups, on both sides, boys and girls, and I think that benefits us, as well"

Partnership#3

This inclusive environment is encouraged from a young age and is recognised as important from a community perspective as well as for the benefit of her own club. However the word 'lucky' is used to describe her club context, suggesting that this inclusive environment is out of their control (not 'worked hard to develop' for example). The intention to foster this type of environment and therefore challenge differentiation is however clearly present. This was also alluded to by partnership#1:

"why should I give one team more than the other team, so, no everything's, everybody's equal and its all football"

Partnership#1

These quotes also incorporate the overlapping of different discourses, with positive benefits of her club suggested as gender, community and family integration, and also the use of adults as sporting role models for juniors. It is difficult to judge if any of these

dominate the text, but notably there is no mention of success in achievement terms. The talk is dominated by positive descriptions of integration and the benefits of this in terms of the club environment.

It is interesting to note that all clubs who provided football for under eleven's maintained single-sex teams rather than encouraging mixed-sex football. Therefore although mixed-sex participation is not prohibited at this age, separate football spaces are still provided for boys and girls, despite claims that mixed sports may represent an empowering alternative for females in sport (Hargreaves, 1994). By retaining sex-based divisions at all ages, the clubs in this study are creating space for women and girls to experience football - however this is still not outside of male-defined norms as integration with male clubs has resulted in women and girls joining existing structures and cultures. Further, this separation maintains the dichotomy between male and female (Hjelm Olofsson, 2004). Issues of integration and separation are of key concern to this study and will run throughout the discussions. This is however problematic in principle as here, separation is experienced in clubs *alongside* integration rather than in opposition to it, contributing to a contradictory situation where sameness and difference are expressed simultaneously.

Discursive Deconstruction of Boys/Girls

As well as actively integrating boys and girls teams at clubs, there was also evidence of a discursive resistance to differentiation. Referring to juniors at the club as 'kids' rather than boys or girls demonstrates the potential for language use to deconstruct difference and promote a more gender-neutral environment, for example in describing what interviewees enjoyed most:

"seeing the kids, playing the football, and enjoying it, and I love it on presentation night, when they're all there, and they're done, and, it's the end of the season and they have all their pictures took"

Partnership#1

"the kids like respect you and stuff like that, and that's a nice feeling"

Partnership#2

"its so sad that like the parks are dying, and nobody's playing football on the parks, and yet there's hundreds of kids out there, boys and girls, want to play football"

Linked#4

Making language use as gender-neutral as possible challenges the dominant discourse of difference, which is vital as the meaning systems associated with gender differentiation are so often associated with female inferiority. The junior level of female football can therefore provide a space for women to challenge the male dominance of football, not just through increasing participation at this level but in deconstructing gender difference. Again this is based on liberal understandings of sameness and the belief that girls should be provided the same opportunities as boys; the male dominance of football is so strong that it is difficult to envisage the provision of football opportunities for girls away from the male frame of reference and therefore girls experiences of football are likely to always be understood in relation to male norms and standards of acceptance.

Increased Acceptability of Girls Playing Football

Understandings based on sameness at the junior level were also demonstrated by the interviewees in relation to an increased acceptance of girls as footballers. Discussions suggested a recent shift in understandings about the acceptability of girls playing football:

"Its [female football] rocketed, hasn't it, I think basically just because its an enjoyable game for kids to play, and the girls start playing with the boys at school, they want to play, and now, there's an outlet, whereas before you wanted to play but you hadn't got anywhere to play, so you played netball, hockey, whatever instead, and then you played with your mates in the street"

"I think its an attractive game, for girls, that's the bottom line of it all, and now there is a facility"

Linked#4

Here it is an increase in opportunities that is believed to have primarily facilitated the growth of girls football, suggesting that it is (not 'has developed into', but always has been) an 'attractive' and 'enjoyable' game for kids (including girls) to play, and providing opportunities allows girls to access this in the same way as boys always have been able to. Further, exposure to girls playing football can contribute to increased acceptance amongst young boys and therefore challenge notions that it is a 'boys-only' sport:

"I mean its different now, I think it's a lot, the misconceptions with the girls and that side of football, in the primary schools is getting less and less and less, the secondary schools its still there because they're not used to having played from a younger age, but now

you've got girls playing aged five, and up, so they're used to it being part of their school life, basically so the lads aren't too bothered"

Linked#5

Exposure is therefore understood here to be creating the space for resistant positions and normalising the image of a female footballer amongst young children. It is of interest firstly that the interviewee suggests it is merely lack of exposure to girls playing football that can create problems for secondary-school age children – no mention is made of other problems, such as identity issues or other interests, that other interviewees (and academic research such as Harris, 2002; Epstein et al, 1999) alluded to. Secondly, the best-case scenario is presented as 'the lads aren't *too* bothered' suggesting that although exposure to girls playing football is challenging 'misconceptions' by emphasising sameness between the sexes, it is unlikely to ever eradicate them. The complexity of this situation is evident in a passage by linked#1, who worked as a football coach:

"even the young ones [boys] are like, 'a girl? A girl'? They're expecting a [male club] Town player, and you know, its like 'no, they don't come', and they're 'alright then', and its like, obviously, when you, when they're on their break, you've obviously got to wait for your next group to come out, so you have a kickabout whatever, then they see what, I mean just a kickabout's just enough to prove that you can kick a ball, and its like, 'ok, well we'll let them teach us shall we', and its like 'yeah you will'...it was really not many at all who wouldn't, I mean wouldn't listen to you, oh 'girls can't teach this', and it was really, one in a blue moon, but whereas every class that come out, was fine, I mean, it really was one kid out of a million who would say summat, so, it weren't that bad"

Linked#1

This experience highlighted how the potential degendering of football at junior level is not a smooth transition but a complex interplay between the social expectations of both coaches and children regarding class, ethnicity, sexuality and predominantly in this case, ability. Being able to prove their football ability, a technique utilised to portray sameness between men and women, can allow women to push boundaries with regards to expressing physicality and other characteristics more dominantly associated with masculinity. Engaging in this type of practice simultaneously challenges female inferiority through 'proving' they can be as good as men, but again by accepting male standards as 'the norm' and even the ultimate aim for women, it is by these norms that women will always be judged, reproducing existing gender relations in football. This returns to the concern that centring understandings on sameness can restrict the potential for women and girls to challenge existing gendered relations as the point of reference is always 'man' (Bacchi, 1990: x).

6.4.2 Senior Level – Difference over Sameness?

However when the interviewees were discussing their own experiences, and how they felt they were perceived as footballers, understandings of difference and sameness tended to conflict more and were used more interchangeably than when referring to junior female (and male) players. Understandings of sameness were not just evident in how the women felt they wanted to be treated the same as men, but also emphasising sameness was implied as necessary for acceptance in the male-dominated football world. This is not denying the existence of gender difference, but it is important to explore how women understand these differences, in what contexts sameness or difference operates as a dominant discourse, how they come to be and to what effect.

Sameness

Discussions of sameness dominated conversations where women felt they struggled to be accepted, and wanted to be considered on a par with men, reflecting an attempt to resist discourses that associate difference with inferiority. The interviewees described at length how they encouraged their senior female players to gain coaching qualifications, not just to help run their club's junior section but also to provide visible role models for the younger female players in the same way young boys were:

“its just a role model, you know, everybody's got David Beckham and Michael Owen³⁷, the girls need that as well to want to stick at it”

Independent#1a

“I think it's a bit of a role model, its great having men coaches, but its nice to have female coaches. With the same experience, cos now there'll be enough people around with the same experience”

Linked#4

“we're also trying to, obviously trying to make them [senior female players] role models for the girls, like the men are here for the lads, so, by being coaches as well as players”

Linked#5

This suggests that role models are not as easily accessible for girls as they are for boys, and these individuals believe they are actively challenging this in their club context by providing role models for girls. Actively encouraging females into coaching, also contributes to the challenge women can pose to the gendered construction of particular skills; women qualifying as coaches on male-dominated courses proves that they possess the same ability as men to coach football. Coaching is a domain where women are

significantly under-represented across sport; in football, the increase in female participants has not been matched in other areas, such as referees, managers and coaches (Fasting & Pfister, 2000). Women were often in a significant minority in mixed contexts, and an important concern here was that the women wanted to pass due to possessing the required ability, rather than a tokenistic gesture:

“when we’ve sent people on the men’s courses³⁸, some of them were qualifying without really being that good, cos the token woman seemed to get accepted, and they felt uncomfortable about that actually”

Linked#4

“a lot of women probably would pass, only for the fact that they’re the only woman on that course...or, or for the fact that, you, there’s not many women coaches, so the more, I mean, they have got, its like a percentage, so they have to pass so many women anyway, so you don’t know whether you’ve passed cos your good enough or you’ve passed cos you’re a percentage number, and they put you through anyway...you wanna be good enough, you don’t wanna just say, well I’ve got my coaching qualification, and then go coaching, and having people looking at you and think, its not good enough, yeah, how did you pass”

Linked#1

This opposition to tokenism reflects the desire to be treated as (and therefore accepted on the same terms as) men. Further, some women expressed resistance to FA initiatives to attract more women to coaching by offering female-only courses, as this emphasises differentiation. However it was highlighted how acceptance in mixed environments is again dependent on meeting male standards of approval, through feeling that they were only accepted after they had proved their football ability:

“They [men on course] were alright, once you play, I mean, they’re the thing is they’ve always got that misconception that you can’t play football, I think now that its growing they’re starting to realise that girls can play football, and as soon as you get on the pitch its all, I mean the level two’s nearly all practical, you’re like playing day in day out, for pretty much those six days, erm, basically once you get on the pitch and you start playing they’re, they kind of go ‘oh, alright then’ and then just leave you alone then, and that’s it, you’re fine then”

Linked#5

“I thought that I had to work twice as hard as what the boys did, because I thought he’d [male examiner] got it in for me, but then when he sort of realised that I knew what I was doing, and I could play football, he sort of mellowed”

Independent#2

Acceptance by male coaches and examiners was therefore believed to be dependent on proof of ability. Being ‘the same’ is again judged by an established (male) point of reference, in this case the ability to play football to the ‘male norm’ standard. This

highlights claims that liberal progressive developments in football may have contributed to an increase in opportunities for women and girls, but 'have yet to serve as the basis of a more far-reaching change to the provision of football for women or to the structures of football itself' (Williams, 2004: 124). This has parallels with recent research by Fielding-Lloyd & Meân (2008) who analysed the gendered structures of coaching courses in English football, concluding that practices inherent in courses reproduced stereotypical categories of men and women in football despite policies to increase gender equity. Perhaps even more significant, the provision of equity policies in football that fail to address discourses underlying gendered definitions can neutralise the significance of gender (Fielding-Lloyd & Meân, 2008) by being outwardly perceived as equitable, as discovered in other sports organisations (Shaw, 2007). Mixed coaching courses are an example of this, as if courses are offered to women, the FA are perceived to be doing all they can to ensure that their structure is equitable – women can be 'blamed' for not taking up opportunities available to them in sports organisations (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2008). Yet if practices within courses remain gendered, and women are not represented as a collective to challenge these practices, then oppression can continue within this 'outwardly equitable' environment. To summarise then, understandings of sameness were drawn upon predominantly in situations where the women were working towards acceptance in football – acceptance that depends on women not just perceiving themselves as similar, but proving this.

Difference

The participants quoted above clearly took up the position (and desire to be accepted based upon this) that women should be treated the 'same as men'. However this was not a consistent or fixed belief, as other discussions were framed by often-opposing understandings of gender difference. Again important here are the implications of these perceived differences, and significantly, how although understandings of difference were often tied to perceived female inferiority, there were significant areas where these were resisted and difference could be perceived as positive.

Difference considered to result in 'not being taken seriously'

Despite asserting sameness, and wanting to be accepted on this basis, women demonstrated how this could be difficult in the wider male-dominated context of

football. In particular this association emerged in discussions concerning how the women in the study felt others perceived them, rather than how they perceived themselves as in the situations above. A particularly striking example of this was how the women felt that referees did not take them seriously as footballers, concurring with findings by Liston (2006) that an implication of assumed gender difference is that women struggle to be taken seriously as they fall short of the male norm. Referees are also a significant group of people in that they represent a visible overlap between the male structure of football and women as participants, as they directly and actively influence their experience of competitive match situations.

"you usually get the gist from referees. If you see what their attitude is you quite often get the gist. If they turn round and make comments, 'well if it had been a man's game I'd of sent em off', then, then you know you're not being taken very seriously. And we've had that a few times (laughs)"

Linked#3

"But I still think there's too many comments... that blooming referee at [opposition], a few weeks ago, actually said to me that he wasn't going to give foul throw-ins because girls always do foul throw-ins. Until you can get rid of that type of attitude, and that's from a referee, then you're not going to get anybody really take it seriously enough to support it or come down and watch it. There's too much of that still that goes on. And you get 'do you play forty-five minutes? Do you? Oh how do you do that?'... 'And no swearing on the pitch'...there's still a lot of that that goes on"

Linked#2a

Both of the above interviewees not only signal how they feel they are perceived as different to men, but how this perception of difference is very closely associated with female inferiority. Participants therefore reported that they did not feel that they were being taken seriously as equal members of the football culture:

"they [some referees] don't treat it, like a football match as well, you have the slightest bit of contact, a lot of the time, and they're like oh oh, blowing the whistle, free kick, 'what you on about ref', you got the ball, 'got the ball here', 'oh you can't barge into each other like that', 'are you joking me or what, it's a contact sport', do you know what I mean? Get on with it, just cos you're not used to girls being a lot more physical, it's different now, the games different, so, they're just as physical, when it comes down to it, women are just as physical in it, and want it, just as much as men do, so your gonna get involved, if they can't accept that, then they shouldn't be refereeing women's football matches, you know, erm, and I think that they find it hard, to control discipline issues, because its women, I don't think they know how to deal with it"

Linked#5

This passage is significant in revealing the complexity of attempts to challenge gender differentiation in such a male-dominated context. Through describing how women can

demonstrate physicality whilst participating in football, there is a clear attempt to assert sameness and resist the notion that women play football differently to men. Again this signifies how attempts to eradicate difference require the movement of women towards male norms - physicality is here not just considered as a traditionally masculine attribute, but one that is considered to epitomise the masculine nature of football and its opposition to femininity (Giulianotti, 1999). The reported resistance to women displaying physicality is based upon stereotypical understandings of gender-role behaviours, which prevent women from not only attempting to eradicate gender differentiation but also to be accepted into a football culture where traditional masculine attributes are celebrated. Women are therefore admitted into football as inferior participants, and can struggle to challenge this double-bind; being perceived as different constructs them as inferior, yet attempts to demonstrate sameness ('women are just as physical in it, and want it, just as much as men do') are also rejected as women acting within the established football norms clashes with stereotypical understandings of femininity.

The use of reported speech used by all the above interviewees is a matter of interest when discussing how they feel referees perceive women playing football. Reported speech demonstrates what Sunderland (2004) calls 'secondary discourse', in that the discourse is represented or reported using constructed quotes from individuals. In the above passages, reported speech is used to construct male referees as not taking women's football seriously and treating it as different and therefore 'the other' to men's football, perceiving football attributes as inappropriate for women, being unable to control women's matches, and holding a patronising attitude towards women's football. All of these perceptions are framed by gender difference, difference that results in women being perceived as inferior to men. This is a significant implication of the dominance of discourses of differentiation, in this case how women believe male referees have internalised discourses of difference and draw upon this to treat women as 'the other' and inferior to men in football.

Different as associated with female inferiority

The dominance of masculinity in the football context is set in opposition to femininity, an opposition which is celebrated in culture and language use, for example in criticisms such as 'you kick like a girl' (Williams & Woodhouse, 1991). The supposed biological

unsuitability of women's bodies for sport has traditionally restricted women's competition and even recreational participation in sports, backed by medical professionals (Hargreaves, 1994); after WW1, female doctors recited old warnings about the dangers of excessive exercise for women to limit their participation in football (Russell, 1997). Although women now participate in sports that were traditionally the sole preserve of men, essential biological differences can still lead to perceptions that females are inferior, and cannot compete on equal terms. Again, differences between women and men are understood as inherent and unquestionable, an understanding that influenced how the women in the study believed they compared to their male counterparts. Particularly notable was the belief that men have greater strength than women, which gives them superior ability:

"It is a slightly different game though isn't it, we can't kick a ball as hard as the blokes can...like him crossing that ball [on TV], some of the girls would never be able to do that, even at the top teams you can see the differences in the skill levels"

Linked#2a

"the physical strength, it's like any sport, unfortunately, men are the stronger sex"

Linked#2b

"the men are definitely a lot stronger, I mean there'd not be many women that'd cope [with mixed football], but I think the women could possibly outshine them with skill, easily, cos the men kick it and run, cos they're fast, cos they're strong, and they just barge people off, whereas the women'll take their time, pass it around"

Linked#1

Linked#2b demonstrates the common-sense understanding that women are inherently weaker than their male counterparts – 'men are the stronger sex'. This is heavily generalised and leaves little space for variance within the categories of 'man' and 'women'. Tied up with these understandings of male physical superiority is that fact that this creates a different game when women play. This was alluded to by linked#1, in demonstrating how the perceived lack of strength means that women must play the game differently, in this case by 'taking their time, pass it around'. This introduces the notion, explored further below, that difference is not necessarily perceived as female inferiority but can be reconstructed as female superiority. Although differences between men and women dominantly framed understandings, it was suggested that the standard of women's football was closing the gap between itself and the benchmark of male football standards:

"you do see some quite good women's games, and the level of skill, as its developing over the years, the level of skill for women is improving, that again, it might not be at the level of the men's, but its getting, its getting to that level, it is getting better...if they can get, well they're never gonna get that physical ability, but apart from that, the skill level and the actual entertainment of the games has improved quite a lot over the years"

Linked#2b

"the level of women's play's increased no end, since they've been coming through, as children, the standard of play is, is a lot better... its never gonna be the same, cos its different strengths and whatever"

Linked#4

This is a strong example of the 'male as norm' discourse that is often used in relation to discourses of gender differentiation (Sunderland, 2004). The context of football as a traditionally male preserve that women were excluded from for a long period of time, has contributed significantly to the creation of 'male' standards that all others are judged by. Coupled with this, the highly visible status that elite male professional football holds in English society further reproduces this male-defined 'ultimate standard' leaving very little space for the development of an alternative. The participants are therefore complicit in the inferior positioning of women in the gender order, maintaining a hegemonic form of masculinity as 'the norm' in football. Women are constantly judged, and more importantly judge themselves, by male standards of ability and 'getting better' denotes a movement towards these standards. Both interviewees above do concede however that this standard is not achievable for women (it's never gonna be the same') due to innate physical differences (and as a result, inferiority), re-appropriating their inferior positioning.

Different as associated with female superiority

Despite this, there was evidence of difference being celebrated. Although maintaining essential gender differentiation, this resistance can be considered to contribute to the development of an alternative framework to the pursuit of male-defined norms. For example, when describing differences in the way women and men play football, this often involved portraying male attributes in negative terms, celebrating gender difference rather than perceiving this as representing inferiority:

"they're [men] just more physical and, I dunno, I mean my husband goes and referees every week and I go and watch him, and a lot of the teams that are playing, I mean its different higher up, but the men's standard locally, they just, they're just animals, they're absolute animals, and their language and things are atrocious. Yeah, of course you get it in women's football, but, not to the extent, I think more girls and women's football, are

people that can actually play a bit, whereas a lot of men's teams, the lower down you get, they can't play football, they just go out for a kick"

Linked#3

"cos referees have always said they enjoy reffing women's games, not just cos of the fiery bad attitudes of the blokes but also because, its skilful, you know, its not the thundering hoofing the ball game of a bloke or men's football, they've said you do try and play football, and its good to referee"

Linked#4

Detailing men's football as comprising negative features helps the women to construct their own game in contrasting positive terms, despite at times alluding to biological inferiority. This 'positive self versus negative other representation' (Van Dijk, 2001) is achieved by associating physicality with 'animal' behaviour and 'fiery' as having a 'bad' attitude. Celebrating difference and reinforcing the positive aspects of women's football are challenging discourses that associate difference with inferiority. Therefore in some respects, the standard by which women are considered different against are still male-defined, but reconstructed as a negative measure that women *should* differ from. This also suggests that women can deconstruct 'skill' as a masculine attribute and associate it with femininity as well as masculinity (this is discussed further in chapter eight). However the belief that 'of course you get it in women's football' suggests the unevenness of the adoption of/resistance to male values and practices. Differences were also celebrated in the way men and women approach the game, and even what they gain through their participation. Firstly, the financial aspect of men's football was criticised, which encouraged the understanding of difference as beneficial because this is not a feature of women's football:

"they [women] play cos they like it, don't they, cos they've not got any money to get out of it in the long run, the ultimate goal for the girls is to get in the England squad isn't it, its not a big fat pay check at the end of the week, erm, so, it, its different...the one thing that concerns me is the way the men's gone, its all about money, its all money orientated, and I would hate for it to turn out like that for the girls, you know, that they're [men] playing for money, not cos they like the game"

Linked#5

"as long as they don't spoil it [women's football] like they spoil the men's. Men get paid, professional men get paid too much money, and it dos spoil it sometimes"

Linked#2b

Further to financial aspects, one interviewee gave a significant example of how she believed women can have a different and better approach to football than male players at the same level, again represented as a positive aspect of differentiation:

"I like to see women's teams turning up, and actually warming up properly, and getting on the pitch and playing properly, not turning up in driblets and drabs with like three of them got blue shorts on, two of them got black on, one hasn't even got any socks, you know what I mean? (laughs) I just think it looks a bit more professional if you can turn up and, look like a team, when half of these men's teams don't... Plus the fact a lot of them do it after they've had two or three pints, on a Sunday morning, and then go out and play, where I think women's, on the whole, I think they tend to take it a little more seriously"

Linked#3

Understandings of gender difference can therefore be utilised to deconstruct the association of this with female inferiority. The women here are celebrating their perceived differences between women and men's football, and highlight a significant aspect of the gender differentiation discourse – difference can be positive and pleasurable. Scraton et al (1999) found that female footballers assigned their own values and meanings to their experiences, resisting claims by Hargreaves (1994) that the powerful influence men have on women's football will impose male values and practices on the women's game. Findings here would concur with this resistance. This can be considered as a challenge to the male domination of football, not through challenging gender differentiation and becoming 'more like men', or by separating and distancing themselves from men's football, but by implying that 'their' game is better in some respects, reconstructing men's football as representing negative values and attributes which women reject in favour of more 'positive' attributes. This demonstrates the potential for women to position themselves outside of dominant discourses that equate difference with female inferiority and find some space to assign alternative meanings to their experiences. However despite assigning alternative values and meanings to their experience, the male norm is maintained as difference is still judged against this. This represents the double bind that women can find themselves in - despite reconstructing difference as positive, established standards that work to inferiorise women remain, which contributes to the maintenance of the gender order (Rich, 2001).

6.5 Difference, Sameness and the Football Association

Women's football can be understood to be structurally similar to men's football, in that women play by the same rules and regulations with no modifications. However in playing by the same rules, male norms are therefore applied to women's football. Often, the quality is compared to men's football, which is reified as the norm by which women's performances are judged (Hjelm & Olofsson, 2004). However in the wider context of football, the awareness of women as different to men and therefore wishing to be treated

that way was much more pronounced. This created a visible conflict between the aims of the FA in developing women's football, and the values the women themselves placed on their sporting experiences. Jean Williams, in her extensive study of women's football in the UK, describes how women's football under the FA is simultaneously integrated into *and* separate from current structures:

“the formal discriminations applied to women playing competitive football are by no means rational or inevitable...this feminised form of the game is materially and ideologically significant. It places women's football as a faction and marginalises it at the same time as incorporating it into current structures. It is at once similar to men's football and different and therefore forms a “structurally and functionally identical group which, by virtue of their similarity, compete for resources or positions of power and prestige, or both” (Brumfield, 1989: 127)”

(Williams, 2003: p104).

The analysis so far would disagree with the claim that women's football forms a ‘structurally and functionally identical group’ (Brumfield, 1989). The situation is more complex than this, and although at times the women in this study felt as if their sport was treated as ‘the same’ as men's football, at others it was considered as significantly different from and less than ‘real’ (men's) football. Further complicating this is the fact that there is little coherence within women's football as to whether participants wish to be perceived or even perceive themselves as similar to or different from ‘men’ who play football, which therefore influences whether they wish to participate in similar or different structures. This is not a new conflict for women's football – the Women's Football Association (WFA), formed in 1969, favoured a grassroots, gradual approach to development that de-emphasised competition, and support for this was divided as some participants preferred a more high profile and professionally-oriented approach (Williams & Woodhouse, 1991). Women in this study demonstrated the perception that structurally, the Football Association consider women's football as *the same* as men's football and ‘fit’ their clubs into league structures that replicate the established male structures. Sameness here is undoubtedly understood as women being ‘the same as men’ (Bacchi, 1990), as it is women's football that is being adapted to fit the established male norms. Linked#4, who had been involved with women's football for over 30 years and sat on various FA committees (and prior to this, committees under the WFA), demonstrated the FA's desire to shift the female game further towards the established male standards:

"they [FA after 1993 takeover] were bringing you in line with the men's game, all the time"

"I think they're probably doing it the wrong way round, I mean they are doing things to develop women's football but I just think they're trying to bring it in line with the men and boys too soon"

Linked#4

Structurally then, it can be claimed that the FA treat women in football as a 'functionally identical group' (Brumfield, 1989: 127) that can be tailored to fit existing established leagues that are at the same time both the same and inferior due to their amateur status. The traditional exclusion of women from football on the basis of their difference, that was preserved for over seventy years (Williamson, 1991), conflicts with current structures based on perceptions of sameness, creating a complex position for women within the current context of football.

The inconsistencies between perceptions of the FA's treatment of women as 'the same' as men were first suggested in the survey responses (Tables 5.1a & b). Some respondents saw this as a benefit, in providing the same structures and organisational benefits provided to men and boys; others believed that being treated like and compared to men did not acknowledge perceived gender differences and therefore considered it a problem. The interviews allowed for this contradiction to be explored more fully, and what emerged was that an emphasis on sameness had the potential to clash with the women's desire to be considered as a group who wanted to be treated as equals, but retaining a focus on their differing values. Further to her belief that women's football was being 'brought in line' with male structures, linked#4 understood this as a problem as differences between men and women were not being acknowledged:

"I think that's the problem, because its [women's football] not the same, and that's what's happening all the time now, they're keep saying 'we've gotta do it that way cos the men do it that way', but that's absolutely useless, and 'the boys do it that way', but they've got such a different structure"

Linked#4

Resistance to the FA's understanding of sameness is clear, further enforced by the concern that to manage this 'sameness', women's football is being modified despite the fact that 'it's not the same'. This was echoed by linked#2a, who was concerned that league restructuring would mean that her team had to travel greater distances and struggled to understand why changes were being implemented:

"the FA are saying that we have to fit in with this, that and the other. Whereas for us, it was running perfectly fine anyway, we like to be in this little region because it works for us at the level we're playing, we're more than happy with it...we're playing a good standard of football, against teams that don't have to travel too far, well not too far, I mean some of them, like [club]'s probably the furthest at the minute, but if they change it we'll have to travel all over the [region], and it's like, we don't want that"

"it's just changing it just to match the men, I mean why do we need to match the men, at the end of the day. If what we've got works, why can't we just leave it working?"

Linked#2a

This demonstrates a desire to retain structural independence (and therefore differentiation) from men's football, resisting the notion that women's football should be adapted to 'match the men'. This was believed to clash with alternative values women attach to their football experience, such as participation and enjoyment:

"we're playing for fun, at our level, and it's how the FA recognise, there's a difference between playing for fun at some of the levels we're at, and yes I can see them wanting to progress the women's teams and that higher up, but we're not at that level, and we probably never will be at that level"

Linked#2a

Adapting women's leagues to the format established for male leagues involves the women incorporating not just different structures, but also the values that accompany these male structures. The pyramid system is designed to provide consistency across different regions, and allow clubs to envisage a clear pathway to the elite level of the sport, supporting values of competition, development and elitism. However linked#2 was concerned that women in football did not necessarily align themselves with these competitive discourses. This is also suggestive of a tension within women's football, between the elite and grassroots levels of the sport. Concerns are exacerbated at the grassroots level, as the women feel further distanced from the FA and their implementation of structures based on competition and progression. Interviewee independent#2 similarly described how her senior team had moved down a league to adjust to the different standards that had resulted from restructuring:

"we were fine in the [league] until the FA decided that the format had gotta be changed...some of the girls see it as a hobby, you know what I mean, football's a hobby to em, they wanna go out, have a game of football, have a few beers after, and a cob like, and job done, you know, and I says god, this leagues too serious for us, you know what I mean? And obviously some of the young ones got a bit disillusioned"

Independent#2

These concerns demonstrate not only that the FA treat women's football as structurally similar to men's football, but also that this similarity does not necessarily reflect the women's individual perceptions of football and the values associated with their own involvement. The male dominance of all levels of the FA clearly creates a conflict of interest between males in decision-making positions and female participants (Williams, 2004), which creates a complex situation regarding whether initiatives should be based upon understandings of difference or sameness. However as it has been demonstrated these are not mutually exclusive categories but overlap considerably, and are drawn upon interchangeably. Women's football should not be perceived as *either* 'different' to or 'the same' as men's football, as these are fluid and unstable concepts that vary greatly in their meanings to those involved, and can be experienced and incorporated simultaneously. The question therefore emerges as to how women can be incorporated into a structure that acknowledges the varying degrees of difference *and* sameness. Linked#2a alluded to this, in suggesting that women would like to be taken seriously as equals so as to help raise their profile, whilst acknowledging difference not just between women and men but also within the different levels of football:

"Without raising that profile, I never see it being taken seriously, getting the publicity going. But not, then, doing that at the top level but not destroying the bottom level by tinkering with it too much, because then clubs will fold cos they can't cope with the demands that the FA want. They've got to put the support at the bottom as well"

Linked#2a

This returns to an issue presented above, in that the tension between the assumed polar positions of sameness and difference are often reconciled by demonstrating the desire to be treated as different but equal. However as already discussed in reference to relationships at club level, discourses that associate gendered difference with female inferiority are particularly strong in the football context, and as a result, this 'different and equal' status can prove very hard to achieve.

6.6 Summary

Firstly it is important not to focus on tensions and perceived problems to the extent that positive advances in football for women and girls are masked. There has undoubtedly been a growth in the number of female junior players registered in clubs (Table 1.1), and the clubs in this study with junior sections supported this claim as all had grown

significantly in recent years with most indicating that they would be adding more junior teams in subsequent seasons to accommodate this increase in players. The experiences of the women in this study did reject claims that the FA are responsible for this growth, through their demonstrated individual drive to increase opportunities for girls to play football and 'recruit' both players and adult volunteers (usually parents) to help facilitate this. However claims that 'women's football' as a sport is rapidly rising in terms of female participants of *all* ages appears, at least for the clubs in this study, to be a little misguided. Both official figures and the clubs in this study do however only represent 'registered' players, and are therefore only partially representative of the types of opportunities available for women as they do not account for female recreational players who do not play in club structures. The 'growth' of women's football is discussed further in chapter eight.

A theme that emerged strongly from the analysis above is the extent to which the individual women in the study, their clubs and their sport appear to be detached from wider football structures, despite being under the 'umbrella' of the male governing body at both regional and national level, and participating in replica league structures. This is often understood in terms of the historical development of the game as a hurdle that women and their sport must overcome (eg Lopez, 1997; Williams, 2003; Williams & Woodhouse, 1991) in order to become more integrated and gain acceptance as members of this dominantly male arena. In some of these clubs, detachment can however be reinterpreted as an increase in control; this echoes the positioning of Linked#1 in the previous chapter that in being 'pushed away' from their male club, this has led to them taking control of both their financial circumstances and material resources, reducing reliance on male structures. In this chapter, the women described how an internal cycle of staff allowed them to foster the type of environment they wished to create, whether this be participatory or based upon competitive and achievement-orientated discourses. However this control appears to be significantly limited beyond their own club contexts. The reluctance of the FA to fully integrate women, particularly into decision-making positions, means that women have very little control over the development of their sport, strongly signified in the expressed aversion to league restructuring but the acceptance that this is inevitable as it is 'out of their control'. The values adopted by the FA with regards to integration and sameness/difference clashed with the values of some of the women in this study. Particularly at the grassroots level of the sport, women expressed

values such as enjoyment and participation but believed this to be disregarded by the FA's drive to replicate male league structures for women's football.

Understandings of sameness and difference again reflected the contradictory and complicated position women hold in football, as mostly these were experienced simultaneously. 'Sameness' was utilised more in reflecting the desire to be treated as equals, but not necessarily the same, and was deemed necessary for acceptance. Perceptions of difference at times reflected understandings of female inferiority, and the 'buying into' women's inferior position in football due to physical differences. However the association between difference and female inferiority was at times deconstructed and reconstructed as 'female superiority' in certain areas, suggesting that the women in the study had little difficulty in understanding difference away from the dominance of the link between this and female inferiority. The women frequently asserted that they do not want to be considered as the same, due to the features in male football that are perceived negatively such as aggression, over-competitiveness and commercialisation, but wanted to celebrate positive differentiation and distance themselves from these perceived negative aspects. The 'claim' women appear to make on skill may demonstrate a particularly significant tension and therefore space for women to challenge dominant discourses that continue to position them as different and therefore inferior.

In extending this debate outside of the club context, tensions between sameness and difference were more prevalent for women, in that the FA treat women as 'the same' rather than 'equal' in modifying the women's game to match male norms. Attempts to eradicate differentiation therefore involve the movement of women towards long-established male standards and structures, and the women were heavily critical of this in wanting differences to be recognised. This demonstrates the concern that the FA are struggling to account for difference/sameness – the women don't feel equal members, yet also don't feel that they have space to celebrate positive differences. Again this reflects Crosset's (1995) notion of women as 'outsiders on the inside', in that liberal gains in terms of increased opportunities and the growth of game are yet to serve as the basis of a more far-reaching change to the provision and perception of football for women or to the structures of football (Williams, 2003). The analysis in this chapter would suggest that this is partly due to the fact that women are admitted to the sport, but not integrated, and this position is accepted as little space appears to exist for women to

challenge this. Even when the women are critical of changes to structure, this is not heard outside of their club context.

Issues of integration and separation are therefore complex at both club and organisational level. Neither has been fully achieved, paralleling similar issues as those for clubs who find themselves dependent on male clubs so accept inferior positioning, who are not fully integrated so don't have means to voice their opinions, but also a lack of independence so a lack of control. Acknowledging different organisational levels on sporting structures such as football is therefore important as issues permeate all levels, and the strength of gendered discourses is heightened due to their prevalence across different structural levels. Major benefits of FA governance are increased status/profile, similar to the suggested benefits of links with male clubs (see chapter five and Appendix 4), yet seemingly coupled with these benefits is relinquished control of own club, sport and experiences. A lack of women at administrative level means that "fundamental issues of control are as contentious now as they have ever been" (Williams, 2004: 125).

³⁴ Combination Leagues are two steps away from the elite Women's Premier League (see Appendix 6 for league structures of women).

³⁵ An unofficial World Cup was held for women in Italy in 1970, and again in Mexico in 1971. Williams & Woodhouse (1991: 97) state that "the international links advertised in Italy and Mexico, as well as the earning potential of the women's game, sufficiently alerted UEFA at its annual conference in June 1971 to pass a motion requesting that national associations take control of the women's arm of the sport in their own countries...fearing censure, or worse, from UEFA, when the [FA] Council met on 29 November 1971 it made a minimal commitment to recognise the WFA, lift the 1921 restrictions on its member clubs, and set up a joint consultative committee with the WFA. Despite its own huge reserves, no financial commitment was made by the FA towards the development of the women's game." The phrase 'take control' is used here, rather than 'take responsibility for', 'or develop', or 'integrate'; this is perhaps indicative of the problems that are contentious for women today, in that some women feel that the FA control women's football but demonstrate little in terms of commitment to developing equity of integrating women fully into the structure and culture of the sport.

³⁶ In 1978, 12-year old Teresa Bennett challenged this rule after being selected on merit to play for her local boys team, but the Appeal Court supported the FA's ruling (Williams, 2003); more recently, 10-year old Minnie Cruttwell wrote to Tessa Jowell asking to be allowed to continue to play for her team, questioning why she should have to change teams when she is good enough to play (The Guardian, 2006). Lord Denning, who upheld the decision against Teresa Bennett, remarked "the law would be an ass and an idiot if it tried to make girls into boys so that they could join all-boys games" (1978: 5, quoted in Williams, 2003: 125). Although this ruling was thirty years ago, the regulation still stands and is significant in differentiating between girls and boys in football past the age of eleven.

³⁷ Again, both David Beckham and Michael Owen are used to represent the male role models in football, this time by a different interviewee.

³⁸ The FA offer different levels of coaching awards to those involved in football, that are nationally recognised qualifications (FA, 2003). Level 1 is an open-entry course with no experience required, and is designed as an introduction to coaching for those with little experience or knowledge. Level 2 is for more experienced coaches, and incorporates more technical aspects, and a great deal of practical time and commitment. Level 3, or UEFA 'B' license, is aimed at professional coaches and is the highest qualification held amongst the interviewees in this study (see Table 5.5).

CHAPTER SEVEN: WOMEN'S ROLES IN FOOTBALL

7.1 Introduction

The previous two chapters explored the perceptions and understandings of women within the broader gender relations that constitute and are constituted by the context of football in the UK. The analysis will now incorporate the individual level within this context, exploring women's different roles within football to demonstrate how women understand their roles within both the structures of football they are embedded in and wider societal gendered discourses. It is clear from the analysis so far that women hold a complex and often contradictory position in football, as increasingly represented participants in a context that has traditionally resisted their involvement. Further, this increase in participation has not preceded the movement of women into leadership and decision-making positions in the hierarchy of football, as women are still significantly under-represented in the structures that are responsible for the development of their sport (Williams, 2004). These institutional inequalities in terms of gender relations contribute to the maintenance of football as a male preserve, and the incorporation of women into this preserve requires a simultaneous acceptance of and resistance to the inherent male norms and standards.

It is also important for the analysis to recognise the role of women in football beyond their role as players – due to the voluntary nature of football work, women are often involved as participants and as 'workers', demonstrating the multiple aspects to their football identities that are interwoven and create multiple positioning both within and outside of dominant discourses. The individual understandings of women's contradictory position as both integrated in yet detached from wider football structures allows an exploration of the conflicting dynamics that women have to negotiate when working in football. In examining the individual level of experience, it is important to position this firmly within the wider structures of football, in order to ensure the study retains a multilevel focus that acknowledges the complex workings of gender and the interconnectedness of organisational levels (Cunningham & Sagas, 2008). The role of gender in sports organisations has been demonstrated to be salient throughout the different levels, with gendered discourses influential in reproducing roles in football as requiring qualities traditionally associated with masculinity (Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2008). This chapter will examine the different roles women occupy in football and

analyse the role of gendered discourse in facilitating or preventing women's movement into these roles. In attempting to understand how women are moving into roles previously the exclusive domain of men, the potential for women to challenge existing gender relations can be examined.

7.2 Women and Football Roles

As already discussed, the context of women's football clubs cannot be considered reflective of the wider gender regimes that it exists within. This is especially evident when examining the sexual division of labour in clubs, as traditional patriarchal understandings of the gender order (Connell, 1987) are apparent yet insufficient in describing the relations of power in this context. The roles undertaken by women across the hierarchy of power in clubs - from chairperson through to being a participant in a highly physical and traditionally male sport - represents a challenge to stereotypical female roles (although the women in this study do dominantly occupy positions such as secretary and more 'maternal' roles with younger players at the club). The lack of support provided by institutions in the wider context such as the FA and male football clubs has created a gap between women's football clubs and the wider context of men's football, limiting the overlap of the levels. Therefore although constituted as a result of processes in wider gendered discourses, the context of women's football has grown independently in some respects. For example, as described in the previous section, female administrators can find they receive little help from the governing body in terms of funding, so have to develop financial self-sufficiency in their club. Similarly clubs can receive little support in terms of male coaches, so make the decision to pay for their own players to qualify and coach the junior teams at the club. The large base of female volunteers who invest a great deal of time in developing opportunities for girls and women to play football have maintained a large amount of control over decision-making at (but however limited to) the club level (Williams, 2003). However, despite women occupying leadership and coaching roles, club-specific contexts are not sites where women are unquestioningly moving into those roles previously the exclusive domain of men. Discourses of gender difference and male 'natural superiority' in the wider football context continue to impact women's understanding of their roles. The interaction of the roles women occupy at clubs with the other more traditionally gendered structures of work they are involved in (paid and domestic roles) also play a part in the women's perceptions. Further, it will be demonstrated that outside of the club context, the women

in the study struggled to negotiate space to take on new roles, often demonstrating resistant positions alongside complicit practices within wider discourses that are more reflective of traditional sexual divisions of labour (Connell, 1987; McKay, 1997). This can limit the advancement of women beyond their own club context, therefore posing little challenge to the naturalisation of male norms and male dominance of leadership roles in football.

7.3 'Women's work'

It has been demonstrated in sports literature that women fulfil certain stereotypical jobs in clubs (eg Thompson, 1994; Hargreaves, 1994; Chafetz & Kotorba 1999; see chapter two for further discussion). However it is appropriate to identify what the participants thought was 'their' work at the club, in order to explore how they understand their roles. Discussions did at times reflect gender-stereotypical understandings of 'women's work', carried out either by themselves or by other women at the club:

"I think its more stereotyped int it, secretary, oh that's a woman...I think the majority of them are women"

Partnership#1

"our teams really very good, because erm, they erm, I've got two mums, and the three of us share the kit washing, so that cycles, I mean kit washing, washing a full [kit], you don't wanna have to do it every week"

Partnership#3

'Women's work' here is suggested to consist of responsibilities such as kit washing and food preparation, an extension of their domestic work (Hargreaves, 1994). These roles are seemingly unchallenged and unquestioned – there was no mention of males at the club assisting with these types of jobs.

"they obviously involve the wives and things in things like washing the kit, and the sandwiches and that, but there aren't any women on the committee, which would maybe be one step next for [women's team] to try and get someone on the committee"

Linked#2b

Again, the belief that there are wives 'obviously' involved in kit washing and food preparation powerfully reinforces gender role polarisation as there were no women at the club in decision-making positions (although the interviewee did believe that there should be, so did not accept this unquestioningly). The use of the word 'obviously' implies that

this is expected of the women, normalising the gendered nature of work and associating women with domestic responsibilities inside football clubs.

“they’re [parents] fantastic, I mean the mums actually did the food for the tournament, made us a bit of money to get our full size goals”

Independent#2

“if there’s anything needs doing down the clubhouse, like people manning say the tea and coffee stall during a game, or something, you get to find out at committee meetings don’t you and you can offer your services”

Linked#3

Similarly, when other women are spoken of as involved in the running of the club, they tended to be referred to by their domestic role, as wives or mothers, again helping to reinforce their subordinate position at the club. Discourses concerning the role of women in servicing men’s leisure (Thompson, 1994) and the ‘natural’ sexual division of labour (Connell, 1987)³⁹ therefore impact women’s understanding of their own role and what is expected of them. Naturalising the relationship between the women’s football and domestic identities contributes significantly to the maintenance of these discourses, further reinforced by associating men primarily with leadership and decision making roles (discussed below). However despite positioning themselves and other women within discourses that normalise the sexual division of labour, this is a complex and often contradictory process as the women in the study were also actively involved in roles that can be understood as ‘traditionally male’ such as coaching, holding decision-making positions, representing their clubs on league committees and above all as participants in physical contact sport. Understanding where and how this has occurred is vital in exploring how women may resist traditional gendered positions.

7.4 The Movement of Women into Traditionally Male Roles

Research has strongly indicated that reported increases in female participation levels in sport have not been matched in leadership roles (eg Fasting & Pfister, 2000; Hovden, 2000b, 2000c). However the movement of women into these roles in itself represents a challenge to the male dominance of the sport. The most striking examples of women moving into male spaces with regards to work undertaken at football clubs were at Linked#5 where the interviewee held a paid role at a male professional football club, and Independent#1 where the decision-making positions in the club hierarchy were intentionally and actively assigned to females. In order to assess if this process

represents a challenge to traditional understandings of the sexual division of labour, it is important to try and understand how these contexts facilitated this challenge, alongside what how the women managed to resist gender norms. In particular, women working (although mainly unpaid) as coaches and holding leadership positions on committees such as manager or chair are understood to be fulfilling roles traditionally occupied by men, and it is these roles that will be examined to explore how experiences within and outside dominant gendered discourses concerning the sexual division of labour both enable and constrain the movement of women into these positions.

Walsh (2001) analysed the role of women in different male-dominated organisations and discussed how women engage in complex negotiations to manage the competing norms faced when taking up traditionally masculine positions. She proposed three ways in which women managed these contradictory norms: by accommodating masculine attributes, by emphasising the suitability of feminine norms, or by actively shifting between the two. In the context of football clubs, there was evidence of the women in the study utilising each of these techniques at various times, highlighting how these are not fixed extremes of resistance or complicity but varying positions embedded in discourses at different moments. Each are utilised multiply in reaction to the context the women are immersed in at particular times. It is also important to recognise the differing extents to which women feel able to enter these non-traditional roles; even within the club context, women can simultaneously be involved in leadership and coaching positions yet be complicit to the naturalisation of male suitability and female unsuitability regarding these roles in football clubs. When taking these non-traditional roles outside of the club context, the strength of football as a male preserve and widely accepted discourses of male dominance can further impact the potential for women to resist these discourses.

7.4.1 Accommodating Masculine Norms

Coaching is an area of sport that is predominantly occupied by men, even when the participants are female (Fasting & Pfister, 2000); coaching in football, as historically associated with men and masculinity to a significant degree, is commonly regarded as more suited to men, even by many female participants (Williams, 2003). In order to succeed or even survive in this area, women may emphasise their sameness to men, by adapting to masculine norms (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2008). The women involved in

the study who worked in coaching roles at their club criticised the courses they attended to qualify as coaches as privileging traditionally male characteristics such as aggressive and domineering styles. Independent#1a suggested that the adoption of these traditionally masculine characteristics can allow women to be perceived as better coaches and therefore more likely to pass the course; these norms could then be adapted to in order to survive (passing) rather than a drive to succeed (being a good coach):

“What it is, you’ve just gotta go out there, and bellow, be in command, it’s a male thing. (shouts) ‘Right you three over there, you over there’”

“There was a group of guys who passed [level 2 coaching course], I basically turned to the two girls and I said, I wouldn’t let them near our club, because of their style, of coaching...they were looking for that traditional, almost it’s a modern course, but they’re looking for the traditional coach, and the two, it aint, it is not working”

“they passed mostly the aggressive blokes that were in the group, if you were aggressive you normally passed”

Independent#1a

These comments suggest that in order to fulfil a role normally considered the domain of men, the interviewee felt pressured to adapt to the masculinist styles associated with this role. Although these quotes do not demonstrate women adapting their behaviour in practice, they do highlight the strength of the masculinity-football association. Similar research concerning coaching qualification courses in English football by Fielding-Lloyd & Meân (2008) demonstrated how football coaching is a significantly masculine arena in a traditionally masculine sport, and gendered practices within courses themselves reproduced this male dominance. Women may lack experience in authoritative situations such as this, but can then be removed further from coaching in practice by the kinds of behaviours that are encouraged - behaviours that are tied to traditional understandings of men and masculinity. Here it is suggested that in order to survive as a football coach (pass the course), women enter into discourses that naturalise associations between authority and masculinity (‘it’s a male thing’), and women can seemingly either comply with male behaviours or resist (discussed further below). Therefore in entering into these discourses in the context of coaching courses, women are inevitably judged against them; the norm here is a male-defined norm that is maintained through complicity. Linked#5, who held a paid role at a male professional football club and was the highest qualified coach in the study, not only experienced this but has since transferred this established male norm into her paid work as a football coach, in adapting her coaching style to be louder - behaviour learnt on the course.

"I was the only girl and I did it [FA coaching course] with twenty-five army blokes, on an army barracks...they hammered me though cos I talked too quietly, so, needless to say I don't any more, I learnt from that"

Linked#5

In contrast to the previous quotes, linked#5 alluded to how she has modified her behaviour long-term, in adapting her style of coaching to the norm encouraged through the coaching course rather than criticising the fact that she was 'hammered' for talking 'too quietly'. Although limited, this data suggests that in being encouraged to adapt their coaching style in line with a traditional domineering method, women on coaching courses can be denied the opportunity to explore alternative coaching styles that they may feel are more suitable for them and the recipients of their work as football coaches. Also, the successful adoption of 'male' norms involves a risk of being perceived by others as aggressive and confrontational, or 'unfeminine' (Walsh, 2001). This issue has been explored in other fields such as the business world, as women who display those attributes valued by male managers can be criticised for being 'macho', harsh and aggressive (Wilson, 2003; Bagilhole, 2002). Although the women in this study did not experience criticism for adapting to these male norms (perhaps because their role was rarely extended beyond their club context, or the 'naturalness' of these norms in the football coaching domain), independent#1a understood the potential consequences associated with being an outspoken female in the wider football context:

"they [male representatives of other clubs] all thought I'm some kind of bra-burning psychopath, so now, like, I try not to go to too many meetings cos they just think you're being militant...in the end you just try and take a step back and say right we just do, we'll do what we thinks right for our club"

Independent#1a

Here is an example of how portraying strong and resistant behaviour becomes more difficult outside of the club context. Independent#1a, at the only fully independent female club in the study, fought for the right to be involved in a traditionally male domain and demonstrated a strong desire to run a football club for women by women. Yet outside of this context, she felt the need to modify this behaviour and be more submissive. Even though she wanted to 'make a change' regarding improving not just access to but also experiences within football for girls and women, outside of the club context there appears to be limited scope in what can be said and done, due to the strength of the strongly established and male dominated wider context of football.

Women are therefore incorporated into football structures but within discourses that not only privilege and naturalise male norms and attributes, but limit the potential for women to resist these norms outside of their club context. Not wanting to be perceived as a 'bra-burning psychopath' or 'militant', also suggests a distancing from her feminist identity, despite creating an empowering football environment for women as well as associating feminism with the more radical end of separatist politics. This reflects findings by Rich (2005) in that young women today can hold a complex position regarding feminism, in supporting an equal opportunities framework yet rejecting a feminist identity. This contradictory position is particularly apparent here as independent#1a maintained underlying radical feminist notions of separatism in running the only female-only club in the study, yet simultaneously resisted a feminist identity. Despite wishing to privilege girls over boys at her club, which demonstrates explicit support for feminist aims, the negative perceptions encountered when moving this type of identity outside of her club resulted in a return back to the 'safer' club context, preventing any female empowerment from being taken beyond her club and allowing the gendered wider context of football to remain male-dominated.

In relation to challenging broader understandings of gender, adapting behaviour to masculine norms associated with traditionally male roles and normative standards of behaviour maintains the polarisation of the masculine/feminine dichotomy. In understanding 'typical' male/female characteristics as opposing, women are fitting into existing societal stereotypes ('men as aggressive/women as passive') and as described, this does little to challenge this dialectical understanding of gender behaviour on a wider scale. In relation to the sameness/difference debate, the adoption of masculine characteristics can be understood as an attempt by women to demonstrate their right to equality of opportunity in traditionally male roles by exerting their 'sameness', associated with the liberal feminist agenda (Hall, 1996; discussed earlier in chapter two). However this allows the association of these characteristics with masculinity to continue unchallenged, maintaining 'common-sense' stereotypical gender behaviours and also in this case, reproducing discourses that associate coaching with male characteristics and therefore more suited to men. Adopting masculine characteristics whilst in the role as a female coach demonstrates how being further 'inside' the male structure of football (coaching considered as more embedded in the sport than just being a participant) can at

the same time reinforce the position of women as 'outsiders', through privileging those characteristics associated with men and masculinity over women and femininity.

7.4.2 Challenging 'Masculine as Superior' Understandings

The rejection of masculine norms can reflect an attempt to challenge the unproblematised status of these norms, through constructing females as possessing characteristics more suited to the management of women (Walsh, 2001). This is especially apparent in the context of women's football, as the interviewees suggested that women were perhaps more 'suitable' for dealing with female participants, such as in an approach to coaching women that is more reflective of their different needs, and being more responsive to feedback:

"I prefer [a female coach], just going on our team, they've got more time, and patience, the, er, obviously the woman will shout at you if you're talking, or doing something wrong but it, I don't think that the male, males don't understand, like, as much as the female, and obviously cos she's a team-mate, you all get on really well anyway"

Independent#1b

"I've found that the majority of our female coaches, ask [participants], what they got out of the session, what they think they [as coaches] should be doing, how they think they could improve"

Independent#1a

Women can perceive themselves as more suitable for coaching roles with females by negatively constructing the 'male' style, and demonstrating how this can be incompatible with female needs, or arguing that they 'don't understand women' as well as a female would:

"I don't think that the male, males don't understand, like, as much as the female"

Independent#1b

"when they [male coach] come down and say 'do you do chesting the ball' and things like that, its like oh for god's sake, they don't seem to realise that we play it exactly as the men play it"

Linked#2a

This reflects one of the central themes to the study – whether women play the same game as men, and further, whether women should be treated as 'the same' as men or whether differences should be acknowledged. Despite emphasising sameness in discussions around how juniors are perceived and treated at their club (see section 6.4.1),

these participants also resisted being treated the same as men, emphasising biological differences that they believe should encourage them to be treated differently. Returning again to debates around separatism and integration, demonstrating essentialised understandings of male/female incompatibility has roots in separatist discourses. Adding women to existing male dominated sporting structures inevitably results in female experiences being understood in relation to pre-established (and in the case of football, highly visible) male norms (Weedon, 1999); in this situation, the women are being judged by accepted male standards of football ability ('chesting the ball') situating women as inferior. The complexity and conflicting discourses surrounding this debate is outlined by linked#2a contradicting her earlier statement in strong support of sameness ('we play it exactly as the men play it') by drawing upon discourses of gender difference:

"Men don't seem to always know how to react, like you can go to training and know, so-and-so's behaving like a complete tit because she's got PMT, where a man would look and say she's giving me an attitude, I'm not having that, but the amount of times you do have to make allowances for people, and I don't always think the men read that as well. They do have to, I mean [] bless him, he was quite a good coach but he didn't read them that well at all"

Linked#2a

"sometimes they [male coach] treat you like a man and, so your like, no, look what, I mean when a lot of them say aw, I'm not very well, obviously, if its due to women's, women's things, and they're like, what?"

Linked#1

This demonstrates the limits of both liberal and radical feminist agendas in their reliance on stable and universally accepted meanings surrounding gendered identities (Weedon, 1999). These differing identities appear interchangeable to the women. 'Sameness' is constructed in an attempt to access the same resources and opportunities, in respect to a dominantly accepted and highly visible 'male norm' in football; this is however rejected in favour of difference when the women wish to portray their greater suitability to certain roles, challenging discourses that associate gender difference with female inferiority.

A 'positive self versus negative other' technique is used here to criticise 'male' behaviour as incompatible with female needs and therefore wrong, suggesting this is in opposition to 'women' as a collective who would automatically understand these needs. Similarly, women's 'efficientness' as administrators and decision-makers was

highlighted by independent#1a as a benefit to their female-dominated committee, in that meetings were both shorter and less confrontational:

“you find that [with a mostly female committee], meetings are very short, yeah, and also erm you don’t get many people sparring off each other, which I’ve watched in meetings I’ve been in the past, if there’s been a few men involved, usually the antlers come out, and, so we’ve managed to steer clear of that at the moment”

Independent#1a

Although challenging the male dominance of such roles and re-inscribing them as more suitable for women, this challenge is based on understandings of innate gender difference and incompatibility which reinforces the differences that often contribute to women being perceived as inferior. This represents the double bind women can find themselves in when attempting to demonstrate feminine compatibility with non-traditional roles – reinforcing notions of essential difference returns women to a position that reinforces the gender order (Rich, 2001). Radical feminists argued for separate spaces for women to experience sport, due to their innate differences to men (Hall, 1990); however a reliance on essential differences maintains dichotomies such as male/female as hierarchical dualisms where male is privileged over female (Weedon, 1999). To demonstrate, all women involved in coaching in the study undertook predominantly grassroots roles with juniors, placed at the lowest level of the coaching hierarchy that Williams (2003: 132) describes as “little more than voluntary childminding”. The dominance of women at this level reinforces their assumed maternal qualities and limits their experience higher up the football hierarchy, a lack of experience that can then work to legitimise their future exclusion (Connell, 1987). The evolutionary nature of institutional change is also important here – women’s football as a sport is still very much in its infancy, especially in comparison to the well-established structure of men’s football, and it is inevitable that it will take time for women to gain experience in football leadership positions and progress up hierarchies. However understandings that construct women as more suited to roles in women’s football due to the incompatibility of men and women limits women’s advancements to the female context and the wider structure of football will remain a site run predominantly for and by men.

As well as highlighting how women might be more suited to roles within football clubs, a similar technique was used to ‘allow’ women’s movement, but without explicitly

reinforcing gender differentiation – the neutralisation of roles. In suggesting that gender is not an important variable for a role, but certain qualities are needed, this represents a shift away from male/female suitability to individual suitability, less associated with gender. This was utilised in discussions of both coaching and refereeing:

“But I don’t think they [coaches] get a different attitude from the players, I don’t think it matters if it’s a man or a woman, if you don’t get their respect, you don’t get their respect, you’ve got to earn that first”

Linked#2a

“Erm, as long as, they’re as consistently good as what we’re used to, cos we normally get classified referees, we try not to get anything less than that, so as long as they’re [female referees] up to a decent standard then yeah, that’s fine”

Linked#3

These responses came from direct questioning about gender difference in each domain, therefore to resist this and express opinions that gender was irrelevant demonstrated specific resistance to differentiation. Suggesting that individual ability is more important than ‘typical’ male/female attributes signals a resistance to gender differentiation and a shift away from understanding roles in football as more suitable to men or women, which is based upon dialectical understandings of gender difference and incompatibility. The drive to be accepted into roles on terms of ability rather than emphasising sameness or difference deconstructs this perceived dichotomy; however the ‘male norm’ discourse is still unavoidable, as linked#3 above had never had a female referee for any of her matches, therefore wanting women to be ‘up to a decent standard’ is again in relation to a pre-existing and male-defined standard. The strong visibility of men in such positions (referees, coaching etc) creates a significant problem for women in that there appears to be no achievable ‘correct behaviour’ to be accepted as women in a traditionally male role, and their inclusion is contradictory in that even resisting naturalised male attributes still positions women as complicit in the gender order (Rich, 2001).

7.4.3 Women's Work as Inferior to That Done by Men

One significant method of moving into previously male-occupied positions behind the scenes in football clubs without compromising their position as a woman was to consider their work as inferior to that done by men at the club. This type of understanding is strongly influenced by discourses of male naturalness in the football context, framing beliefs that men do the ‘real work’. Despite often undertaking large

amounts of work behind the scenes in clubs, this was often constructed as unimportant or insignificant in contrast to the work done by their male counterparts.

"I don't like talking about myself, but basically I do run the club! ...On a day to day basis, well, erm, everything really, I sort the accounts out, erm, sort out the meetings, venues, the presentation night, the registration, for teams and players, so a lot of shuffling of paperwork, erm, just basically the running of it, if there is a decision to make then, or if someone comes to me with a problem, then I'll go to the chairman"

Partnership#1

This is most evident where their role is discussed in comparison to that of a male at the club; partnership#1 describes herself as 'running the club', but constructs her actual duties as menial ('paper-shuffling' – portrayed as not 'real' work) and significantly limited (any decisions or problems are taken to the chairman). So despite the movement into a leadership position in football, there is little challenge to discourses of male natural dominance in these roles as she constructs her role as inferior to that of the chairman. Her modesty is also evident and contributes considerably to the reproduction of female inferiority in this context, as if she cannot appreciate the importance of the work she undertakes, then it is unlikely that others will. A lot of the women in the study were involved in internal work at their club; as in the example above, the interviewee held the position of secretary and was predominantly involved in responsive tasks, and her understanding of this work will be influenced by dominant discourses in wider institutions such as businesses that construct this type of work as inferior to decision-making roles that can involve contact with external parties (Colgan & Ledwith, 1996). However involvement in what is often perceived as low-level internal work does not explain perceptions of her own inferiority by independent#2 who held a number of different roles at her club:

"I'm sort of manager, and general dogsbody... We did have a volunteer manager, but he erm, due to his work commitments he sort of knocked it on the head, so I was left as secretary, manager, coach, transport"

"the guy that I work with, [], he's you know a real bit of help, he's sort of top dog, I make sure everyone sort of gets there"

Independent#2

Despite a significant contribution to the running of her junior club, including the role of manager which involved representing her club externally, the interviewee still refers to her male co-worker (he is her partner not her boss in their paid roles as coaches outside of their club) as 'top dog' and devalues her own influence as 'making sure everyone gets

there' (a typical maternal role). She also refers to herself as 'dogsbody' for having so many duties rather than valuing her own contribution as essential to the running of the club, despite undertaking the same type of work as her male co-worker. Practices such as this reproduce oppositional discourses of male superiority/female inferiority in football rather than challenging them, despite the involvement of women in leadership and decision-making roles. Later, partnership#3 then listed and subsequently devalued her extensive duties:

"Basically its erm, just making sure that, some of the roles that I do is I book the pitches, er, book referees, deal with all the paperwork that comes through from [local] FA, help [male secretary], if he needs a hand on the other side, if we've got erm, if something's happened and we've got a disciplinary hearing or something, I deal with all the paperwork, pay the fines, go to the disciplinary hearing, then pass the information back to the team, erm, spend time with the girls, I'm also child protection officer for the girls as well...you deal with issues, you've got letters going out, you know, erm, type all the type all the letters up, erm, do the fixtures, make sure they've all got the fixtures out, deal with all the affiliation forms, pay the cheques, (laughs), make sure everything's, just make sure that everything's, done, you know, but the main thing the main thing, [husband and club chair] does most of the meetings and the organising as such, on that side, but I tend to do the more, the paperwork"

Partnership#3

The prevalence of this technique of inferiorising the work that women undertook themselves at clubs is clear. Here the substantial number of duties involved in partnership#3's role are devalued as insignificant in her conclusion that her husband does the 'main' jobs such as organising and taking meetings, which she considers as more important than the 'all the paperwork' that she does. The association of women with secretarial and maternal duties ('spend time with the girls') is normalised, and understanding this type of work as inferior to the 'main' jobs devalues the type of work that is considered the norm for women. All three of the participants quoted here held the position of secretary (for independent#2, this was amongst others) and the devaluing of the significant number of time-consuming jobs that this role involves reinforces the wider sexual division of labour (Connell, 1987) that associates secretarial work with women and therefore as inferior to the decision-making positions held by men.

Linked#3 implied her inferiority at her club by constantly discussing how much work her husband (as chair of the club) undertook. He was frequently mentioned in discussions about how her club was managed, and he appeared so do a significant amount of work there, particularly involving communication outside of the club context.

The specific jobs he was associated with suggested that linked#3 left certain types of jobs to her husband as he would be more successful, for example:

"he does most of it [work] to be honest, cos, he's a good talker, plus the fact he works in an office, so if there's any paperwork needs doing he's sat at a computer anyway. So he does most of it"

"my husband was actually on their [old male club] committee as well, he was on both"

"And when we said, my husband said, 'thanks a lot, we've already registered as your name', and then it was like, 'oh well, if you could just kick off an hour earlier, so [] could leave a bit earlier', and it was like, 'forget it', they [old male club] didn't want us there, we'll find somewhere else that does"

"I mean my husband did try, he did try to get committee meetings sorted down there and, it was just one excuse after another"

"My husband, yeah, he'll aim to get on the men's committee, obviously we'll give it a few months and once they get started he'll approach them and see if he can sit on as a representative"

"I should of brought the email my husbands just sent"

"my husband was furious at this, so he rang up [local women's football development officer]"

"he's actually wrote an email saying, 'I'll come, if you want me to, I'll come on, sort out the county league for, with the help of []', that's what he rang up [] about"

"its always [husband] that sorts it out, cos he knows a lot of people on the FA anyway, our county FA, [] and all the rest of it, he knows them all, so. As soon as he rings up and says 'its [husband]', its like 'oh, from [club]'...I mean he just loves doing that sort of thing, but he did used to be chairman of the [] League as well, so"

Linked#3

The extent of references to the work her husband does here is important – external work that requires communication with other agencies is repeatedly associated with him, suggesting he is positioned more closely to those he needs to interact with. Men who have experience of football structures and have been immersed in these structures for a number of years will undeniably hold greater social capital in these situations than women, and will be able to utilise this experience outside of the club context in ways which women who do not have the same resources would not be able to. The majority of these situations are where links are needed between the club and the wider football context (male club, local FA, county league, other clubs), suggesting that she believes he will be more successful in bridging this gap than she (or any other female) might be. The constant referral to the work her husband does, especially in comparison to the limited descriptions of her own role as treasurer, emphasises the importance of his role with the club and simultaneously downplays her own input. Knoppers & Anthonissen (2008) discovered a similar theme in their study of male senior managers in sports organisations, demonstrating how discourses of homogeneity reinforced the suitability of men for positions that involved dealing with other men in informal networks that are

often male homosocial contexts. This issue is particularly salient in the organisation of football, in that despite the clubs in the study being run wholly or in part for females, the wider context of football remains male dominated and women such as linked#3 may find that it is easier to use men to communicate outside of the female club as they are in a more advantageous position to do so. A difficulty in challenging this issue is the infancy of women's football and the resultant lack of experience that women hold, particularly in hierarchies. The perceived value of male experience even in women's football was recognised by linked#4:

"We like to keep a [male/female committee] balance but, we always have known men have got a lot to offer, their experience and whatever, so, some clubs are a little bit anti-male, they think everything should be female, but we've never really been that. If people are there and willing, we're quite happy take em on board and do it!"

Linked#4

Tied in with recognising the experience men can bring to the women's game is the constant struggle that was evident throughout all interviews, in that the running of clubs relies heavily on volunteer help, and in that respect, no help would be turned away if offered. Separatism in the club context is also rejected in favour of utilising the experience men can offer, with the aim to keep 'a balance'. The danger is however becoming reliant on male experience to do work outside of the club context that involves networking with wider structures such as other clubs and league committees. Not only would this reliance limit the independent growth of women's clubs, but also always utilising male experience to bridge the gap between women and men's football maintains this cycle and makes it very hard to break (discussed further below).

Connell's (1987, 2006) understandings of the sexual division of labour suggests that 'women's work' is often considered inferior to that undertaken by men, as it is often unpaid (mainly domestic work and responsibilities). However this explanation is not sufficient in this context, as in all of the examples above, the work of both the women and men at all the clubs is unpaid. The overtly masculine culture of football and the attributes required to play the sport perpetuate understandings that men are 'naturally' more suited to football, giving them greater access to the sport but also assuming them to be superior and holding more valuable experience. Issues related to skill acquisition further accentuate this – Connell (1987) describes how women's exclusion from traditionally male occupations is often rationalised by their lack of experience, and these

occupations remain a male preserve as women can find it very hard to break this cycle. In relation to football, its strong historical association with football helps to maintain the discourse of 'male natural superiority' and privileges men as the holders of knowledge. The interviewees utilised this rationalisation to explain their preference for men in certain roles in women's football, in that they are likely to have more experience and will therefore be better:

"they're expecting them [men] to be better [coaches], erm, I don't know"

Linked#4

"we'll have guy's who come in every now and again who'll coach a special session, because that is the only thing I think with having all female's is that, we almost need to go on to a next level now, and you're only really gonna get that with some of the professional blokes that we've seen...I think for the future, we probably will need to go down that track, the more serious we get, we probably will have to, but, not yet"

Independent#1a

This creates a difficult situation for women trying to break into roles that have been traditionally held by men, as their relative lack of experience can be used as rationale for exclusion, and it becomes very difficult to gain the type of experience required. This situation becomes more complex as women become complicit due to the pervasiveness of these discourses, which further reduces the potential for resistance and challenge. Again conflicting understandings of sameness and difference are evident, as earlier quotes described the incompatibility of male coaches and female participants; here this situation is complicated by understanding that men are not only different but better, which encourages a preference for men despite their apparent incompatibility. This also reinforces the difficulty of understanding women's football outside the dominant (male) frame of reference. The need to improve in the quote above is to become closer to elite men's football (needing 'professional blokes') – perhaps also implying a lack of visibility with regards to higher level female coaches that may be able to do the same specialised training.

7.4.4 Female-Only/Female-Dominated 'Spaces'

Some of the women expressed contrasting views about their work in demonstrating how they held a better position to resist the dominant understandings of female inferiority in relation to their male counterparts. No interviewee celebrated the work they did or placed significant importance on their role, but discussions were not always constructed

negatively or as strongly influenced by gendered discourses, for example at Independent#1:

"it [job]'s basically the admin and the league affiliation, that's probably the main part of it, I go to most of the meetings, only because I've been involved with County FA ... I've just done a newsletter, I can send you one of them if you like, erm, funding, I do all the funding"

"I was bursting at the seams...we split every, we've split most jobs down now, so I'd say my role mainly is the paperwork that comes from the leagues, and the FA, and I'm also FA liaison officer for the regional league, and I'm chair of the girls league, well was, I'm now, I just do registrations for them, so I still like dabble in some of the leagues but I've tried to take more of a step back as my club's got bigger"

"I just walk around, and, you know, talk to the parents, see if anybody's happy, not happy, just like go round, a bit like PR really...I just sit there, and I feel like the big chief, and like everybody talks to you and that"

Independent#1a

This interviewee held several responsible roles, and discussed at length the different committees she had been involved with outside of her club. Out of all the interviewees, this individual appeared to have the strongest resistance to understandings of male superiority. Although a great deal of her work involved administrative and internal duties, she fully recognised that she held a position towards the top of the hierarchy at her club and that this work was very important. The environment at Independent#1 clearly contributed to this, as care is taken to ensure their committee is and remains female dominated and they are the only independent women's football club in the study (with no male teams associated with their club in any way). This demonstrates that there is the potential in football for women to be visible as leaders, and in turn, role models for other women and girls who may wish to work towards these positions. Although a female dominated committee has an analogous relationship with radical feminism and separatist politics, the failings of which in challenging existing gendered relations have been highlighted previously, it is in this context that women in decision-making roles are most visible and therefore pose the greatest challenge to the normalised association of men with football leadership. A reliance on men to act as 'gatekeepers' between women's clubs and the wider context of football (as with linked#3 above), rationalised by their superior experience in the network and associated social capital, limits the visibility of women to their club context only, and wider football structures remain male dominated and inaccessible to women. Resistance to male dominance encourages

independent#1a to value her own position and work, underpinned by her attitude towards how she would like her club to be run:

“everywhere you go its always men, my whole, I work full time and its all blokes, so I says let’s run something that’s all female...I’ve found it worked well”

Independent#1a

It is however interesting to note that although the committee hierarchy is predominantly female, the majority of team managers at Independent#1 were male. So despite challenging the natural association between men and football leadership positions by visibly portraying women in these roles, this naturalisation is simultaneously supported with regards to team management, perhaps even more intensely as the reliance on men for management roles contrasts sharply with the desire to ‘run something that’s all female’. The belief that having a female dominated club hierarchy distances them from men signifies an attempt to separate their experience from what is understood as uneven gender relations at mixed-sex clubs, but perhaps masks gender dualisms that continue to position women as ‘the other’, highlighted by the contradictory reliance on men for team management roles. As well as the female-dominated space created at Independent#1, the interviewees at Linked#2 also ran their female team entirely by themselves, despite being linked to a male club.

“[my role involves] picking the team, shouting at them, making them take the nets down and put the nets up, motivating the squad, that type of thing, erm...run the whole team on a Sunday. At the moment I’m doing the coaching as well, because we haven’t got a coach, so its running the training sessions on a Wednesday, and selecting the team, telling them on a Wednesday, that’s something we have brought in, we tell them the team on a Wednesday night after training. And then, take it from there and manage them on a Sunday”

Linked#2a

“The main things are organising away games, and home games, make sure that people like [player] have got a referee, sending out instructions and making contact with the opposition. I also have to keep the club informed with any changes, or any things that are going on with the league, which I don’t know if I’m, sometimes I’m quite good at it but, there’s stuff that is just pointless passing through, but it’s there if anybody needs it. Also, taking the subs and everything else, keeping a record of who’s paying and not paying”

Linked#2b

Involving few or no men in the running of their club may allow these women to value their own position more highly; also at Linked#2, having no men to ‘fall back on’ as such with the roles and responsibilities meant these women both understand and describe

their duties matter-of-factly and again in a more descriptive manner than the earlier quotes. However the female-only hierarchy at Linked#2 has been developed despite the clubs' formal link to a male club, demonstrating that women's clubs do not have to be independent in order to actively create space for women to be visible in leadership positions outside of a pre-defined male norm.

Having a space where females dominate was also utilised by Independent#1 to challenge gendered norms that children can be socialised into, either through schools or through the family. In chapter six (6.2.1) it was described how female coaches 'bridging the gap' between schools and clubs can help to break down access barriers to football for girls, in providing them with a clear and direct route into organised sports, even though it might not be something that they have peer support for. Also, there were examples of active resistance to gendered practices that parents still engage in:

"You do find that some parents won't let their girls play football on a Sunday if their brother plays...I've had quite a few, where we have to put like a mark against their name to say that they can only play every other week, cos the parents have said 'well sorry but the boy plays', and because he's the next David Beckham, he's more likely, I say to them, in fact, she's got more chance of making it in football than he ever has, because the proportions, I says she could end up in America earning lots of money"

Independent#1a

The potential to challenge gendered norms that girls who wish to play football can be faced with, even in the family context, is strongly demonstrated here. However the strength of dominant gendered understandings that privilege male access to football opportunities significantly affect this challenge; independent#1a above succeeded in destabilising the dominant discourse and highlighting its socially constructed nature, but ultimately lost the battle.

7.5 Interactions Between Football Work, Paid Work and Domestic Responsibilities

Interviewees often discussed their football work alongside (and often intertwined) with other areas of their life, most notably paid work and family life. This provided examples of overlapping discourses, in assessing how football roles interact with the other roles the women varyingly adopted, with differing roles considered more important at different times. The role of football in these women's lives therefore moved in and out of their other responsibilities, highlighting how these women struggled at times to accommodate this extra dimension into their lives.

7.5.1 Football/Paid Work Qverlaps

Firstly regarding paid work outside of football, there were often incidences where the type of work undertaken at the football club overlapped with the interviewees' paid work, which was seen at times as a benefit and at other times as a problem. For partnership#3, links with paid work as a teacher facilitates her role as Child Protection Officer at the football club:

"I'm also child protection officer for the girls as well, erm, so, I've had quite a few, there's been a couple of issues, but...I do it with the boys as well, because they tend to get, because I work in a school, boys play, from school, so parents know that I'm child protection officer for the club, and they tend to come to me with any issues, so, you deal with issues...I run the girls team in school, and I have done, for quite a few years"

Partnership#3

Linked#4 found similar overlaps with her work as a PE teacher and coach at her club:

"I love it [coaching], and I coach all the time at school, I run the school team"

"I thought maybe in the future when I'm not teaching, cos its [coaching] like teaching, a little bit, so bit like working twenty-four hours a day (laughs) but at the moment, with all the stuff I do at school and the after school clubs, I just, I've had enough of it by the time, but I did think if I went part-time teaching, I could do a bit more"

Linked#4

The women involved in coaching positions outside of their club (working either as a teacher or a coach) see their paid work as dominating, which discourages them from doing similar work on a voluntary basis in their clubs. Linked#4 above moves from 'loving' coaching all the time to having 'had enough of it' at times, suggesting that combining similar paid and voluntary roles is not straightforward, especially considering the physical requirements of coaching. The potential difficulty in combining what appear to be compatible roles of teacher and coach may have practical and policy implications.

"I'm kind of down as being a coach, so sometimes they kind of say to me, do you want to take a session, and I don't really want to, because I wanna stay with the players, rather than, cos I coach all day every day, do you know what I mean, so I'd rather, on a Sunday, and when I'm training, I'd rather turn up and train and concentrate on that"

Linked#5

"that used to be my job I used to be a football coach, so that's where me and her both qualified the same time and [], who's now the manager, come coach, whatever, we all worked together, so that was our job, constantly, so, but yeah, wi doing it all day every day

its like come to football, you don't wanna, you don't wanna coach it, you wanna just play, so you don't, you don't offer unless you've got no choice"

Linked#1

Football, especially for those still playing (linked#5 and linked#1), is perhaps seen more as an activity that the interviewees do not want to feel they are 'working' at, so would therefore prefer that their paid work does not overlap into this 'leisure space' in their own clubs as this may affect their enjoyment. This represents a conscious attempt to separate the two areas of their lives, where paid work takes priority and football represents something outside of this. The final two quotes concern office work – independent#1a and partnership#1 both undertook secretarial roles at their club, which paralleled with their administrative paid work:

"it can do [take a lot of time], sometimes I get to the point where I have to turn around and say enough is enough, I'm lucky really cos I can do a lot of my stuff at work, you know like photocopying, and on the computer, and things like that, so I just quickly do that"

Partnership#1

"I actually have a full time job, but, my company's in [country], so they don't really know what I'm up to, but I think they've got a bit of an inkling that I'm on the sly most days, when they ring me and can hear all this wind, passing my phone, and all these kids shouting, so yeah it does, if I'm not at work, I spend, I mean I've had three weeks on the sick cos I've had a big sinus nose thing, and I've just done football stuff all day every day, caught up with everything"

Independent#1a

Rather than consciously attempting to separate the two as with coaching, these roles are more compatible and can actually benefit each other to save time (although both suggest that football work should not overlap into paid work time – 'quickly do that' and 'on the sly'). This type of work is also more traditionally associated with femininity – perhaps encouraging the women to combine the two more than with the more non-traditional role of football coaching. All of these quotes suggest the large amount of time these women spend on 'football work' – perhaps most indicative of this is in the final quote where independent#1a states 'I actually have a full time job'. She undertook extensive duties at her club, and the use of the word 'actually' suggests that it might appear unlikely that she would have the time to work full-time on top of her work at the football club. Partnership#3 gave a particular example of how she utilised the knowledge she has gained through her work as a teacher to challenge an FA policy, and demonstrated how this created feelings of empowerment as she succeeded in making a difference:

“there’s an issue came up, a couple of months ago, about, they [girls league] wanted to do the registration system, via the internet, and it meant, sending information, and children’s pictures, via a website, and I’m quite strongly against that, obviously cos I work in school, I know guidelines within school, so I went to a particular meeting, erm, just sat there listening, and all of a sudden decided I was gonna say, what I wanted to say. So I said it, and there was a few grumbles, from people around me, they were like, ‘oh, I didn’t know that, I didn’t know that’, and I said ‘well actually I work in school and I know there’s guidelines you can’t have children’s this you can’t do that you can’t do the other’ and they were like, ‘oh really, we didn’t know any of this’...I set a proposal, and they seconded it, that we didn’t want, we didn’t want this system, to take place, I put reasons down...we’re gonna stick with the manual system at the moment which I’m really pleased about, erm, and I just felt that, I’d put the, I’d fought that cause...I just felt that that was a cause that needed to be fought, and, I went (laughs)...Yeah, stand up for myself”

Partnership#3

As discussed previously, a significant reflection of the individual motivation to develop girl’s football by the women in the study was the resources they drew upon from their experiences outside of football, and the application of this to their own roles. Again this is evident here: partnership#3’s role at her football club as Child Protection Officer is largely informed by her work as a teacher rather than assistance or education she has received through football organisations. Further, these resources are drawn up to ‘fight the cause’ for junior football and against the wider decision-making structures of the sport, which resulted in her own satisfaction at the challenge she had made.

7.5.2 Football/Home Life Overlaps

As well as paid work overlaps, there were also discussions concerning how football work overlapped in different ways with the women’s domestic roles. Firstly, time issues were seen as a problem in relation to both paid work and family time:

“cos I teach full time, its, its very difficult, and you’ve got like family, its just the time element, I could just do with some people to do some things”

Linked#4

“it’s the time, and the commitment, you’ve got to give to it, I mean I find, just through the girls football, cos I work full time, and I’ve got kids of me own, it’s the time, that you give up, and, there’s only so much of your time that you want to give up cos you want some time for yourself”

Partnership#3

Both of these women discuss their paid work and domestic roles together in terms of the amount of time they feel they can give to football because of their other (here combined) responsibilities, tying their football experiences to their domestic identities. Again this highlights another considerable weakness of the liberal agenda; campaigning for and

gaining access to those roles previously inaccessible to women increasing led to a 'dual role' burden with women expected to manage family, paid work and public life (Weedon, 1999). The participants having to accommodate their football 'work' into their existing roles within their family and career demonstrate this - all women in the study mentioned a lack of time as a problem in combining their different responsibilities. Independent#2, who held a paid role in sports coaching of which her girls football team was part, demonstrates this in discussions around how the funding for her position had been withdrawn, creating a difficult position:

"they've all said they want me to manage it [girls team] and everything but obviously I've gotta think about my employment...everything is in place, you know, the, all the kits in there, there's footballs, there's goals, everything, we don't need anything, but obviously we just, the only thing we can't do is we can't coach em, cos no-ones paying us, and you know at the end of the day I've got a family and bills to pay, and a mortgage, you can't do it for nowt, you know what I mean, and its such a, I mean the pair of us put our heart and souls into this project, and it is, its heartbreaking"

Independent#2

Here it is highlighted not only how much passion and commitment can be directed into football work, but also how domestic responsibilities, paid work and football are all intertwined and place significant demands that require careful balancing, especially regarding time:

"what I do is, Wednesday afternoon, I'm always sort of home, between, its more or less sort of my afternoon off, so we always train on a Wednesday, whether its raining, snowing...we do boys on a Tuesday, girls on a Thursday, and then (laughs), Sunday, I get up, pack the [girls team] bag get in the car go to the match, come back, pick the [ladies team] bag up, get back in the car...I'd get home on a Sunday and I'd be bleeeuuugh (collapses in chair), you know...Sunday is very busy, and you know how, they say you're a golf widow, or, my husbands a football widower! Sundays is pphhh"

Independent#2

These passages of talk from independent#2 highlight not only how much of her free time football takes up (as well as being employed in this area) but also the impact this can have on her family. As well as being a provider, the last quote suggests that spending a lot of time away from home has an effect on her family, in describing her husband as a 'football widower'. When attempting to understand the complex interconnectedness of football work, paid work and domestic responsibilities in the lives of these women it is apparent that the role of football is inextricably linked to the women's other roles, and fluctuates in significance and moves in and out of their other roles depending on the context.

Parallels with family life were also suggested by several interviewees describing their club as similar to a family, and valuing this:

"I'd say we're successful in running a big family...Sunday night, I had what, I dunno, six or seven families round my house, that have just got to know each other from football, all the kids are running rampage around my house and all the parents are sitting chatting, and to me, I sat there and I thought yeah, this is, this is what its all about. Yeah, and I love that bit, cos I just sit there, and I feel like the big chief, and like everybody talks to you and that, and on Sundays we pick and choose what games we go and watch, so we get to see everybody play. It's like having an extended family"

Independent#1a

"It's brilliant, its, I was saying that, one minute your talking to one person, in the club, then the next minute your talking to somebody else, and then somebody else, everybody's just talking to everybody, there's no little cliques, no silly little snidieness, it was all just one big happy family sort of thing"

Linked#3

"we try and make it like a family club, everyone's involved, we'll have a drink for an hour or so, that's how it is. And that's why, in my mind, its better, in my opinion I should say, its better to have a parent involved, and do it like that, so when we're getting coaches, its more of a family atmosphere"

Partnership#3

For these interviewees, describing the club as like a family represents how close they feel to the club and the type of environment they are providing. This could be more important in female sports, as women value the collective experience and social closeness of team sports (Lenskyj, 1994); Williams (2003) found this to be an outcome of her research with female footballers even at the elite level. This also contributes to earlier claims about self-sufficiency and independence - in perceiving the club as like a family, it can remain close-knit and supportive. The passage from independent#1a is particularly strong in portraying this, as the closeness is understood very positively and even described as 'this is what its all about'. Success is even understood in these terms above competitive achievements, such is the importance of this environment. Football clubs representing a family to these women is perhaps important in prolonging their roles, especially as in some cases their own children had finished playing but they had continued their involvement.

As the quotes above highlight, the women in the study gained a great deal of pleasure out of their roles, and it is important to finish off this analysis by stressing this further; despite the significantly gendered structures that the women hold roles in, both at club

and organisational level of their sport, the exclusionary barriers they face, and the amount of time they devote to the sport as a volunteer with very little evidence of external support, all retain their involvement and remain positive about their roles. The benefits were dominantly associated with the pleasure gained out of providing positive opportunities for girls (and boys) to experience football:

“yeah, its just seeing them all out there, especially when the little ones, are coming back...and its successful”

Linked#4

“Seeing the kids, playing the football, and enjoying it, and I love it on presentation night, when they're all there, and they're done, and, it's the end of the season and they have all their pictures took... seeing the team, and the kids enjoying it”

Partnership#1

“you sit and think, well they've all taken part, stuff like that, yeah...it's nice to see them enjoying themselves...its nice to see, you know all the kids, come in, and stuff like that, I mean, there's kids, well, presentation night comes round again now, but there kids that in that under fourteens, fifteens, that I can remember, coming soccer school every Saturday at five year old, you know, and you get part of the family, type of thing...the kids like respect you and stuff like that, and that's a nice feeling”

Partnership#2

The drive to continue developing girls football is strongly represented through the pleasure the women gain from this part of their role, and is a significant indicator that not only do the girls gain a great deal from being provided with the opportunity to play football, but the women who devote a great deal of their time and energy to facilitating this also benefit greatly. Being able to do this in a sport that the women love is perhaps best expressed in the final comment:

“The thing that I get out of it the most is er, seeing the smile on their faces, when they're training, actually enjoying what they're doing...to be able to give the kids something, that, I couldn't have, as a kid, is brilliant...I love, football.”

Independent#1b

7.6 Summary

Women are evidently moving into positions that are strongly associated with masculinity in football. This does represent a positive challenge that women are posing, and an attempt to destabilise male dominance in sport beyond the increased representation of women as participants. However, this movement into a context traditionally dominated, and as examined, still run by men, is creating a number of tensions for women that serve

to limit the potential of this challenge. Women's understandings were still strongly influenced by wider discourses of male natural superiority in the football context, and 'women's work' was repeatedly constructed as inferior to that done by men. This is insufficiently explained by the unpaid nature of the work, as the work undertaken by men in football clubs is also unpaid. The situation is clearly more complex than this, and women's understandings are influenced by wider and deeply rooted discourses of women's/men's work and the value of this work, the dominance of men in sports/football leadership roles, the attributes associated with the roles they fulfil and male/female dichotomies that still dominate discourses surrounding football. Women can also shift between positions in relation to the context. For example partnership#1 indicated how she did a great deal of work in her role at the club, challenging male dominance and gaining experience in this role; this however then shifted to significantly inferior positioning as she constructed the work she does as inferior to the 'real work' and decision-making that is undertaken by a male. This also clashed with her previous assertion that girls and boys should be treated equally at her club, that 'they're all the same' and 'its all football' (see section 5.2.5), based upon discourses of equality of opportunity and gender sameness over difference.

Further, this chapter has continued the concern surrounding women's control of football outside their own club, as the significant under-representation of women in football hierarchies combined with the gendered practices they engage with to understand but ultimately inferiorise their won position in football essentially limits women's control of their sport to the boundaries of their own club. As this chapter has demonstrated, even *within* their own clubs, women can engage in practices that limit their own control.

Despite this, it is crucial to ensure that the role of women in football clubs should not be undervalued. The amount of effort put in, time devoted as volunteers, working at recruiting more help and players, and negotiating the overlaps into and clashes with both paid work and family responsibilities are vital in ensuring that girls are given opportunities to play football. The important role of women such as those in the study continues to provide the framework for the growth of participation at junior level. Despite documenting significant problems that the women encounter, particularly in dealing with the wider structures of football, those in study have continued to work at the development of their own clubs, and through this, the development of girl's football.

This is in spite of significant demands on their time and often not feeling valued outside of (and sometimes even inside) their own clubs. This is a benefit of looking at how women manage their position in football not just as participants – in these different roles, women are more embedded in established structures, and have more contact with 'men's football' rather than just playing week on week.

Chapters five to seven have attempted to provide an overview of some pertinent issues to women in football, whilst demonstrating how these are inextricably linked to the day-to-day experiences and negotiations at the individual level. The next chapter will discuss the main emerging themes in relation to developments in feminist theory and organisational approaches to gender equity. It will examine how women experience football within the wider structures of the sport, what tensions have emerged, and discover any potential spaces for women to challenge dominant discourses and gendered practices that continue to impact their football lives.

³⁹ Connell's (1987) sexual division of labour is an attempt to conceptualise the manifestations of the Gender Order, and highlights how organisations are structured both vertically and horizontally along lines of gender. Implications of this are that women can remain 'bunched' under the glass ceiling in organisations, and are also dominantly employed in positions considered 'softer' and with lower rates of pay and social status. There are also implications of this for groups of men in organisations, as Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity is often considered to dominate organisational structures and privilege attributes such as assertiveness and domination (see McKay, 1997; Gherardi & Poggio, 2001; Colgan & Ledwith, 1996 for application and exploration of these issues in both sport and non-sport organisations).

CHAPTER EIGHT: DISCUSSION

8.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss some of the themes that emerged from the data in relation to both the theoretical grounding of the study and existing literature. It was discussed in chapter three how developments within feminist theory are useful in assessing the complicated position of women in a sport that been traditionally hostile to their involvement. Despite this, females are playing football in increasing numbers, yet are still significantly under-represented in decision-making and leadership roles (see for example Fielding-Lloyd & Meân, 2008; Williams, 2003). In particular, the success of the liberal feminist approach in increasing the numbers of females involved in football overlaps yet contrasts sharply with radical calls for separatism that highlight the marginalised position women hold in traditionally male sports, due to perceptions of difference and therefore inferiority. This chapter will attempt to work within these debates to explore the current position of women in football regarding integration/separation and their subsequent potential to challenge existing gendered arrangements. The previous three chapters have demonstrated how the experiences of women within the context of women's football are fraught with tension and conflict, and that "women are neither powerless 'victims' of oppressive discourses nor free from structural constraints" (Cox & Thompson, 2000: 5). In particular, discourses of male dominance have been demonstrated to be strongly tied to understandings of sameness and difference. The following chapter examines this in more detail, relating this to the wider context of football - organisational level policies and strategies cannot be separated from understandings and experiences at the individual level (Cunningham & Sagas, 2008).

In examining some potential 'recommendations' of the study, it is important to underline the transformative potential of work that is framed by concepts of discourse, multiplicity and complexity. The use of a theoretical framework that retains a focus on individual variance renders generalised conclusions and recommendations not only unattainable but also undesirable, as this would impose a degree of universality across the category of 'women' that is unstable, multiple and diverse. However the value of understandings of discourses as social constructions has been demonstrated in the increase in organisational research utilising the concept of discourse to provide a fuller analysis of

the importance of gender (see for example Fielding-Lloyd & Meân 2008; Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2008; Shaw, 2006, 2007; Shaw & Penney, 2003). The potential for women to pose a challenge to gendered practices has also been highlighted through considering how the 'doing' of gender – how behaviours are given gendered meanings thus (re)producing gender differences during interactions – can also be undone and therefore challenged (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2008). Further, in highlighting conflicting sites in women's experiences, such as the potential disjuncture between policies to enhance equity and the variance in individualised understandings of gender (for example Acker, 2000), these sites of conflict and tension can create space for the development of new meanings (Shaw & Frisby, 2006). Rather than attempt to propose over-arching policies therefore, these can instead be criticised for their supposed universality and inability to recognise multiplicity of experience; change can then be understood in terms of highlighting practices and positions that have the potential to challenge dominant hierarchical constructions of gender that structure women's experiences.

8.2 Discourses of Sameness and Difference

It is clear from the previous three chapters that discourses of sameness and difference tended to dominate the women's understandings of both their own individual experiences and behaviours, and wider insights into the context of women's football within established (male) structures. In attempting to consider the significance of different feminist approaches to analysing gender in sport, it is clear that in the context of this study, liberal and radical understandings of sameness and difference are not only fundamental to the women's understandings, but relate to each other in complex and often contradictory ways. Sunderland (2004) suggests that to most people, difference is what gender is all about; in this section the strength of this claim will be highlighted in the various and fluid experiences of gender difference, often at times despite the women's attempts to explain understandings in liberal terms of sameness. The complementary and contradictory ways in which sameness and difference were drawn upon by the women will be first discussed as framing their understandings, then will be explored as relating to both individual and collective experiences. In incorporating a 'multilevel' approach to the significance of gender in sports organisations (Cunningham & Sagas, 2008), understandings of sameness and difference have been demonstrated to underline perceptions of integration and separation from existing football structures, and these perceptions have very real implications for women involved in football at the

individual level. It is important to reiterate that it is not the intention here to draw any conclusions as to how the women in the study prioritise difference *or* sameness in particular situations, but to highlight how these seemingly opposing traits can each be prioritised, challenged or reproduced, sometimes in contradictory ways.

8.2.1 Sameness: Looking to the Future

In her work on the experiences of women in male-dominated organisations, Nentwich (2006) described how when defining the problems they face, women alluded to gender difference, yet when describing their aspirations for the future, the emphasis shifted to sameness. A similar pattern emerged through the perceptions of the women in this study. This is particularly evident in the demonstrated contrast between the junior and senior level of women's football, with discourses of sameness more influential at the junior level. This was accompanied by the belief that treating girls and boys the same at junior level may represent a generational shift through moving towards the eradication of gender difference that would present a future for women's football outside of dominant understandings that associate that difference with female inferiority. The intention to promote sameness at junior level was clear - the women involved at both independent and partnership clubs supported the notion that girls should be given *the same* opportunities and access to resources as boys, and treated the same. Promoting equality does not necessarily however result in an equitable environment (Hall, 1996) as will be discussed below.

Liberal discourses of sameness were also drawn upon in the expressed desire to be taken seriously in football – an example of this was given in coaching courses, as two interviewees were critical of tokenistic practices that may result in 'special' treatment for females and instead wanted to be treated the same as their male counterparts to ensure that they met the standards required as a football coach. Meeting the required standards and being accepted dominantly required women 'proving their ability' in football to their male peers on courses, indicative of Bacchi's (1990) assertion that 'sameness' between the sexes is problematic as it is always relation to an established male norm. By proving their ability for acceptance, women therefore contribute to the reproduction of this male standard as 'the norm'. This is however a complex and fluid issue. The negative reaction that male referees can express towards women displaying physicality (as demonstrated in section 6.4.2) represents a double bind for women. Despite efforts to dispel female

incompatibility in football by committing to celebrated attributes, the perception that this is in conflict with normative femininity means that they continue to 'be positioned by their gender' (Rich, 2001). Further, independent#1a suggested that coaching courses promoted a masculine style that celebrated aggression and dominance (section 7.4.1); asserting sameness for acceptance may therefore also involve colluding with established male norms. Scraton & Flintoff (2002) suggest that the liberal approach can result in women unquestioningly accepting men's sports practices. In understanding individuals as multiply positioned within available discourses (Keddie, 2005), the claim that values are adopted 'unquestioningly' is rejected, but dominant masculinistic practices within coaching (and seemingly coach education) alongside the women's desire to be accepted as 'equals' limits the accessibility of non-conformant positions. In perceiving differences as discursively produced rather than natural, it is proposed here that gendered practices within coaching education can therefore (re)produce difference and alienate women, highlighting how discursive constructions can have material effects (Weedon, 1999) as women can find it difficult to engage with dominant practices.

8.2.2 Difference: Inferiority *and* Superiority

In contrast to how sameness dominantly framed understandings of junior football, at the senior level of the sport discourses of difference were much more evident. Unsurprisingly considering the dominant and visible position football holds in the UK, the women interviewed did at times perceive 'women' as a group as inferior to 'men' in the context of football. At junior level, this was believed in part to be a result of socialisation processes, thus relying upon inequality rather than essentialised female inferiority, however at senior level understandings were predominantly framed by perceptions of female biological inferiority, and further, this was accepted as 'the way it is'. However, more interesting and potentially significant in understanding the potential for women to resist and challenge dominant gendered discourses, was the ways in which difference was constructed as female *superiority*. The 'male norm' in football alluded to above is not fixed or stable (Weedon, 1999), and the women did at times deconstruct the hegemonic male 'standard' and attempt to refocus on skill rather than aggression and physicality, challenging hegemonic masculinity in football that is constructed by (and constitutive of) these elements (Skelton, 2000). Wright & Clarke (1999) found that female rugby players characterised difference in terms that reproduced hegemonic masculinity and femininity. The women in this study did not however always collude

with this, but in some ways they demonstrated how difference could be interpreted in a potentially more challenging way. This does however reinforce the gender dualism, in that aggression and violence is associated with masculinity and not femininity, and the continued association of these behaviours with masculinity continues to gender football which works to inferiorise women. Nevertheless, in asserting this positive differentiation, women are assigning their own meanings to participation not by adopting more traditionally feminine values, as discovered by Scraton et al (1999), but by reclaiming 'skill' as a gender-neutral attribute that women are just as likely to possess as men. This highlights a potentially significant area where women may be able to resist established sporting norms that have negative connotations such as violence and aggression, without adopting typically 'feminine' and oppositional values that are assigned less social value or capital, such as teamwork and participation (Heywood & Dworkin, 2003; Messner, 1990). Second-wave feminist critiques of the adoption of typically masculine values by women in sport as 'selling out' (Heywood & Drake, 1997) can also be challenged through women choosing to celebrate 'skill' – not considered a negative or health compromising aspect, but neither is it valued any less in the sporting arena, especially in football. Giulianotti (1999) in his examination of football supporters, suggests that "the most 'artistic' or technical players are greatly revered, particularly their sophisticated and deceptive skills which outmanoeuvre or ridicule 'tough-tackling' or 'hard' opponents"; examples of Brazil, The Netherlands and Liverpool have also been used to demonstrate the value of skill and technical ability⁴⁰. The extent to which women are able to 'choose' to celebrate alternative values is however both individual- and context-dependent; but skill is likely to be accessible to women as it is not in opposition to normative understandings of femininity, and can even be discursively associated with beauty - Humphrey (1994: 66) suggests that the success of Brazil has "showed that artistry could win. Beauty could be effective." This deconstruction of masculine dominance is in contrast to more radical perspectives on differentiation that are centred upon oppositional and fixed norms that reproduce difference and do not acknowledge the complexity and instability of gender relations.

8.2.3 Difference and Sameness: Overlaps, Contradictions and Complexities

In gender relations within clubs, conflicting discourses of difference and sameness could be experienced simultaneously, particularly at clubs where the women were not fully integrated and were therefore treated the same in some respects but also positioned as

inferior to the male teams at the club, in some cases even to junior male teams. Multiple discourses of sameness and difference can therefore be experienced simultaneously within the same relationship. Club Linked#5 was the most significant example of this, and that this relationship entailed a woman occupying a paid role within a professional male football club creates a more complex interrelation of these discourses. In male professional football, women and girls are more vividly differentiated due to the amateur status of the female game (Williams, 2003), but talent development programmes and academies are increasingly mirroring male structures – underlined by notions of sameness. This lack of coherence as to whether women and girls should be treated ‘the same as’ or ‘different’ to men in football highlights the difficulties faced in attempting to develop equitable policies for these contexts. Not only is there the potential for policies to clash with the perceptions of individuals, but acknowledging the multiplicity of positioning *within* the understandings of the same individual means that interpretations will be inconsistent and location-specific. For example, as discussed below, FA aims to develop the elite level of football and provide a clear pathway to this position clashed with the way in which some of the women rejected achievement-orientated values in favour of enjoyment (see section 6.5).

Some interesting conflicts in this area also emerged in relation to the ways in which the women understood their own behaviours within football, particularly in relation to the adoption of typically and overtly masculine (physical/aggressive) attributes. When discussing experiences on coaching courses, several interviewees indicated that the adoption of more masculine behaviours, such as embracing a domineering style of coaching, was not only accessible but encouraged. The perception that the discourses that dominated coaching courses privileged traditionally masculine attributes however limited the availability of alternative positions, as indicated in the passage by linked#5 (p211) describing how she got ‘hammered’ for talking too quietly, and as a result, her coaching style was modified within this discourse. The significance of different contexts and the multiplicity of discourses surrounding women and physicality became evident when the same individual discussed how referees can draw upon dominant discourses of ‘appropriate’ gendered behaviour to discourage female physicality. This therefore limits the space within these dominant discourses for women to display physicality. Both of these contexts are further complicated by the demand for women to prove their ability in order to be accepted. The combination of ‘woman’ and ‘footballer’ can therefore create

contradictory and multiple positions within this, and the portrayal of physicality is both accepted and resisted within institutional practices (coaching courses and refereeing decisions as examples of these). The implication of these competing discursive positions is that women must learn to negotiate discourses of sameness and difference and understand when to either conform or resist these gendered behaviours if they wish to be accepted by men in the sport as footballers (here, as players *and* as coaches). Although it has been suggested in the literature that women in sports and activities associated with physicality are often able to express this (Wright & Clarke, 1999; Heywood & Dworkin, 2003, Therberge, 1997), in this context these expressions appear to remain within the constraints of discourses that influence the organisation of football and still privilege masculinity and typically masculine behaviours.

A broader example of contradictory discourses of sameness and difference was evident in understandings of the position women's football was assigned within the Football Association. The implications of this for the success of policy initiatives are discussed below, however the extremeness of contradiction within understandings of the role of the FA had very significant implications for how the women in the study experienced football. In attempting to answer calls in organisational literature for multilevel research (Cunningham & Sagas, 2008) it is important to highlight how gendered discourses in the wider structure of football are reproduced at the individual level of experience, and that at this level, challenge and resistant is possible but has limited impact on meso and macro level decision-making processes. With regards to FA control over league structures, the dominant perception was on *sameness* – but the ‘fitting’ of women into structures that replicate men's football is a clear example of how sameness between the sexes can be commonly interpreted as ‘women are the same *as men*’. This returns to the concern that centring understandings on sameness can restrict the potential for women and girls to challenge existing gendered relations as the point of reference is always ‘man’ (Bacchi, 1990: x). The desire to challenge this by the women in the study was particularly pertinent, as modifying female league structures was mostly perceived as disrupting and unnecessary, and hierarchical league structures were also criticised for over-emphasising competition and progression at the expense of alternative values such as enjoyment and participation. Issues of control are particularly contentious here, as all women believed that despite their concerns, this was ‘out of their hands’ and even interviewee linked#2b, who had attended FA meetings where restructuring decisions

were made, was resigned to the fact that there was little anyone could do to challenge the initiatives. This demonstrates how at the individual level, women are not deterministically oppressed or silenced (Keddie, 2005), yet women can still find it particularly difficult to access resistant positions within the football hierarchy as football for women is still dominantly run by men (Williams, 2003). The complexity and contradiction is strongly evident as women are denied a voice in decision-making positions due to the strength of traditional discourses that have excluded them from football structures on the basis of gender difference, yet the decision-making process that they are excluded from is modifying their sport on the premise of sameness. This highlights a significant disparity between those individuals in decision-making positions, usually male, and the female recipients of the sport. Disparities such as this can be utilised as sites for the deconstruction and reconstruction of gendered practices (Shaw & Penney, 2003), however the difficulty women face in being heard appears to severely limit the potential of this in the male-dominated football hierarchy. The multilevel analysis employed in this study can therefore highlight how individual attempts to resist oppressive relations at the micro level can have limited potential for success due to the strength of wider gendered discourses at the meso (organisational decision-making) level.

8.2.4 Acknowledging Difference Within Women's Football

A major barrier for women's acceptance in football is in the persistent comparison made to the more established structure and standard of men's football (Williams, 2003). Focusing the analysis only on understandings of sameness and difference between men and women can therefore work to reinforce this comparison, and to challenge this through academic practice, differences *within* the category of 'woman' should also be examined, away from male norms. In relating this to the structural context of women's football, there emerged some tensions between women at different levels of the game, particularly concerning the varying levels of emphasis afforded to competitive discourses. Alignment with achievement-focused understandings of success and ambition differed greatly, with independent clubs in particular attempting to resist this and promote more participatory values, in contrast with some individuals at linked clubs who believed that being associated with a male club was imperative for progression in the sport. This can on the one hand be understood as reflective of differing individual aspirations, suggesting a degree of individual resistance, however this is also influenced

by wider discourses such as the visible dominance of achievement-based success in the professional male sport model, and the social devaluing of values understood in opposition to competitiveness such as participation (Messner, 1990). This asks serious questions as to how best conceptualise the future of football for women, as there are strong tensions within the context; in addition, this renders universal policies inappropriate due to significant variance *within* women's experiences of football.

The tension described above, although alluding to variance within women as a collective in football, is largely influenced by discourses of competition and success that structure male football in particular and sport in general. Tensions within the game may therefore still be embedded within wider discourses that dominate competitive models of sport more widely. This supports the claim by Young & White (1995) that women collude with dominant (male) practices in sport as they have no alternative set of meaningful discourses in which to understand their sporting experiences. The attempts made by the women at Independent#1 and Independent#2 to resist the competitive discourse *outside* of their club environment does however highlight the instability of this discourse, and provide potential spaces for resistance through promoting alternative values to the players at their clubs.

8.3 Integration and Separation

Many of the complexities introduced above seemed to underpin the more practical applications of difference and sameness regarding the extent to which women should be integrated into existing structures of football, both at club and organisational level. This area will therefore extend the above understandings of sameness/difference into a more collective appropriation, in talking of 'women's clubs' and 'women's football' rather than interpretations that remain solely at the individual level – relating individual understandings into wider positioning within structures. This is a major area of this study, but one that has been paid very little attention in academic research in the UK. Studies exploring the experiences of women in traditionally male sports in the UK and other countries have dominantly focused on the individual experiences and understandings of women (for example Halbert, 1997; Krane et al, 2004; Mennesson, 2000; Miller & Penz, 1991; Obel, 1996; Young, 1997), especially in football (Caudwell, 1999, 2003, 2004; Cox & Thompson, 2000; Scraton et al, 1999). Although this study is heavily focused on individual experience, a fundamental aim of adopting a multilevel

approach (Cunningham & Sagas, 2008) is to position these experiences firmly within the wider organisational structure of football and examine the interconnected nature of these differing levels of analysis. As outlined in section 2.5, organisational studies are increasingly recognising issues of gender, and assessing the movement of women into established male-dominated structures in management (Bagilhole, 2002; Cockburn, 1991; Walsh, 2001) and sports organisations (Hovden, 1999, 2000b; Shaw, 2006; Shaw & Slack, 2002) that has provided a useful insight into the extent to which women are integrated into these structures. Recent studies have also analysed the interconnected nature of gender within sports organisations, in attempting to understand how strategies and policies designed to enhance gender equity can fail due to highly gendered practices throughout organisations (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2008; Fielding-Lloyd & Meân, 2008; Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2008; Shaw, 2006, 2007; see section 2.5.3). Crosset (1995) studied the experiences of female professional golfers, and this study has some coherence with how the women in his research were collectively portrayed as within but simultaneously outside of the world of golf:

“The women of the LPGA⁴¹ sit on the edge of conventional culture. They stand somewhat outside the broader culture, yet are part of it. For all their skill, the LPGA professional golfers remain outsiders within the golfing community...they are reluctant and frustrated outsiders. They want nothing more than to be accepted as golfers. At the same time, they are reminded, week after week, by pro-am partners, sponsors, fans, and management, that they do indeed operate by slightly different rules.” (225)

This ‘outsider on the inside’ status, although in this case supported by commercial and professional discourses, is particularly significant for women in football, as participants in a sport that has traditionally been monopolised by men at all levels.

In football, the infancy and amateur status of the women's game combined with the well-established and visibly dominant structures of men's football means that most women's clubs become associated with male clubs to gain access to the required facilities and resources, though to varying extents (Williams, 2003). A similar process is evident in rugby, and in both Australia (Carle & Nauright, 1999) and the UK (Jeanes, 2001). Research has highlighted the tensions and inequities that can result from women being ‘integrated’ to varying extents into both club and organisational structures such as unequal access and the limited potential for resistance to male norms. Despite the prominence of this, very little attention has been paid to this process in women's football specifically and sport more generally, such as the extent to which women feel that they

are accommodated/resisted into club structures, what is happening within relationships, and the type of environments that can be developed. Given that a great deal of women experience football within the contexts of these relationships, it seems imperative that the nature and intricacies of these relationships should be explored. It was demonstrated in chapters five and six how issues of integration and separation are crucial to women in football as they bisect the differing levels of experience, most notably in clubs and the FA but also affect understandings of female potential to challenge male-dominated practices, the position of girls in junior football, and the adoption/rejection of masculine norms. Firstly it must be highlighted how sex-separation is formally enforced due to the FA prohibition of mixed-sex football. This separation is concurrent with integration into existing structures. As well as women having their own 'replica' league structures, they are also integrated (although often to a limited extent) into the male context as coaches, on committees, as referees and so on. In terms of theoretical grounding, integration is dominantly understood alongside liberal understandings of sameness, with separation linked to more radical perspectives that prioritise difference (Thompson, 2002).

8.3.1 Differing Degrees of Integration

Chapter five detailed the variance across the different clubs in the study, highlighting the need for context-specific understandings of individual experiences in women's football due to this significant variance. Connell & Messerschmidt (2005) highlight how both incorporation and resistance can occur together in orderings of gender, rather than as exclusive positions, yet this perspective offers little in the way of how and why this is, or the movement of women between different positions. It is argued that the fundamental tension between the increased movements of women into a male-dominated structure that has traditionally (and strongly) resisted female involvement prevents positions of either total integration or total separation from being accessed. Women's movement into football tends therefore to involve the incorporation of both these two facets with variance occurring as to the degree by which women are integrated or separated and the implications of this.

Initially, the terms 'linked' and 'not linked' were utilised in an attempt to conceptualise how women's clubs were either integrated into or separate/independent from male clubs. However it soon became clear that these terms needed to be deconstructed to account for the significant variance between not just the different club contexts in the study, but also

within individual clubs. This allowed the multiplicity of contexts to be acknowledged and the tensions between and within these contexts to be explored. Despite this, and in response to the call for sound theoretical grounding in gender and organisational research (Cunningham & Sagas, 2008), it is important to assert the shared experiences of some of the participants. Clubs could therefore be loosely categorised, and although these were not fixed or rigid but overlapped and were demonstrated to be unstable, this provided examples of both accommodation of and resistance to gendered practices/discourses to be highlighted as areas for potential opposition. Significantly, the 'middle ground' that women could occupy in terms of integration/separation was the area where women appeared least able to resist dominant discourses of male dominance and exclusionary and inequitable practices. Gendered relations in this area, although varying, were the most fragile and inequitable and as a result, the women in these relationships demonstrated very little potential to challenge what were the most unbalanced relations of power that had very real and negative consequences such as restricted access to quality facilities, exclusionary practices, limited influence in decision-making processes and even financial exploitation. Being 'linked' was understood by all five clubs broadly positioned in this area as a necessity, but did not result in any form of gender integration as the clubs remained significantly separate. The combination of discourses of necessity and separation can lead in some cases to a loss of a degree of independence with very little gain in return, and women's clubs can become reliant on external support that can create significant problems if withdrawn (explored further below). More concerning was the acceptance of these unbalanced relations by the women in the study, particularly at Linked#1 and Linked#2, where separation within links was the greatest. This echoes findings by Carle & Nauright (1999) and Etue and Williams (1996) that women can accept a lower status and lower budgets in rugby and ice hockey respectively, due to the dominance of the belief that they are participating in a female version of the 'real' sport. The extent of the visibility of this 'real' sport is so great that this is seen as 'the standard' with little space for alternative understandings. Care must be taken not to 'blame' the women for contributing to their own subordination however, but explore how these two discourses work together to strengthen dominant gendered discourses and limit the potential for resistance. The perceived necessity of facilities means that if women want to play football they must become associated with a male club and therefore 'borrow' from the established structure of male football. Their perceived difficulty in making any attempts to improve their own situation reflects the

instability of the relationship, instability that can silence the women and maintain existing and oppressive relations of power.

8.3.2 Inconsistencies and Implications of Integration

It also must be acknowledged that relationships are more complex and integration/separation is more fluid than simple deterministic unbalanced relations of power that leave little space for female resistance and transformation. It has been demonstrated in organisational literature that an understanding of the complexity of relations within structures can highlight areas where discourses are simultaneously reproduced and resisted, therefore providing the potential for a challenge to oppressive gender relations (see for example Claringbould & Knoppers, 2008). Two areas where this was evident can be focused on to demonstrate how discourses of male dominance in and access to football spaces are not fixed or totalising and can therefore be contested by women and may result in a (context-specific) shift in relations of power.

Firstly, there was the suggestion that FA policy to encourage integration (explored further below) could be exploited by male clubs for financial gain, but could also be utilised by women to challenge gendered practices and improve their own situation. This involved 'promoting' their female clubs as of benefit to male clubs, which could potentially result in a shift in power towards female clubs as they can 'bargain' for better access to resources and therefore challenge discourses of male superiority at the club. However again this does not instigate integration or a movement towards an equitable environment. Achieving greater benefits may improve the position of the women, but this position remains separate, and at risk of the well-documented limits of 'adding' women to existing established contexts as maintaining gendered structures (Hall, 1996; Scraton et al, 1999; Weedon, 1999). A second area where complexity and contradiction can destabilise dominant discourses concerns womens' multiple understandings of their own position in gender relations and how these can in some contexts be reconstructed as beneficial. Again in this ambiguous area of 'linked' clubs, the positioning of the women did at times reflect how a lack of support can reconceptualised as increased independence and control, and seen as a positive outcome of the lack of support received from a male club. At Linked#1, no access to resources was provided so the women at the club therefore gained control of where the club played, and in functioning as 'detached' from their male club, were able to influence the type of environment fostered at the club

and the values promoted. This re-acquisition of control through lack of support was also apparent in the enforced (although in most instances this was also perceived as beneficial) financial independence. In retaining control of this aspect of the club, the women were able to monitor their own finances and expenditure, but furthermore, were not reliant on external help that could be withdrawn. The potential for this in women's football has been highlighted in a number of cases in high profile women's clubs (discussed in chapter one). Both of these examples demonstrate the instability and reconstructive potential of what can appear to be oppressive relations of power by creating space for women to reaffirm a degree of control over their experiences.

In understanding the integration/separation debate alongside dominant discourses of gender in the wider context of football, a significant premise that emerged from the women's individual experiences was how the further integrated they became into the structure of 'football' (beyond their club context), the greater their experiences were impacted by the discourses that maintain football as a male-dominated preserve. Participating in the 'same' structures as men challenges the male dominance of sports and destabilises discourses of hegemonic masculinity – women as football participants, coaches, managers, referees, and administrators opposes the 'natural' association of these roles with men and masculinity. This has parallels with Claringbould & Knoppers (2008) examination of how 'token' women on boards of sport organisations, despite at times reinforcing discourses of male dominance through conforming with gendered practices, are also 'undoing' gender merely by accepting positions on male-dominated boards. The movement of women into roles previously reserved solely for men is an important challenge to gendered arrangements through providing visible role models to demonstrate how women can occupy and succeed in these roles. Interpretations from the experiences of the women in the study *outside* of their own club context suggests that this challenge is however limited. Exclusionary gendered practices, such as being denied a voice, and the privileging of typically male attributes, were not only more evident in the wider context of football but also perceived as much harder to resist outside of their own clubs. Therefore, the further women are embedded into the 'football' context, rather than 'women's football', the greater the dominance of discourses and the more difficult they can be to resist. For example, the dominance of aggressive and domineering discourses on coaching courses limited the positions available to the women outside of those that accommodated these attributes, and adopting alternative behaviours, such as a

more inclusive coaching style, was particularly difficult in the context of the course. However, in their own clubs, where these discourses are not so dominant and alternative attributes can be accessed (and are often valued), the potential to demonstrate, embrace and promote alternative values appears wider and more accessible. A degree of detachment seems to facilitate this challenge, again returning to the integration/separation debate.

The further women progress in football (outside of their own club context), the greater the threat they pose to destabilising this male preserve. Resistance in the wider context is therefore unsurprisingly greater. Weedon (1987) suggests that the degree to which marginal (counter) discourses can increase their social power is governed by the wider societal context – if demands from marginal groups (eg women) can be met without a significant shift in dominant interests, change is more likely (Weedon, 1987). In relating this to football, the accommodation of women into their own detached ‘space’ in the football context requires little in the way of this shift; however the movement of women into roles within male football structures is likely to pose a greater challenge. The experiences of independent#1a outside of her own club were particularly strongly gendered - in particular, the heavily male-dominated environment of FA committees were so strongly gendered (for example, she was awarded a tie on joining a committee, symbolising masculinity) that as the only woman, she felt so unable to instigate any kind of challenge to existing practices and structures that she withdrew, which preserved the significant gender imbalance in this context. In explaining why she felt she could not continue on the FA committees (section 6.6.3), independent#1a presents herself as knowledgeable and experienced in girls football, but believes that this is not valued. The re-appointment of men from within the structure suggests that the ‘experienced female’ position is inferiorised by the FA in favour of men, who in the football context, are often automatically assumed to be knowledgeable and experienced (Williams, 2003). Gendered relations of power are further strengthened by the awarding of a tie to new committee members, strongly indicating that masculinity is privileged. Traditional associations between football and masculinity are likely to be significant in this practice, as traditionally FA committees were exclusively male (Russell, 1997); the women in the study understood that the FA were traditional, set in their ways and resistant to change. Understanding these practices as historically constructed did not help the women to

resist, such is the strength of traditionality in the football context, and institutionalised practices continue to limit women's access to resistant positions.

8.3.3 The Significance and Limitations of Separatist Spaces

It is important to conclude this section with a brief discussion of the contribution the independent clubs in the study contribute to wider understandings of separatist politics *within* established sporting structures, as all clubs played in mainstream leagues. 'Separatist spaces' are therefore not entirely separate but represent a space for women to dominate and challenge existing male dominated practices, but from within the wider context of the sport. Independent#1 was a female-only club, and both interviewees alluded to how they intentionally maintained female dominance at all levels of the club, to the extent of preferring women over men for certain roles *because* of their gender. This provided the space for women to move into leadership and decision-making roles, and take control over their own club. The importance of this in providing female role models, particularly in coaching, was recognised by the interviewees and provides a significant challenge to discourses that associate these roles solely with men and masculinity. The priority assigned to enjoyment and participation and the refusal to let achievement-orientated discourses of success dominate their clubs by all interviewees at Independent#1 and Independent#2 supports Caudwell's (2006) discussions concerning how separatist and female-dominated spaces within football can encourage the development of alternative philosophies and resist inequitable practices. Despite the dominance of these discourses, women can find the space to resist, and female-dominated spaces provide the greatest potential for this as they are distanced from male norms.

In this 'independent' context, it is also evident that radical notions of separation can exist *alongside* liberal attempts to increase opportunity within established sporting structures. Traditionally oppositional radical and liberal discourses of separation and integration are therefore drawn upon simultaneously to not only give girls increased access to male-dominated sporting contexts but provide girls and women with their own space in order to ensure female priority as they do not have to compete with men and boys. Despite this intention, the complexity of the situation at Independent#1 demonstrates the difficulty in accommodating both of these discourses. As alluded to above, the inability of women's clubs to acquire their own facilities results in a reliance

on men's clubs. At Independent#1 this was poignantly discussed and in accepting that they had little alternative than to borrow facilities, the separatist space they were trying to foster was still subjected to gendered practices in the wider context, such as being assigned low priority regarding access to facilities and funding. Again, the difficulties women encountered when attempting to resist exclusionary and gendered practices, even when intentionally developing a female-dominated environment, demonstrates the complex 'outsider on the inside' (Crosset, 1995) position that women can occupy in sporting structures.

It is clear that providing separatist spaces for women and other groups to experience sport allows for alternative values to be explored and prioritised away from the competitive and hierarchical dominant model of sport (Hargreaves, 1994; Lenskyj, 1994; Elling et al, 2003). However this is more complex than sports provisions being either single- or mixed-sex, or integrated or separate; existing practices cannot be challenged without a focus on the discursive and gendered practices that underpin differing sporting environments. Critiques of separatist discourses have demonstrated how not only does this reinforce differentiation, but also fails to challenge the male-dominated norms and practices within mainstream sport as gains made in these separatist environments have little impact outside of their own specific contexts (eg Hall, 1996). Hargreaves (2000: 171) describes how progress regarding sexual freedom made by the Gay Games "is taking place in insular, 'ghettoised' spaces and that gay sports liberation is partial and conditional – it has come only with separation and not with integration". In considering this issue in relation to the alternative environments fostered at Independent#1 and Independent#2, it is clear that in football, this is complicated by the fact that these environments function within rather than outside of the wider football context. However discussions with independent#1a demonstrated the difficulty of retaining their alternative environment outside of her own club context. In particular, the participatory environment that was being promoted for the girls in the club attracted criticism by a male manager from a different club, who brought achievement-orientated values *into* this environment at a tournament. Her response to this was to "do what we thinks right for our club" (independent#1a, see p136), explicitly demonstrating the difficulty in extending alternative values fostered in their own separatist context beyond their own club boundaries. Further, this supports criticisms of separatist practices that point to their

limited potential to influence gendered practices, even in cases such as this where separatist spaces are also integrated into wider sporting contexts.

This is a very complex area where women and their clubs are multiply positioned in regards to understandings of integration and separation. The discussion will now explore how this tension is further complicated by FA policies and practices concerning the integration of women into existing sporting structures.

8.4 Liberal Advances and Limitations: Problematising Policies and Practices

Chapter two highlighted how the application of equity policies in both sports contexts and organisations has relied heavily on liberal 'equality of opportunity' discourses that have attempted to provide increased access to sport for females but failed in challenging existing gendered practices that work to exclude women and other minority groups (eg Acker, 2000; Claringbould & Knoppers, 2008; Crosset, 1995; Hargreaves, 1990; Shaw & Penney, 2003). The application and implications of these liberal discourses in football will now be discussed, with potential responses highlighted.

8.4.1 The Growth of Female Football

The sport of football for women has frequently been referred to as 'the fastest growing female sport'. This understanding is reflected across the media (see for example www.thefa.com/womens, Kessel, 2007a), government reports (DCMS, 2006) and academic research (eg Williams, 2003; 2004). This is attributed to an increase in opportunities for females to play organised football, alongside an increased acceptance of women in the sport. The previous three chapters have attempted to explore this claim, and in particular, what processes and developments are occurring at the grassroots level of football in order for females to enter in increasing numbers. The rapid growth at junior level was evident at all clubs with a junior section – this is undeniable, with all interviewees indicating that they intended to add more junior teams to their clubs for the forthcoming season to accommodate the increasing numbers of girls wanting to play for their clubs. In particular, the growth at Independent#1, from only a handful of junior players to over 220 in two years, was unprecedented. The increase in girl participants in football is reflective of liberal gains and equal opportunity discourses, which advocate that in breaking down access barriers and providing opportunities, more girls will

participate. However the time and effort committed by both interviewees at Independent#1 to ensure their club maintains its growth highlights the difficulty in causally associating a growth in opportunities with a growth in participants. Developing links with local schools to actively 'recruit' players suggests that girls need more than simply to be presented with opportunities in order to overcome the difficulties associated with this crossing of gender boundaries, such as feeling different to their friends (Scruton et al, 1999), displaying attributes that conflicting with ideal notions of femininity (Harris, 2002) and entering into a culture dominated by hegemonic masculinity (Skelton, 2000; Swain, 2000). More than simply the provision of equal opportunities (further, how equal these opportunities actually are is difficult to ascertain) is required for girls to move into the male-dominated preserve of football.

Despite the 'fastest growing female sport' claim implying that both girls and women are participating in equal numbers, the clubs in this study supported claims of an increased growth at junior level only. The aim is not to generalise findings from the ten clubs in this study, but to demonstrate the unevenness of this process of growth and the potential limitations of success attributed to liberal equal opportunity policies in football. Jean Williams (2004) states that one of the most talked about aspects of women's football in England in the 1990s is the growth in the number of female players, again suggesting women and girls. This claim is not fully supported here, and needs to account for the discrepancy between the growth in the quantity of junior compared to senior female players. In the three clubs in the study who catered for senior women players only, all three interviewees indicated that they struggled for players at times, and linked#1 stated that her club had a reserve team in the previous season but had to withdraw this team from the league as they did not have enough players to continue. This is not to generalise beyond the context of this study, or even to other grassroots clubs, but within this study, the significant growth of girls sections is therefore in sharp contrast to what seemed not just to be a plateau of senior team developments, but actually a reduction on the number of women players, as none reported a growth at this level. This also supports claims that the growth of female football is tolerated by male football authorities as it is unthreatening to the male domination of the sport as it does little to change the essentially amateur nature of the women's game (Williams, 2003). Understanding the recent growth as restricted to the junior level of the sport further limits the potential challenge females pose to the current status of football. Therefore despite claims that the

liberal feminist agenda has been resoundingly successful in opening up opportunities for women in sporting spaces previously unavailable to them (Hall, 1996), the context of football demonstrates the inconsistency of women's participation in new sporting arenas. As will be discussed below, this is likely in large part due to the significantly gendered context of football that through both formal and informal practices remains resistant to the full inclusion and integration of women.

8.4.2 The Football Association and the Liberal Agenda

Discussions with the women in this study concerning their understandings and perceptions of the governing body of football, the Football Association, demonstrated the significance of football as a site for exploring the tensions between incorporating liberal ideals of equality of opportunity and integration based upon premises of sameness into a context that has been traditionally, at best, hostile to the involvement of women (Williams, 2004). FA aims to improve the accessibility of football for all minority groups, of which females are one, sit uncomfortably alongside the fact that women's football remains heavily influenced and controlled by men (Scruton et al, 1999). However, the FA are attempting to integrate women into existing structures, and this has had and is continuing to have significant implications for the development of women's football. This context of football is significant in demonstrating how discourses of difference and sameness can be both in conflict and overlap and be experienced simultaneously. The strength and visibility of hegemonic male norms ensures that the movement of women into this context, both as participants and in decision-making positions, is fraught with tension.

Organisational research has been particularly useful here in understanding the application of liberal equity policies to male-dominated environments (eg Acker, 2000; Colgan & Ledwith, 1996; Fielding-Lloyd & Meân, 2008; Shaw & Frisby, 2006; Shaw & Penney, 2003). Shaw & Frisby (2006) explored potential reasons for the failings of liberal equity approaches by sports organisations, concluding that the drive to create equal opportunities by removing barriers to women's access "does little to confront the conditions that create and sustain gender inequalities" (289). A recurring issue in this study is how the FA is attempting to increase the number of females in football by encouraging links to be developed between male and female football clubs, highlighting a number of concerns similar to those that have emerged in the organisational studies

above. All interviewees were aware that being a mixed-club, in offering football to individuals “irrespective of gender...[is a] significant factor in assisting clubs funding applications” (FA, 2007). There are several implications of this issue for the women and their clubs in this study.

Equality v Equity

‘Equality’ can be interpreted as ‘equality of opportunity’, and although perhaps implying equity, actually reflects equal access rather than equality of experience (Hall, 1996). Offering football to girls and women is not the same as ensuring that they have the opportunity to experience football in an equitable environment. The issue here is that girls and women are being accommodated (and even this is to varying degrees) into existing gendered structures, and therefore often have to adapt to these practices, leaving little space for resistance or the development of alternatives. This was highlighted in the fragility of the male-female club relationship for some of the women in the study, most notably those that were ‘linked but separate’. Integration in this case is limited, highlighting how being linked to a male club does not necessarily result in integration – in fact, the mere use of the term ‘linked’ denotes at least a degree of separation, as to be linked, there must be two individual entities. In contrast, the three interviewees within ‘partnership’ clubs in the study took pride in the way boys and girls were integrated within their clubs (but interestingly, men and women were integrated in only one of these partnership clubs), and saw this as promoting a positive football environment where ‘kids’ could experience football. The use of a gender-neutral term such as ‘kids’ by all three women at partnership clubs demonstrated the intention to provide an equitable environment at this level. In these contexts, there was little evidence of gender differentiation, suggesting that this could be a positive way for girls to experience football within male structures from an early age where lessons can be learnt about gender roles, gendered behaviours and multiplicity of identity.

Funding and Monitoring

Secondly, funding initiatives only require organisations to be “outwardly perceived as equitable” and often represent little commitment to initiating change (Shaw & Frisby, 2006: 496). This was highlighted in a study of UK sports equity policies by Shaw & Penney (2003), and similar concerns are particularly evident here. The interviewee at

Linked#1, the most 'loosely' linked to a male football club, described how her club had been exploited financially by this policy. Therefore in this context, not only did the FA's funding initiative not increase gender equity at the club, but it actually had the opposite effect, as the female club lost out financially *and* had to acquire alternative playing facilities. There appears a significant problem here with the lack of monitoring by the FA in ensuring that the provision of football for different groups is not just a 'tick-box' exercise, and that when funding is awarded, there is no system in place to check that this is being spent equitably. This issue clearly needs serious attention, and the difficulty of linked#1 and her team-mates to challenge the situation, instead accepting it and continuing independently (but retaining the name of the male club) suggests significantly imbalanced relations of power at this club.

Further, the variance and multiplicity of club relationships and contexts problematises any attempt to develop universal equity policies. Funding policies can be both beneficial and severely detrimental to female football clubs. For the partnership clubs, this was a beneficial policy whereby working together as an integrated club meant that funding could be acquired that was utilised to develop the club so was a benefit to both boys and girls in grassroots football. However the situation at Linked#1, where integration was portrayed but did not exist to any extent, highlights how male clubs can use this policy to gain funding without making any commitment to developing a gender equitable environment. This is further complicated through how at two clubs, Linked#3 and Linked#4, it was indicated by interviewees that they were attempting to utilise this policy for their own gain, which although again demonstrated little in terms of actual integration, was perceived as a benefit to women's clubs as they could 'use' this to 'bargain' for the use of facilities at male clubs. Clearly the FA's aim is for clubs to offer football to both boys and girls, thereby increasing the opportunities for girls to access football opportunities in clubs, yet claims that liberal policies often succeed in increasing female involvement but fail overall as deeply rooted and gendered structures remain unchallenged (eg Acker, 2000; Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2008; Shaw & Frisby, 2006) are evident in the football context.

Benefits of Independence/Separatist Environments Overlooked

The independent clubs in the study posed the strongest challenge to the taken-for-granted association between football and masculinity, in that they can be considered to

be providing a space for women and girls to experience football in an environment where they do not have to compete with men and boys – both spatially and ideologically. Aside of participation, the women in these clubs also had the opportunity to move into and experience leadership roles; away from male dominated norms, there is the potential for these roles to be re-inscribed and alternative values developed. However approaches to equity that are based on integration overlook this significant area for women and girls to experience sport, and the perception by Williams (2003; 2004) and independent#1a that the FA are uninterested in the success of independent clubs prevents other clubs from learning from these successes and developing in similar ways. In the two independent clubs, the women retained a great deal more control over their club environments, which encouraged the resistance to perceived negative values inherent in men's football such as over-competitiveness and aggression whilst still being integrated into football structures. This challenges the claim by Hargreaves (1994) that women participating in football are being schooled to do what men do, and builds on work by Caudwell (2006) who highlighted how women and their clubs can resist exclusionary practices and the hegemonic male dominance of football whilst participating within established leagues. It seems sensible to suggest that rather than be ignored, or worse, discouraged, independent female clubs should be encouraged by the FA and not just supported but championed due to their increased potential to provide positive football experiences for girls without resorting to creating completely separatist environments.

Overall, the issues above highlight the difficulty in applying an overarching policy for women's clubs that differ greatly in terms of club structure, relationship, environment and individual needs. Not only are gendered structures in clubs dominantly unchallenged, but policies can be abused, and can negatively impact both female players and development of women's clubs, affecting the game structurally. This suggests that there is a long way to go before equity is reached – in the current climate, women are always fighting against a long and very strong tradition of masculinity. Policies that provide support to clubs that appear 'outwardly equitable' is concerning, and should be reworked into a more individualised focus on clubs to ensure that *equity* is being promoted, rather than simply equality of opportunity. This could include the integration of women into club hierarchies, their involvement in decision-making processes, and a fuller commitment to integration. Shaw & Frisby (2006: 490) suggest that an alternative approach to gender equity should be developed, where "the discourses and assumptions

that make gendered hierarchies and practices appear normal are disrupted with the aim of creating space for the development of new meanings and understandings". In applying this to women's football therefore, this would encourage self-reflexivity, and a critique of gendered processes within clubs that prevent equity from being achieved. The potential for football clubs, or indeed the FA, to engage with equity approaches that require an examination of and challenge to deeply-rooted gendered processes seems unlikely, as this would entail a shift in the balance of power away from the dominant male group who benefit from existing arrangements. Focusing only on policies and their reformulation denies how these are inextricably linked to day-to-day practices and the gendered discourses that are reproduced through practices and behaviours (Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2008). Sports organisations are multilevel entities (Cunningham & Sagas, 2008) and as such any change in policy at the organisational level needs to be accompanied by a challenge to practice and the 'doing' of gender at the individual level. In the context of this study, the failure of equality policies to challenge the fundamentally gendered structure of football in general and women's football in particular is largely due to practices that reproduce male dominance and superiority throughout football, practices which must be deconstructed and challenged if women and girls are to pose any threat to this highly gendered context.

8.5 Summary

The claim by Sunderland (2004: 52) that difference is "for most people what gender is all about" is appropriate to conclude this chapter that has discussed the varying contexts in which constructions of difference and sameness were evident throughout this study. The visible dominance of football in England leaves little space for the development of alternatives. Women are therefore constantly judged in relation to the established male structure (and culture) of football, and this judgement entails perceptions of difference and/or sameness. This judgement is also not only by others, but by the women themselves as they struggle to understand their experiences away from dominant discourses in football. This chapter has brought together the different implications and understandings of sameness and difference, and suggested that the way these discourses are manifested in the women's relationships with male structures at both club and organisational level is both constitutive of and constituted by 'attempts' to improve gender equity. It is concluded that a more reflexive and multilevel approach to gender equity is required to account for the differing club contexts and individual values within

football, and that deeply-rooted gendered practices within wider football structures, particularly at the top of the hierarchy but also at the individual level of experience, must be challenged. The control that the women in the study appeared to have over their own club contexts is encouraging (although the degree of this varied significantly), as this allows for alternative values and environments to be fostered. However, the resistance women face beyond the boundaries of their own club radically limits the potential for this to pose a challenge to wider gendered structures that inherently privilege men and masculinity.

⁴⁰ The Brazil national football team are commonly associated with skill, individual flair and ability that provides great entertainment value. Humphrey (1994: 74) suggests that the success of Brazil in the 1958 World Cup was seen as a "triumph over the European 'strength football', a game based on physical fitness, strong (possible violent) challenges and subordination to the tactical plan". The concept of 'Total Football' can be used to represent a style of play that challenges the focus on strength and power, instead emphasising skill, dribbling, attacking play and tactical and technical strength; this is commonly associated with the Brazilian team but is believed to have been developed out of Dutch football culture of the 1960's and 1970's (Winner, 2000). In the UK, the Liverpool team of the 1980's were seen as 'great entertainers', in that they combined an aesthetically pleasing form of football with a passion for success (Hopkins, 2001).

⁴¹ The Ladies Professional Golf Association, formed in 1950, has survived and even flourished where professional leagues in other women's sports have failed. Women's professional golfers on the tour hold a degree of 'celebrity status', earn a wage higher than the national average, and are 'admired for what they do', but because they are women in a male world, they remain outsiders (Crosset, 1995: 2). However the LPGA can be considered a significantly atypical context in sport, particularly such a traditionally male-dominated one such as golf; "a place where women hired men to follow them around and perform menial tasks (caddies not only carry a players clubs but also her name across his back). A place where women moved to the head of the line and wealthy men obliged" (ibid, 4). Yet despite these gains, women are still considered 'outsiders' to the golf community.

CHAPTER NINE: CONCLUSIONS

9.1 Introduction

This research set out to explore the experiences of women in football, in an attempt to contribute to both understandings of female movement into traditionally male sports arenas and the salience but complexity of gender within sports organisations. The main focus has been on how women understand their position within the established structures of football in the UK, both at club and organisational level. This builds on previous research on women in male-dominated sporting environments (for example Crosset, 1995; Halbert, 1997; Heywood & Dworkin, 2003; Miller & Penz, 1991; Therberge, 1997; Young, 1997) and football in particular (Caudwell, 1999, 2004, 2006; Cox & Thompson, 2000; Mennesson & Clement, 2003; Scraton et al, 1999) that highlighted the complexities faced by women in attempting to negotiate varying and often competing discourses surrounding gender, difference and sport. In working within a broad feminist framework in order to prioritise gender and ensure that the focus remained centred on women's experiences, research has drawn upon a theoretical grounding that has the potential to foreground the varying experiences of women whilst ensuring that these experiences remain understood within the wider structures (both sporting and societal) that they are embedded in.

This study began with the intention of building on existing understandings of women and girls in football and attempted to focus on the experiences of women in a variety of organisational roles in football aside from (and as well as) playing the sport. The majority of academic work on the experiences of women in football has focused primarily on the female playing context, in order to prioritise the understandings of women and explore in detail issues of identity construction, intersections of gender with sexuality and race, and the multiplicity of subjectivities (Caudwell, 1999, 2003; Cox & Thompson, 2000; Harris, 2002, 2005, Scraton et al, 1999; Scraton et al, 2005). Here, the research has attempted to take a different direction, in positioning the experiences of women explicitly within the football context that they are embedded in, drawing upon developments in academic research focusing on the role of discourse and the need to examine experience within sporting structures (Cunningham & Sagas, 2008). Liston (2006) suggests that the experiences of females should not be separated from the wider social contexts in which they have increasingly begun to participate; in acknowledging

the significance of these contexts and the way women draw upon the dominant discourses that structure football, there is the potential to analyse experience within wider social contexts. Research examining gender in sports organisations (eg Aitchison, 2000; Fielding-Lloyd & Meân, 2008; Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2008; Shaw & Penney, 2003; Shaw & Slack, 2002) has increasingly focused on these structures as made up of competing discourses of varying dominance, that take material form in both social and cultural institutions, rather than independently fixed (Weedon, 1999). The experiences of women as entrenched in the competing discourses that structure football can therefore be related to the wider structures of the sport, such as clubs and the governing body, by analysing the implications of relations of power and how gendered practices with varying levels of visibility that impact women's experiences are normalised through dominant discourses.

Finally, the attempts in the previous chapter to discuss some possible 'recommendations', in terms of recognising potential spaces for women to challenge and reformulate gendered practices that structure their experience, must be considered within both the context of football and the recognition of multiplicity and fluidity of experience at the individual level. Therefore the intention is not to conclude with any semblance of 'best practice' in terms of club relationships or FA initiatives. However it is important to reiterate spaces within the different relationships where women found space to gain control, to pose resistance to gendered practices, and to move into traditionally male roles. It is also important not to mask commonality of experience with deconstruction and multiplicity (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002). The acknowledgement of commonality in areas such as the implication of referee perceptions, contexts within which resistance to gendered practices was difficult, and the attempts to promote sameness at junior level can give an indication into the strength/weakening of particular discourses or highlight areas where women can make their own spaces for the development of alternative values.

9.2 Aims and Objectives Revisited

The aim of this research was to develop an increased understanding of how women experience football in relation to the male dominated structure within which they participate. This was addressed through four objectives.

1: To investigate the dynamics between women and the male football clubs that they are associated with

Chapter five provided an insight into not just what type of male-female club relationships exist, but began to explore the dynamics within these relationships, and how women understood their own individual position in this relationship and the wider positioning of their own female club/team/section. What emerged from this was that despite some commonalities, there exists an extensive diversity of relationships, not just between the 10 clubs in phase two of the study, but also the 55 survey respondents. The value of using a combination of survey and interviews became particularly evident when assessing the aim. To illustrate this, the most common survey response to whether the relationship caused any problems, was 'none', yet this was additional to evidence provided on a number of benefits. There was also little difference between the proportion of respondents who described themselves as satisfied with the relationship and those who said they were not, with slightly more respondents positive. An examination of potential improvements began to suggest that this level of satisfaction might, however, reflect that in some cases, little was expected from relationships – an issue that needed to be explored in greater detail through qualitative methods. The subsequent in-depth interviews allowed for the relationships to be examined in greater detail with respect to the different types of relationships that existed and the resistance/complicit positions available within the contexts.

Broad categories were identified in an attempt to conceptualise the different *types* of relationships that could exist, and also to examine the dynamics between and within these relationships. Diversity could therefore be retained within the attempt to devise broad categories that may be useful for understanding relationships between male and female sports clubs outside of the football context. Clearly there are also many types of relationships that are not necessarily illustrated by the clubs in this study; further research could then develop these positions in an attempt to provide a more expansive understanding. In particular, the different relationships in between 'independent' and 'partnership' varied greatly, and it is likely that there is a great deal of variance within this area that this study has not accommodated. However it is imperative to not allow categorisations to structure understandings, as these are varied, multiple, and certainly do not represent 'fixed' categories that clubs can fit wholly into; the understandings,

experiences and perceptions of the interviewees at every club in the study was highly variable and highlighted a great deal of overlap between categories.

It became clear throughout the study that integration and separation are not totalising concepts, but can be combined to create complex and contradictory structures for women and their clubs. In asking questions about the potential for women to challenge and resist existing gendered arrangements, it is important to look at the experiences within the different categories conceptualised in chapter five. Understanding 'integration' as 'partnership' as opposed to 'being linked' appeared to provide an equitable environment for all three clubs in the study who perceived their relationships in this way. Further, interviewees from the two independent clubs also demonstrated how they were working at developing alternative environments where alternative values to the competitive male model could be fostered, but from *within* these structures. In these environments, girls could also be given priority, rather than be treated 'the same' as in partnership clubs. Both of these environments were understood to have the potential for resistance to male-dominated practices and values. Again, it is not to presuppose that women in football wish to develop alternative values or distance themselves from competitive aims. Linked#5 was an example of a club where the interviewee understood her club's position within the structure and culture of a male professional club as vital for achievement and progression in football. Values are clearly contradictory and multiple, and it is therefore unwise to conclude that some relationships were 'better' than others and should therefore be followed or benchmarked as 'good practice'. What is important is identifying the dynamics and practices within relationships, whether integrated or separate, that limit the control afforded to women and create unbalanced relationships of power.

2. To analyse the perceived role of the Football Association in accommodating and/or resisting the movement of females into all levels of the sport, not just as players

This issue was discussed extensively in chapter eight. It can be suggested that the relationship between women and football structures at both regional and national level is ambiguous at best. Again, there appeared to be some discrepancies between the survey data and the interview discussions. Whilst survey responses were predominantly neutral, and described benefits as well as potential tensions in the relationship between women's football and the Football Association, the interviewees were overwhelmingly critical of

this relationship. This can however not be generalised – the interviewees were selected by their variance in relation to club structures, not their perceptions of the FA; despite this, the fact that clubs and participants were selected rather than randomly sampled limits the issues that emerged to these respondents only. The critical position adopted in the majority of interviews does however indicate the tensions that can emerge between the women involved in football and a governing body in which women are significantly under-represented (Williams, 2003). These tensions include resistance to female integration; the perceived inability for women to challenge initiatives; women feeling that they are structurally treated the same, but still not equal, rather than acknowledging differences in values; and the limits of female control outside of their own club context.

These issues were evident not just in experiences of FA committees and personal interaction with individuals within these structures, but in the initiatives promoted - for example mixed coaching courses, Charter/Community Standard Awards and league restructuring. This was however interpreted through individual experiences, as these are manifested in interactions. For example, linked#2b described how she felt unable to challenge initiatives to restructure her local league, despite opposing this and representing her club at meetings where this initiative was discussed. This furthered the perceived distancing between governing structures and the female participants and 'workers', both in terms of support provided, values promoted, and initiatives implemented to develop the game and attract more players. This returns to the contradiction whereby women feel that they are treated as structurally 'the same' as men, and their structures are modified to fit existing leagues, yet in some situations still perceived as different and therefore inferior. Managing this involved negotiating contradictory discourses of difference and sameness simultaneously, and often women aligned with discourses that perceived women as inferior to men in football. The implications of this for policy implementation and the provisions of sport for women were discussed in the previous chapter, and these may make an important contribution to understandings of women's position in organisations as well as in sporting contexts.

3. To identify how women understand their own roles and experiences in relation to dominant discourses that structure both football as a broad context and women's football as a micro-context within this

Women are undoubtedly moving into roles in football that have traditionally been dominated by men and masculinity - not just as players, but as coaches, referees, administrators and FA and football club employees. As a result of this movement however, dominant discourses of masculinity, femininity and gender difference that structure football as an organisation and as a culture significantly impact their experiences and understandings. The previous chapter discussed the dominance of 'masculine' behaviours in certain contexts, highlighting how on both coaching and courses and as players of the sport, the portrayal of stereotypically 'masculine' attributes is at times rewarded and at other times problematic, such is the complex interplay of discourses of masculinity in football and normative ideals of femininity. In some cases this can be perceived as problematic, in that the women can critically adopt attributes stereotypically associated with masculinity to achieve their short-term aims, such as passing coaching courses. At other times behaviours are modified uncritically, which can make this process appear gender neutral and gendered practices are more implicit and therefore difficult to challenge. This is likely to have some parallels with gender organisational studies, as the ways in which women moved into leadership roles in football and the complex negotiations involved in resisting and accommodating masculine norms is similar to some of the tensions discovered through research in this area (see for example Walsh, 2001; Wilson, 2003). The tensions created for women in the sport are particularly significant due to the visibility of football in the UK. The language used in football is often considered as masculine, with phrases such as 'man-on' and 'linesman' used both formally and informally; this is not simply reflective of a masculine culture but also constitutes this masculinity and reproduces its dominance. In some cases, the 'feminine' subject position becomes undesirable or even unavailable due to the lower value assigned to this position within the male dominated football context. However the rejection of aggressive and over-competitive attributes at times in favour of skill may represent the potential to challenge discourses of masculinity, by exploiting a tension in men's football - in the clash that can occur between physicality and power and technical skill. This was only touched upon with this study; further exploration is required to examine the particular contexts where feminine/masculine dualisms can be deconstructed and alternatives displayed.

It also suggested that wider discourses of achievement/success also influenced male-female club relations. If these discourses were drawn upon for future aims, links are

perhaps seen as necessary due to status benefits, rather than being perceived as beneficial. The perception that a relationship with a male club is necessary rather than beneficial can result in women feeling less able to challenge relationships/practices that can have very real and negative impacts in terms of status, priority and integration. Club Linked#1 was a particularly pertinent example of this, in that the interviewee positioned her club as 'linked' to a male football club, but indicated this did not involve any support; the only link was that they kept the name of the men's club. Retaining the name was important to the interviewee as this assigned a high status to her club and implied an association with a male professional football club. This was then believed to attract better quality players to the club and help in meeting achievement-orientated aims. In contrast to this, both independent female clubs were unconcerned by this, and were aiming to foster a participatory environment at their respective clubs. Interviewee independent#2 rejected discourses of achievement-orientated success to the extent that her team moved down a league in order to enjoy the game more and play local fixtures only. Both interviewees at independent clubs also described male-female club relationships in strongly negative terms, positioning themselves in opposition to this by providing examples of unbalanced relations of power at other clubs and rejecting attempts by male clubs to develop a link. Resistance is therefore possible, not only to the necessity of male-female club links but also to achievement-based definitions of success that dominate competitive models of sport; the overlapping of these discourses both enables and restricts the potential for a challenge to unbalanced relations of power.

4. Examine and highlight areas of tension between competing discourses, and areas in which women are attempting to challenge gendered practices and discourses.

This final objective has been referred to throughout this chapter. The strength of male dominated discourses within football significantly restricted the extent to which women could challenge gendered practices outside of their own club context. However within their own context, the women in the study were each making their own gains in male-dominated contexts, as players and in leadership positions. Even dominant discourses created sites of conflict that can create space for the development of new meanings (Shaw & Frisby, 2006). The extent to which women can utilise this space for their own gain is however debatable, such is the perceived lack of control over the future of their own sport. More encouraging is the resistance expressed to dominant and negatively perceived attributes in football such as aggressiveness and extremes of physicality.

Women demonstrated how they could succeed in resisting these negative behaviours, and in redefining women in football as possessing skill, challenged the dominance of these attributes. Again, these reported attempts to 'reclaim' skill have only been briefly examined, and a more in-depth exploration of how women understand and internalise the different attributes privileged in football is required to assess the extent of this challenge.

9.3 Implications of the Study

The study has identified a number of areas where gendered practices continue to impact women's experiences and create inequitable environments. There are several implications of these for policy and practice, along with some suggestions of areas for future research to both strengthen and expand on the issues that have emerged here.

9.3.1 Policy and Practice

Throughout the study, and particularly in chapter eight, an exploration of the tensions between women in football and the wider organisations within which they must operate has highlighted areas where policy *and* practice within these structures, particularly in combination, can be detrimental to women's experiences. This has created a potential space for reflections on existing policy and practice, and a number will be discussed briefly here with some suggestions for ways in which this space may be utilised to improve the experiences of women in football. These suggestions have been based on the experiences of women within a very small sample of ten grassroots football clubs of varying sizes and structures, and therefore cannot be considered reflective of women's football clubs in general, or even those who play at a similar level or have similar structures. The multiplicity of club relations and even the differing experiences within clubs means that it would be unwise to make generalisations beyond this context, however the concerns illuminated have highlighted some areas of tension for the women in the study that suggestions can be provided based on these analyses.

As already highlighted, there seems a significant disjuncture between the development of policy at the organisational level and the implementation of this policy in practice at club level. In particular, funding can be awarded to clubs on the basis that they offer football to a variety of groups of children and adults, of which women and girls are one.

This reflects an *assumption* by the FA that individual clubs will take the responsibility for developing women's and girl's football, yet there is no official requirement for this. Even in this small-scale study, there are examples where this has not been implemented, which suggest that this initiative needs close monitoring – it is particularly significant that in some cases in this study, funding awards were not followed up to ensure that they were being used for the benefit of the whole club. This is not to suggest that there is no monitoring system in place, but that if there is, this is not being implemented consistently or effectively. Further, women who may experience difficulties within club relationships need to be provided with access to information concerning these initiatives, so they are aware of anything that they may be entitled to. However although closer monitoring may help limit the potential for financial exploitation and allow women to access greater funding, the point can be made that reliance on any kind of external financial assistance can create an uneven balance of power and also in some cases a degree of independence can be sacrificed in return for the benefits associated with links. The security of clubs may then be in jeopardy, as demonstrated in high-profile cases at the elite level of women's football (discussed in chapter one). It seems appropriate therefore to suggest that women's clubs are encouraged (and assisted) to become financially independent and secure, instead of 'pushing' links with male clubs to gain access to resources and potentially funding, strongly evident in the case of Independent#1. Although this study is not a policy evaluation, the potential for financial exploitation of women and their clubs coupled with the tentative male-female club relationships even at the elite level of women's football seriously questions the foundations upon which the FA are basing their drive for male and female football clubs to become linked.

The study has also demonstrated how, notwithstanding the recent increase in participation, practical problems are still widely prevalent for women's clubs despite these initiatives to integrate male and female clubs. Access to facilities was problematic for a number of women in the study, and this was across all club categories, regardless of whether they were linked, independent or in partnership, supporting similar findings by Williams (2003). This is likely to be a widespread problem, and is not an issue related solely to provisions within football clubs - the report into women's football by the DCMS (2006) found that women's clubs struggled to access quality council-owned facilities and strongly recommended that the FA should take a stronger line in achieving

equality of allocation and the provision of quality facilities for girls and women. This suggestion is echoed here. The difficulty of access even when linked to a male football club who have these facilities suggests that women and their clubs can be as disadvantaged within the system as outside of it. This may however be harder to detect for those women's clubs associated with male clubs as they may be outwardly perceived as equitable and equity in terms of access may be assumed. Again, one might advocate the need for closer detailed monitoring.

A further recommendation concerns the suggestions that women may find it difficult to channel their experience, opinions and varying needs within existing structures. Instances of resistance to gendered practices were usually individually motivated, and therefore isolated. In compiling the different experiences of these women, a collective voice has emerged from the study to suggest areas where similar problems have been experienced. The concern is that there appears to be little opportunity for women to share experiences and build a collective voice within existing structures of football to express these, which may be more effective. The isolation of individuals as 'token women' on male-dominated committees has been demonstrated not only to significantly restrict the potential for women to be heard, but even to lead to them dropping out and leaving no female representatives. The opportunity to develop a collective voice may provide more potential for women to express their needs within football. Claringbould & Knoppers (2008) support this in their analysis of how a gender balance on boards within sports organisations resulted in women and men feeling more able to challenge stereotypes and gendered practices – gender was not so salient, and instead board members emphasised individual differences, attributed to style rather than gender. However it is imperative that channels for this voice to be not only heard but to contribute to decision making are generated. The example provided by linked#4, that she had been a member of a women's committee that had a say but not a vote, is a prominent indicator that a collective voice has no use if it is not heard, and policies and practices should be cognizant of this.

9.3.2 Directions for Future Research

The small sample of clubs in this study make it difficult for extensive recommendations to be developed; the aim of the research was to provide a rich insight into the relationships between women and football that rendered a large sample size as

inappropriate. However the findings of the study provide useful indications of areas that would benefit from greater exploration to build on this and others' work. The results incorporate the different dimensions of the role of women in football, and can provide suggestions about where further analysis can be undertaken.

Although the evolving nature of male-female club relationships was examined in relation to the past experiences and future hopes of the women, this study has only provided an insight into a particular moment in what is likely to be a constantly shifting relationship. The movement from club to club, changes within relationships, the movement of roles and positions within these roles make for a fluid and unstable context. A longitudinal study could be employed to demonstrate the dynamic nature of links more fully, and examine how changes are instigated and the impact of this, potentially illuminating areas where women may be generating change to improve their situation, or alternatively, experiencing enforced change.

In examining the interplay between women and the wider structures of football, the research has been conducted from the perspective of those women who are at the same time within but distanced from this context. The findings of this study have highlighted the significance of these structures as consisting of multiple discourses that impact the way in which women experience football and understand gendered practices and policies. This could be explored further by adopting an alternative perspective, at looking *within* the structures rather than at those who experience football within them. Examining the experiences of women who work within organisations, particularly in positions of influence, may illustrate further how gendered practices and discourses are reproduced or challenged within this structure. In attempting to understand the (re)production of male dominance, it would also be insightful to explore the experiences and understandings of men within these structures, both in paid positions within the FA and as nominated volunteers on committees. Work in this area from a feminist perspective, although shifting the primary focus away from women, may be valuable in searching for potential spaces where this can be resistant. It is also important not to assume that all men in football are detrimental to the women's game, as this can mask complex realities and social relations of power in which some men have played important roles in the development of women's football (Liston, 2006). Although the perceptions of the women in this study were at times critical of men's roles, there were

also examples of husbands, fathers and male friends providing significant support in the running of clubs, challenging gender differentiation and being pro-active in developing the game. Examining the range of understandings of men in football, from both women's and men's perspectives, may therefore provide alternative insights into how channels to question to the status quo can be discovered and exploited.

There are limitless directions that further research in this area can take. The focus here on grassroots clubs incorporates experiences within this level only, and although this reveals how women within grassroots clubs appear to be further detached from men's football, an examination of the experiences of women involved at higher levels of the game would provide further insight into this detachment. Perceptions that the FA were elitist in their focus would benefit from an examination of the extent to which women at high performance levels felt integrated into wider football structures, and whether at this level, tensions that emerged from this study are less evident and if so, whether this creates further conflict due to increased exposure that may not be experienced at the grassroots. Further, the clubs in this study highlighted many negative implications that can arise from male-female club relationships, and an examination of club structures where equitable environments have been developed would again provide an alternative perspective on the dynamics within relationships.

Finally, on a more methodological note, it was discussed above how this study has combined individual voices within women's football to demonstrate the variance of experiences but also commonality of tensions that can emerge for those involved in male-dominated structures. However although the interview process may have encouraged the women to reflect on their own positions, focusing on groups of women within football, enabling them to speak and discuss their experiences may allow problem-sharing and the development of collective strength. This is linked to the suggestion above that women need a channel to develop a collective voice and ensure that this is heard. In employing this, research can be praxis-orientated⁴² (Lather, 1991) and perhaps provide a more 'applied' challenge to the difficulties women can face within football. On an individual level, accommodating the diversity of women who play the game, such as those from different ethnic and racial backgrounds, is also crucial in understanding the multiplicity of perceptions and experiences of women involved in

football and attempting to construct equitable football environments for *all* women, as participants and in leadership roles.

9.4 Concluding Remarks

The data from this study suggests that the context of football is a strong example of how women in 'masculine' sports territory must negotiate vastly conflicting understandings. The attempt to examine the role of discourse and gendered practices within football has not been at the expense of acknowledging the difficulties and tensions women in football can experience, and also the areas where women may be initiating a challenge to practices that constitute these difficulties, albeit dominantly on an individually motivated basis. The women in the study however appeared to have little alternative to this due to their isolation within football structures. The study therefore suggests that women's football faces continuous challenges in addressing the structures that are constraining both individual experiences and collective advancement in the game. If the sport is to advance, research may have a valuable role to play in revealing the complexity of the relationship between women and the context of football that they are both embedded within yet detached from.

⁴² Lather (1991: 51) defines 'research as praxis' as "research that is explicitly committed to critiquing the status quo and building a more just society". Although this understands empowerment in liberatory terms, in that *providing the opportunity to women to engage with the research process, they may 'become liberated'* (and empowerment as something that can be achieved rather than a product of particular discourses), the notion that research, particularly from a feminist perspective, can become more inclusive and accessible to the participants and potentially contributing to challenging the conditions it attempts to illuminate may be significant.

REFERENCES

Acker, J (1990). Hierarchies, jobs, bodies: A theory of gendered organisations. Gender and Society 4, 139-158.

Acker, J (1992). Gendering organisational theory. In A.J Mills & P Tancred (eds) Gendering Organisational Analyses. London: Sage.

Acker, J (2000). Gendered contradictions in organisational equity projects. Organisation 7, 625-632.

Acosta, R.V., & Carpenter, L. (2002). Status of women as administrators.
<http://www.aahperd.org/nagws/pdf/acostaAdministration.pdf>

Acosta, R.V & Carpenter, L (2008). Women in intercollegiate sport: A longitudinal, national study: Thirty-one year update, 1977-2008.
<http://webpages.charter.net/womeninsport/2008%20Summary%20Final.pdf>.

Adams St. Pierre, E (2000). Poststructural feminism in education: An overview. Qualitative Studies in Education 13/5, 477-515.

Aitchison, C (2000). Post-structural feminist theories of representing others: A response to the "crisis" in leisure studies discourse. Leisure Studies 19, 127-144.

Aitchison, C, Jordan, F & Brackenridge, C (1999). Women in leisure management: A survey of gender equity. Women in Management Review 14/4, 121-127.

Arnott, P (2006). Different ball game. Management Today March 2006, 54-58.

Bacchi, C.L (1990). Same Difference: Feminism and Sexual Difference. Sydney: Allen & Unwin.

Bagilhole, B (2002). Women in Non-Traditional Occupations. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Bain, L (1990). A critical analysis of the hidden curriculum in physical education. In R. Tinning, and Kirk, D. (Eds.), Physical Education, Curriculum and Culture: Critical Issues in the Contemporary Crisis. Lewes: Falmer Press.

Baxter, J (2002). Competing discourses in the classroom: A post-structuralist discourse analysis of girls' and boys' speech in public contexts. Discourse & Society 13/6, 827-842.

BBC Sport (2006). Terry named new England skipper. BBC SPORT Online 10/8/2006. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pt/fr/-/sport1/hi/football/internationals/4780745.stm> First accessed 19/9/2007.

Bernstein, A (2002). Is it time for a victory lap? Changes in the media coverage of women in sport. International Review for the Sociology of Sport 37/3, 415-428.

Berry, R S Y (1999). Collecting data by in-depth interviewing. Paper presented at the British Educational Research Association Annual Conference, University of Sussex at Brighton, September 2-5 1999.

Birrell, S (1988). Discourses on the gender/sport relationship: From women in sport to gender relations. Exercise and Sport Sciences Review 16, 459-502.

Birrell, S (2000). Feminist theories for sport. In J Coakley & E Dunning (eds) Handbook of Sport Studies. London: Sage.

Birrell, S & Therberge, N (1994a). Ideological control of women in sport. In D.M Costa & S.R Guthrie (eds) Women and Sport - Interdisciplinary Perspectives. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Birrell, S & Therberge, N (1994b). Feminist resistance and transformation in sport. In D.M Costa & S.R Guthrie (eds) Women and Sport - Interdisciplinary Perspectives. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Blinde, E.M (1989). Participation in a male sport model and the value alienation of female intercollegiate athletes. Sociology of Sport Journal 6, 36-49.

Blinde, E.M & Taub, D.E (1992). Women athletes as falsely accused deviants: Managing the lesbian stigma. Sociological Quarterly 33, 521-533.

Bourdieu, P (1993). In R Nice (trans) Sociology in Question. London: Sage.

Boutilier, M.A & SanGiovanni, L.F (1983). The Sporting Woman. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Boutilier, M.A & SanGiovanni, L.F (1994). Politics, public policy, and Title IX: Some limitations of liberal feminism. In S Birrell & C.L Cole (eds) Women, Sport and Culture. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Brace-Govan, J (2002). Looking at bodywork: Women and three physical activities. Journal of Sport and Social Issues 26/4, 403-420.

Britton, D. M (2000). The epistemology of the gendered organisation. Gender & Society 14, 418-434.

Brown, D & Rich, E (2002). Gender positioning as pedagogical practice in teaching Physical Education. In D Penney (ed) Gender and Physical Education: Contemporary Issues and Future Directions. London: Routledge.

Bryson, L (1987). Sport and the maintenance of masculine hegemony. Women's Studies International Forum 10/4, 349-360.

Bryson, L (1994). Sport and the maintenance of masculine hegemony. In S Birrell & C.L Cole (eds) Women, Sport and Culture. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Butler, J (1990). Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity. New York: Routledge.

Campenni, C.E (1999). Gender stereotyping of children's toys: A comparison of parents and non-parents. Sex Roles 40, 121-138.

Carabine, J (2001). Unmarried motherhood 1830-1990: A genealogical analysis. In M Wetherell, S Taylor & S.J Yates (eds) Discourse as Data: A Guide for Analysis. London: Open University Press.

Carle, A & Nauright, J (1999). Crossing the line: Women playing Rugby Union. In T.J.L Chandler & J Nauright (eds) Making the Rugby World: Race, Gender, Commerce. London: Frank Cass & Co.

Cashmore, E (2004). Beckham. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Caudwell, J (1999). Women's football in the United Kingdom: Theorising gender and unpacking the butch lesbian image. Journal of Sport & Social Issues 23/4, 390-402.

Caudwell, J (2003). Sporting gender: Women's footballing bodies as sites/sights for the [re]articulation of sex, gender and desire. Sociology of Sport Journal 20, 371-386.

Caudwell, J (2004). Out on the field of play: Women's experiences of gender and sexuality in football contexts. In S Wagg (ed) British Football and Social Exclusion London: Routledge.

Caudwell, J (2006). Women playing football at clubs in England with socio-political associations. Soccer & Society 7/4, 423-438.

Cealey Harrison, W & Hood-Williams, J (2002). Beyond Sex and Gender. London: Sage.

Charlesworth, H & Young, K (2003). Why female athletes play with pain: Motivations and rationalisations. In Young, K (ed) Sporting Bodies, Damaged Selves: Sociological Studies of Sports-Related Injury. Amsterdam: Elsevier Press.

Chafetz, J.S & Kotorba, J.A (1999). Little League mothers and the reproduction of gender. In J Coakley & P Donnelly (eds) Inside Sports. London: Routledge.

Christopherson, N, Janning, M & McConnell, E.D (2002). Two kicks forward, one kick back: A content analysis of media discourses on the 1999 Women's World Cup soccer championship. Sociology of Sport Journal 19, 170-188.

Clarke, G (1998). Voices from the Margins: Lesbian Teachers in Physical Education. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Leeds Metropolitan University.

Claringbould, I & Knoppers, A (2007). Finding a 'normal' woman: Selection processes for board membership. Sex Roles 56, 495-507.

Claringbould, I & Knoppers, A (2008). Doing and undoing gender in sport governance. Sex Roles 58, 81-92.

Cockburn, C (1991). In the Way of Women: Men's Resistance to Sex Equality in Organizations. London: MacMillan.

Cockburn, C & Clarke, G (2002). "Everybody's looking at you!": Girls negotiating the 'femininity deficit' they incur in Physical Education. Women's Studies International Forum 25/6, 651-665.

Cochrane, K (2007). On the Ball. The Guardian 28/9/2007.

Coddington, A (1997). One of the Lads: Women who Follow Football. London: Harper Collins.

Cohen, L & Manion, L (1994). Research Methods in Education (4th ed). London: Routledge.

Cole, C.L (1994). Resisting the canon: Feminist cultural studies, sport, and technologies of the body. In S Birrell & C.L Cole (eds) Women, Sport and Culture. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Cole, C.L (2000). The year that girls ruled. Journal of Sport and Social Issues 24/1, 3-7.

Coleman, J.C & Hendry, L.B (1999). The Nature of Adolescence (3rd ed). London: Routledge.

Colgan, F & Ledwith, S (1996). Women as organisational change agents. In S Ledwith & F Colgan (eds) Women in Organisations: Challenging Gender Politics. London: Macmillan Business.

Collins, L.H (2002). Working out the contradictions: Feminism and aerobics. Journal of Sport and Social Issues 26/1, 85-109.

Collins, P Hill (1990). Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment. Boston, Mass: Unwin Hyman.

Collins, P.Hill (1991). Learning from the outsider within: The sociological significance of black feminist thought. In M.M Fonow & J.A Cook (eds) Beyond Methodology: Feminist Scholarship as Lived Research. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Collins, P Hill (1997). Comment on Heckman's "Truth and Method: Feminist Standpoint Theory Revisited": Where's the Power? Signs 22/2, 375-381.

Coltrane, S (1998). Gender and Families. London: Thousand Oaks.

Connell, R.W (1987). Gender and Power. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Connell, R.W (1995). Masculinities. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Connell, R.W & Messerschmidt, J.W (2005). Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept. Gender & Society 19/6, 829-859.

Cook, J.A & Fonow, M.M (1990). Knowledge and women's interests: Issues of epistemology and methodology in feminist sociological research. In J.M Nielson (ed) Feminist Research Methods. Colorado: Westview Press.

Costa, D.M & Guthrie, S.R (1994). Feminist perspectives: Intersections with women and sport. In D.M Costa & S.R Guthrie (eds) Women and Sport - Interdisciplinary Perspectives. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Cox, A.M, Johnson, F, Newitz, A & Sandell, J (1997). Masculinity without men: Women reconciling feminism and male-identification. In L Heywood & J Drake (eds) Third Wave Agenda: Being Feminist, Doing Feminism. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Cox, B & Thompson, S (2000). Multiple bodies: Sportswomen, soccer and sexuality. International Review for the Sociology of Sport 35/1, 5-20.

Crawley, S.L (1998). Gender, class and the construction of masculinity in professional sailing. International Review for the Sociology of Sport 33/1, 33-42.

Crosset, T (1995). Outsiders in the Clubhouse: The World of Women's Professional Golf. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Cunningham, G.B & Sagas, M (2008). Gender and sex diversity in sport organisations: Introduction to a special issue. Sex Roles 58, 3-9.

Davies, B (1989). Frogs and Snails and Feminist Tales. London: Allen & Unwin.

Davies, B (1997). The subject of post-structuralism: A reply to Alison Jones. Gender and Education 9/3, 271-283.

Davies, B & Banks, C (1995). The gender trap: A feminist poststructuralist analysis of primary school children's talk about gender. In J Holland & M Blair (eds) Debates and Issues in Feminist Research and Pedagogy. Clevedon: Open University Press.

Davies, B & Harré, R (1990). Positioning: The discursive production of selves. Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour 20, 43-63.

Davies, J (2003). Expressions of gender: An analysis of pupils' gendered discourse styles in small group classroom discussions. Discourse & Society 14/2, 115-132.

Davies, P (1997). I Lost My Heart to the Belles. London: Mandarin Paperbacks.

DCMS (2006). Select Committee on Culture, Media And Sport – Fourth Report.
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmselect/cmcumeds/1357/135702.htm> First accessed 28/09/2006.

Deem, R (1986). All Work and No Play? The Sociology of Women and Leisure. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Denscombe, M (2002). Ground Rules for Good Research: A 10-point guide for social researchers. London: Open University Press.

Dewar, A (1993). Would all the generic women in sport please stand up? Challenges facing feminist sport sociology. Quest 45, 211-229.

Di Stefano, C (1990). Dilemmas of difference: Feminism, modernity and postmodernism. In S Nicholson (ed) Feminism/Postmodernism. London: Routledge.

Dillaborough, J (2001). Gender theory and research in education: Modernist traditions and emerging contemporary themes. In B Francis and C Skelton (eds) Investigating Gender: Contemporary Perspectives in Education. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Duncan, M.C & Hasbrook, C.A (2002). Denial of power in televised women's sports. In S Scraton & A Flintoff (eds) Gender and Sport: A Reader. London: Routledge.

Duncan, M.C & Messner, M.A (1998). The media image of sport and gender. In L.A Wenner (ed) MediaSport. London: Routledge.

Duncan, M.C, Messner, M.A & Williams, L (1990). Gender Stereotyping in Televised Sports. Los Angeles: Amateur Athletic Association, Los Angeles.

Dunning, E (1986). Sport as a male preserve: Notes on the social sources of masculine identity and its transformations. Theory, Culture and Society. 3/1, 79-91.

Dunning, E (1999). Sport Matters: Sociological Studies of Sport, Violence and Civilisation. London: Routledge.

Elling, A, De Knop, A & Knoppers, A (2003). Gay/lesbian sport clubs and events: Places of homo-social bonding and cultural resistance? International Review for the Sociology of Sport 38/4, 441-456.

Ely, R.J & Meyerson, D.E (2000). Theories of gender in organisations: A new approach to organisational analysis and change. Research in Organisational Behaviour 22, 103-151.

English Sports Council, The (1997). England, the sporting nation: A strategy. London: English Sports Council.

Epstein, D, Kehily, M, Mac an Ghaill, M & Redman, P (2001). Boys and girls come out to play: Making masculinities and femininities in school playgrounds. Men and Masculinities 4/2, 158-172.

Evans, J & Davies, B (1993). Equality, equity and Physical Education. In J Evans (ed) Equality, Equity and Physical Education. London: The Falmer Press.

Fair Game Magazine (2007). www.fgmag.com First Accessed 10/10/2003.

Fairclough, N (1992). Discourse and Social Change. Oxford, UK and Cambridge, MA: Polity Press and Blackwell.

Fairclough, N (1995). Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language. London: Longman.

Fairclough, N (2001). The discourse of New Labour: Critical Discourse Analysis. In M. Wetherell, S Taylor & S.J Yates (eds) Discourse as Data: A Guide for Analysis. London: Sage.

Fasting, K (2004). Small country – Big results: Women's football in Norway. In F Hong & J.A Mangan (eds) Soccer, Women, Sexual Liberation: Kicking Off a New Era. London: Frank Cass.

Fasting, K & Pfister, G (2000). Female and male coaches in the eyes of female elite soccer players. European Physical Education Review 6/1, 91-110.

Fielding-Lloyd, B & Meân, L.J (2008). Standards and separatism: The discursive construction of gender in English soccer coach education. Sex Roles 58, 24-39.

Finlayson, A & Valentine, J (2002). Post-structuralism and Politics: An Introduction. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Flax, J (1990). Postmodernism and Gender Relations in Feminist Theory. In S Nicholson (ed) Feminism/Postmodernism. London: Routledge.

Football Association, The (2003). Coaching.
<http://www.thefa.com/GrassrootsNew/Coach/Postings/CoachingPathway.htm> First Accessed 2/8/2007.

Football Association, The (2004). FA Community Clubs.
<http://www.hefa.com/GrassroootsOld/ClubDevelopment/CharterStandardScheme/Postin gs/2004/01/FACommunityClubs.htm> First accessed: 2/8/2007.

Football Association, The (2005a). Structural Review Consultation Paper. London: The Football Association.

Football Association, The (2005b). FA Structural Review. London: The Football Association.

Football Association, The (2005c). Record Breakers. Monday 5th June 2005.
http://www.thefa.com/Euro2005/NewandFeatures/Postings/2005/02/Euro2005_FinlandP_review.htm First Accessed 19/09/2007.

Football Association, The (2006). Charter Standard Scheme – Criteria and benefits.
<http://www.thefa.com/GrassrootsNew/CharterStandard/Club/Postings/2006/05/AboutTheCharterStandardScheme.htm> First Accessed 2/8/2007.

Foucault, M (1972). The Archaeology of Knowledge. (Translated by Alan Sheridan), London: Tavistock (originally published 1969).

Francis, B (2001). Beyond postmodernism: Feminist agency in educational research. In B Francis & C Skelton (eds) Investigating Gender: Contemporary Perspectives in Education. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Francis, B & Skelton, C (2001). Investigating Gender: Contemporary Perspectives in Education. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Giulianotti, R (1999). Football: A Sociology of the Global Game. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Gregen, K.J (1992). Organisational theory in the postmodern era. Rethinking Organisation: New Directions in Organisational Theory and Analysis. London: Sage.

Gherardi, S & Poggio, B (2001). Creating and recreating gender order in organisations. Journal of World Business 36/3, 245-259.

Gorely, T, Holroyd, R & Kirk, D (2003). Muscularity, the habitus and the social construction of gender: Towards a gender-relevant physical education. British Journal of Sociology of Education 24/4, 429-448.

Greendorfer, S (1983). Shaping the female athlete: The impact of the family. In M.A. Boutilier & L SanGiovanni (eds) The Sporting Woman. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Griffin, P (1989). Assessment of equitable instructional practices in the gym. CAHPER Journal 19-22.

Griffin, P (1992). Changing the game: Homophobia, sexism & lesbians in sport Quest 44, 251-265.

Griffin, P (1998). Strong Women, Deep Closets: Lesbians and Homophobia in Sport. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Griggs, G (2004). Are boys just 'hogging' the ball? An examination of the factors that influence primary school girls' participation in football. Bulleting of Physical Education 40/2, 161-177.

Guttmann, A (1991). Women's Sport – A History. New York: Columbia University Press.

Haig-Muir, M (1999). Skirting the issue: Women, gender, and sexuality in the golfing world. In M.R Farralley & A.J Cochran (eds) Science and Golf III: Proceedings of the 1998 World Scientific Congress of Golf. Leeds: Human Kinetics.

Halberstam, J (1998). Female Masculinity. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Halbert, C (1997). Tough enough and woman enough: Stereotypes, discrimination and impression management among women professional boxers. Journal of Sport and Social Issues 21/7, 7-36.

Hall, M.A (1990). How should we theorise gender in sport? In M. Messner & D. Sabo (eds) Sport, Men, and the Gender Order. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Hall, M.A (1996). Feminism and Sporting Bodies: Essays on Theory and Practice. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Hall, M.A, Cullen, D & Slack, T (1989). Organisational elites recreating themselves: The gender structure of National Sport Organisations. Quest 41, 28-45.

Haraway, D (1991). Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature. London: Free Association Books.

Harding, S (1986). The Science Question in Feminism. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Harding, S (1990). Feminism, science, and the anti-Enlightenment critiques. In Nicholson, S (ed) Feminism/Postmodernism. London: Routledge.

Harding, S (1997). Comment on Heckman's "Truth and method: Feminist standpoint theory revisited": Whose standpoint needs the regimes of truth and reality? Signs 22/2, 382-390.

Hargreaves, Jennifer (1990). Gender on the sports agenda. International Review for the Sociology of Sport 25, 287-305.

Hargreaves, Jennifer (1994). Sporting Females: Critical Issues in the History and Sociology of Women's Sports. London: Routledge.

Hargreaves, Jennifer (2000). Heroines of Sport: The Politics of Difference and Identity. London: Routledge.

Hargreaves, John (1986). Sport, Power and Culture. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Harris, J.R (1998). The Nurture Assumption. New York: Free Press.

Harris, J (1999). Lie back and think of England: The women of Euro 96. Journal of Sport and Social Issues 23/2, 96-110.

Harris, J (2002). 'No you can't play, you're a girl': Some primary school recollections of female football players'. The Bulletin of Physical Education 38/3, 161-178.

Harris, J (2005). The image problem in women's football. Journal of Sport & Social Issues 29/2, 184-197.

Harris, J & Clayton, B (2002). Femininity, masculinity, physicality and the English tabloid press: The case of Anna Kournikova. International Review for the Sociology of Sport 37/3, 397-413.

Harstock, N.C.M (1997). Comment on Heckman's "Truth and method: Feminist standpoint theory revisited": Truth or justice? Signs 22/2, 367-374.

Hartmann, H (1981). The unhappy marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a more progressive union. In L Sargent (ed) Women and Revolution: The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism. London: Pluto Press.

Hasbrook, C.A (1999). Young children's social constructions of physicality and gender. In J Coakley & P Donnelly (eds) Inside Sports. London: Routledge.

Heckman, S (1997). Truth and Method: Feminist Standpoint Theory Revisited. Signs 22/2, 341-366.

Henry, J.M & Comeaux, H.P (1999). Gender egalitarianism in coed sport: A case study of American soccer. International Review for the Sociology of Sport 34/3, 277-290.

Heywood, L & Drake, J (eds) (1997). Third Wave Agenda: Being Feminist, Doing Feminism. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Heywood, L & Dworkin, S.L (2003). Built to Win: The Female Athlete as Cultural Icon. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Hill, M & Tisdall, K (1997). Children & Society. London: Longman.

Hirschmann, N.J (2007). Feminist political philosophy. In L.M Alcoff & E.F Kittay (eds) Feminist Philosophy. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Hjelm, J & Olofsson, E (2004). A breakthrough: Women's football in Sweden. In F Hong & J.A Mangan (eds) Soccer, Women, Sexual Liberation: Kicking Off a New Era. London: Frank Cass.

Hoeber (2008). Gender equity for athletes: Multiple understandings of an organizational value. Sex Roles 58, 58-71.

Holland, J & Ramazanoglu, C (1994). Power and interpretation in researching young women's sexuality. In M Maynard & J Purvis (eds) Researching Women's Lives From a Feminist Perspective. London: Taylor & Francis.

Hollway, W (1984). Gender differences and the production of the subject. In J Henriques et al (eds) Changing the Subject. London: Methuen.

Hong, F (2004). Soccer: A world of sport for women. In F Hong & J.A Mangan (eds) Soccer, Women, Sexual Liberation: Kicking Off a New Era. London: Frank Cass.

Hopkins, S (2001). Passing rhythms: The wider origins and development of the Liverpool way. In John Williams, S Hopkins & C Long (eds) Passing Rhythms: Liverpool FC and the Transformation of Football. Oxford: Berg

Hovden, J (1999). Is it worth the price? Women's involvement in leadership and coaching in sport organisations in Norway. WSPAJ 8/1, 23-45.

Hovden, (2000a). Do women politicians make a difference to sport politics? Gender, ideological conflicts, and power in Norwegian Sport Organisations. Paper presented at Pre-Olympic Congress: International Congress on Sport Science, Sport Medicine and Physical Education. Brisbane: Australia, 7th-13th September.

Hovden, J (2000b). Gender and leadership selection processes in Norwegian sporting organisations. International Review for the Sociology of Sport 35/1, 75-82.

Hovden, J (2000c). "Heavyweight" men and younger women? The gendering of selection processes in Norwegian sport organisations. NORA 1/8, 17-32.

Hoye, R & Stewart, B (2002). Power and organisational change: The case of the Melbourne Women's Hockey Association, 1995-1998. Sporting Traditions 18/2, 47-65.

Humberstone, B (1990). Warriors or wimps? Creating alternative forms of Physical Education. In M.A Messner & D.F Sabo (eds) Sport, Men and the Gender Order. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Humphrey, J (1994). Brazil and the World Cup: Triumph and despair. In J Sugden & A Tomlinson (eds) Hosts and Champions: Soccer Cultures, National Identities and the USA World Cup. Aldershot: Arena.

Jäger, S (2001). Discourse as knowledge: theoretical and methodological aspects of a critical discourse and dispositive analysis. In R. Wodak & M. Meyer (eds) Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis. London: Sage.

James, D (2007). China events have got us boys talking about the girls. The Observer 16th September 2007. <http://football.guardian.co.uk/comments/story/0,,2170132,00.html>
First accessed 18/9/2007.

Jarvie, G & Maguire, J (1994). Sport and Leisure in Social Thought. London: Routledge.

Jeans, R (2001). An Examination of the Barriers Affecting Female Rugby Players. Unpublished MSc. dissertation, University of Sheffield.

Jones, A (1997). Teaching post-structuralist feminist theory in education: Student resistances. Gender and Education 9/3, 261-269.

Kane, M.J & Greendorfer, S.L (1994). The media's role in accommodating and resisting stereotyped images of women in Sport. In P.J Creedon (ed) Women, Media and Sport: Challenging Gender Values. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kay, T (1995). Women and Sport: A Review of Research. The Sports Council.

Keddie, A (2005). On fighting and football: Gender justice and theories of identity construction. International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education 18/4, 425-444.

Kehily, M.J (2001). Issues of gender and sexuality in schools. In B Francis & C Skelton (eds) Investigating Gender: Contemporary Perspectives in Education. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Keller, E.F (1990). Gender and science. In J.M Nielson (ed) Feminist Research Methods. Colorado: Westview Press.

Kelly, F (2001). David Beckham: Portrait of a Superstar. London: Scholastic.

Kenway, J & Willis, S (1997). Answering Back: Girls, Boys, and Feminism in Schools. London: Routledge.

Kessel, A (2007a). All we are saying is give us a chance. The Observer 9th September 2007. <http://observer.guardian.co.uk/sport/story/0,,2165587,00.html> First accessed 10/9/2007.

Kessel, A (2007b). 'Beautiful game, beautiful goals'. Guardian Unlimited 11th September, 2007. http://football.guardian.co.uk/News_story/0,,2166688,00.htm First Accessed 18/9/2007.

Keyworth, S & Smith, F (2003). C'mon PE(TE) it's time to get changed for dance. In Hayes, S & Stridder, G (eds) Equity and Inclusion in Physical Education and Sport. London: Routledge.

Kirk, D (2002). Physical Education: A gendered history. In D Penney (ed) Gender and Physical Education: Contemporary Issues and Future Alternatives. London: Routledge.

Knoppers, A (1987). Gender and the coaching profession. Quest 39, 9-22.

Knoppers, A & Anthonissen, A (2001). Meanings given to performance in Dutch sport organisations: Gender and racial/ethical subtexts. Sociology of Sport Journal 18, 302-316.

Knoppers, A & Anthonissen, A (2008). Gendered managerial discourses in sport organizations: Multiplicity and complexity. Sex Roles 58, 93-103.

Krane, V (2001). We can be athletic and feminine, but do we want to? Challenging hegemonic femininity in women's sport. Quest 53, 115-133.

Lapadat, J C & Lindsay, A C (1999). Transcription in research and practice: From standardisation of technique to interpretive positionings. Qualitative Inquiry 5/1, 64-86.

Lather, P (1991). Getting Smart: Feminist Research & Pedagogy with/in the Postmodern. London: Routledge.

Leighton, T (2007). Cost-cutting Charlton scrap women's team. The Observer 24th June 2007. <http://football.guardian.co.uk/womensfootball/story/0,,2109931,00.html> First accessed 25/06/2007.

Lenskyj, H. J (1991). Women, Sport and Physical Activity (2nd ed). Government of Canada.

Lenskyj, (1994). Sexuality and femininity in sport contexts: Issues and alternatives. Journal of Sport & Social Issues 18, 356-376.

Lenskyj, H. J (1998). 'Inside Sport' or 'One The Margins'? Australian women and the sport media. International Review for the Sociology of Sport 33/1, 19-32.

Lines, G & Stridder, G (2003). Reflections on the mixed- and single-sex PE debate. In S Hayes & G Stridder (eds) Equity and Inclusion in Physical Education and Sport. London: Routledge.

Linton, R (1989). Toward a feminist research method. In A.M Jaggar & S.R Bordo (eds) Gender/Body/Knowledge: Feminist Reconstructions of Being and Knowing. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Liston, K (2006). Women's soccer in the Republic of Ireland: Some preliminary sociological comments. Soccer and Society 2-3, 364-384.

Lloyd, M (2005). Beyond Identity Politics: Feminism, Power and Politics. London: Sage.

Longman, J (2001). The Girls of Summer: The U.S. Women's Soccer Team and How it Changed the World. New York: HarperCollins.

Lopez, S (1997). Women on the Ball. London: Scarlet Press.

Lorraine, T (2007). Feminism and post-structuralism: A Deluzian approach. In L.M Alcoff & E.F Kittay (eds) Feminist Philosophy. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Macdonald, M, Kirk, D, Metzler, M, Nilges, L.M, Schmepp, P & Wright, J (2002). It's all very well, in theory: Theoretical perspectives and their applications in contemporary pedagogical research. Quest 54, 133-156.

Markovits, A.S & Hellerman, S.L (2004). Women's soccer in the United States: Yet another American 'exceptionalism'. In F Hong & J.A Mangan (eds) Soccer, Women, Sexual Liberation: Kicking Off a New Era. London: Frank Cass.

Marshall, C (2000). Policy discourse analysis: Negotiating gender equity. Journal of Education Policy 15/2, 125-156.

Maynard, M (1994). Methods, practice and epistemology: The debate about feminism and research. In M Maynard & J Purvis (eds) Researching Women's Lives From a Feminist Perspective. London: Taylor & Francis.

Maynard, M & Purvis, J (eds) (1994). Researching Women's Lives from a Feminist Perspective. London: Taylor & Francis

McLennan, G (1992). The enlightenment project revisited. In S Hall, D Held & T McGrew (eds) Modernity and its Futures. London: Open University Press.

McKay, J (1997). Managing Gender: Affirmative Action and Organisational Power in Australian, Canadian and New Zealand Sport. Albany: State of New York Press.

Meân, L (2001). Identity and discursive practice: Doing gender on the football pitch. Discourse & Society 12/6, 789-815.

Measor, L & Sikes, P.J (1992). Gender and Schools. London: Cassell.

Meis, M (1999). Towards a methodology for feminist research. In Bryman, A (ed) Qualitative Research. London: Sage.

Melling, A (1998). 'Ray of the Rovers': The working-class heroine in popular football fiction, 1915-25. The International Journal of the History of Sport 15/1, 97-122.

Melling, A (1999). 'Plucky Lasses', 'Pea Soup' and Politics: The role of ladies football during the 1921 miners' lock-out in Wigan and Leigh. The International Journal of the History of Sport. 16/1, 38-64.

Mennesson, C (2000). 'Hard' women and 'soft' women: The social construction of identities among female boxers. International Review for the Sociology of Sport 35/1, 21-33.

Mennesson, C & Clement, J.P (2003). Homosociability and homosexuality: The case of soccer played by women. International Review for the Sociology of Sport 38/3, 311-330.

Messner, M.A (1988). Sports and male domination: The female athlete as contested ideological terrain. Sociology of Sport Journal 5, 197-211.

Messner, M.A (1992). Power at Play – Sports and the Problem of Masculinity. Boston: Beacon Press.

Messner, M.A (2000). Barbie Girls versus Sea Monsters: Children constructing gender. Gender & Society 14/6, 765-784.

Messner, M.A (2002). Taking the Field: Women, Men and Sports. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Messner, M.A, Duncan, M.C, & Cooky, C (2003). Silence, sports bras, and wrestling porn: Women in televised sports news and highlight shows. Journal of Sport and Social Issues 27/1, 38-51.

Messner, M.A & Sabo, D (eds) (1990). Sport, Men, and the Gender Order. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Messner, M & Sabo, D (1994). Sex, Violence and Power in Sport.

Meyer, M (2001). Between theory, method and politics: Positioning of the approaches to CDA. In R. Wodak & M. Meyer (eds) Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis. London: Sage.

Meyerson, D.E & Kolb, D.M (2000). Moving out of the “armchair”: Developing a framework to bridge the gap between feminist theory and practice. Organisation 7, 553-571.

Miller, L & Penz, O (1991). Talking bodies: Female bodybuilders colonise a male preserve. Quest 43, 148-163.

Mills, S (1997). Discourse. London: Routledge.

Morley, L (1995). The micropolitics of women's studies: Feminism and organisational change in the academy. M Maynad & J Purvis (eds) (Hetero)sexual Politics. London: Taylor & Francis.

National Curriculum Online (2004). <http://www.nc.uk.net/nc/contents/aboutcurr2.htm>
First accessed 4/5/2004.

Nentwich, J. C (2006). Changing gender: The discursive construction of equal opportunities. Gender, Work & Organisation 13/6, 499-521.

Newsham, G.J (1997). In a League of Their Own! The Dick, Kerr Ladies Football Club. London: Scarlet Press.

Nielsen, J M (ed) (1990) Feminist Research Methods. Colorado: Westview Press.

Nixon, H (1996). The relationship of friendship networks, sports experiences, and gender to expressed pain thresholds. Sociology of Sport Journal 13, 78-86.

Nylund, D (2003). Taking a slice at sexism: The controversy over the exclusionary membership practices of the Augusta national golf club. Journal of Sport and Social Issues 27/2, 195-202.

Oakley, A (1972). Sex, Gender and Society. London: Temple Smith

Obel, C (1996). Collapsing gender in competitive bodybuilding: Researching contradictions and ambiguity in sport. International Review for the Sociology of Sport 31/2, 185-202.

Peatcher, C (2000). Changing School Subjects: Power, Gender and Curriculum. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Paechter, C (2001). Using poststructuralist ideas in gender theory and research. In B Francis and C Skelton (eds) Investigating Gender: Contemporary Perspectives in Education. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Pelak, C.F (2002). Women's collective identity formation in sports: A case study from Women's Ice Hockey. Gender & Society 16/1, 93-114.

Pfister, G (2004). The challenges of women's football in East and West Germany: A comparative study. In F Hong & J.A Mangan (eds) Soccer, Women, Sexual Liberation: Kicking Off a New Era. London: Frank Cass.

Pfister, G, Fasting, K, Scraton, S & Vasquez, B (2002). Women and football – a contradiction? The beginnings of women's football in four European countries. In S. Scraton & A. Flintoff (eds) Gender and Sport: A Reader. London: Routledge.

Pirinen, R (1997). Catching up with men? Finnish newspaper coverage of women's entry into traditionally male sports. International Review for the Sociology of Sport 32/3, 239-249.

Pomerleau, A, Bolduc, D, Malcuit, G, & Cossette L (1990). Pink or blue: Environmental gender stereotypes in the first two years of life. Sex Roles 22, 359-367.

Ramazanoglu, C & Holland, J (2002). Feminist Methodology: Challenges and Choices. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Randhawa, K (2003). Netball gets the boot as more girls bend it like Beckham. The Daily Mail 17-03-2003.

Reinharz, S (1992). Feminist Methods in Social Research. New York: Oxford University Press.

Rich, A (1980). Compulsory heterosexuality and lesbian existence. Signs 5/4, 631-660.

Rich, E (2001). Gender positioning in Teacher Education in England: New rhetoric, old realities. International Studies in Sociology of Education 11/2, 131-155.

Rich, E (2002). Strong Words, Tough Minds, Trained Bodies. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Loughborough University.

Rich, E (2005). Young women, feminist identities and neo-liberalism. Women's Studies International Forum 28, 495-508.

Rogers, M.F (1999). Barbie Culture. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Rowe, D (1998). Play up? Rethinking power and resistance in sport. Journal of Sport and Social Issues 22/3, 241-251.

Russell, D (1997). Football and the English: A Social History of Association Football in England, 1863-1995. Preston: Carnegie.

Sabo, D (1988). Psychosocial impacts of athletic participation on American women: Facts and fables. Journal of Sport and Social Issues 12/2, 83-96.

Sage, G.H (1999). Justice Do It! The Nike Transnational Advocacy Network: Organisation, collective actions, and outcomes. Sociology of Sport Journal 16/3, 206-235.

Scambler, G & Jennings, M (1998). On the periphery of the sex industry: Female combat, male punters, and feminist discourse. Journal of Sport and Social Issues 22/4, 416-430.

Scruton, S (1992). Shaping Up To Womanhood: Gender and Girls' Physical Education. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Scruton, S (1993). Equality, coeducation and Physical Education in secondary schooling. In J Evans (ed) Equality, Education and Physical Education. London: The Falmer Press.

Scraton, S, Caudwell, J & Holland, S (2005). 'Bend it like Patel': Centring 'race', ethnicity and gender in feminist analysis of women's football in England. International Review for the Sociology of Sport 40/1, 71-88.

Scraton, S, Fasting, K, Pfister, G & Bunual, A (1999). It's still a man's game? The experiences of top-level European women footballers. International Review for the Sociology of Sport 34/2, 99-111.

Scraton, S & Flintoff, A (2002). Sport feminism: The contribution of feminist thought to our understandings of gender and sport. In S Scraton & A Flintoff (eds) Gender and Sport: A Reader. London: Routledge.

Sharp, R (2006). Football manager demands ban on women referees. The Observer 12th November 2006. http://football.guardian.co.uk/News_Story/0,,1946044,00.html First accessed 13/11/2006.

Shakib, S & Dunbar, M.D (2002). The social construction of female and male high school basketball participation: Reproducing the gender order through a two-tiered sporting institution. Sociological Perspectives 45/4, 353-378.

Shaw, S (2006). Gender suppression in New Zealand Regional Sport Trusts. Women in Management Review 21/7, 554-566.

Shaw, S (2007). Touching the intangible? An analysis of *The Equity Standard: A Framework for Sport*. Equal Opportunities International 26/5, 420-434.

Shaw, S & Frisby, W (2006). Can gender equity be more equitable?: Promoting an alternative frame for sport management research, education, and practice. Journal of Sport Management 20, 483-509.

Shaw, S & Hoerber, L (2003). "A strong man is direct and a direct women is a bitch": Analysing discourses of masculinity and femininity and their impact on employment roles in sport organisations. Journal of Sport Management 17, 347-376.

Shaw, S & Penney, D (2003). Gender equity policies in National Governing Bodies: An oxymoron or a vehicle for change? European Sport Management Quarterly 3/2, 78-102.

Shaw, S & Slack, T (2002). 'It's been like that for donkey's years': The construction of gender relations and the cultures of sports organisations. Culture, Sport & Society 5/1, 86-106.

Short, G & Carrington, B (1989). Discourse on gender: The perceptions of children aged between six and eleven. In C Skelton (ed) Whatever Happens to Little Women? Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Shotton, P.A, Amour, K.M & Potrac, P (1998). An ethnographic study of gender influences on social behaviour of members at a private golf club. Sociology of Sport Online 1/2. <http://physed.otago.ac.nz/sosol/v1i2/v1i2s1.htm> First accessed 15/12/2003.

Sisjord, M (1997). Wrestling with Gender: A study of young female and male wrestlers' experiences of physicality. International Review for the Sociology of Sport 32/4, 433-438.

Skeggs, B (1994). Situating the production of feminist ethnography. In M Maynard & J Purvis (eds) Researching Women's Lives From a Feminist Perspective. London: Taylor & Francis.

Skelton, C (2000). A passion for football: Dominant masculinities and primary schooling. Sport, Education and Society 5/1, 5-18.

Smith, D.E (1987). The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology. Boston: Northeastern University Press.

Smith, D.E (1997). Comment on Heckman's "Truth and method: feminist standpoint theory revisited". Signs 22/2, 392-397.

Smith, R (1996). Sexual constructions and lesbian identity. In T Cosslett, A Easton & P Summerfield (eds) Women, Power and Resistance: An Introduction to Women's Studies. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Stacey, J & Thorne, B (1985). The missing feminist revolution in sociology. Social Problems 32, 301-316.

Stanley, L (1990). Feminist Praxis: Research, Theory and Epistemology in Feminist Sociology. New York: Routledge.

Stanley, L & Wise, S (1990). Method, methodology and epistemology in feminist research processes. In L Stanley (ed) Feminist Praxis: Research, Theory and Epistemology in Feminist Sociology. London: Routledge.

Stanley, L & Wise, S (1993). Breaking Out Again: Feminist Ontology and Epistemology. London: Routledge.

Sugden, J & Tomlinson, A (1994). Soccer culture, national identity, and the World Cup. In J Sugden & A Tomlinson (eds) Hosts and Champions: Soccer Cultures, National Identities and the USA World Cup. Aldershot: Arena.

Sunderland, J (2004). Gendered Discourses. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Swain, J (2000). 'The money's good, the fame's good, the girls are good': The role of playground football in the construction of young boys' masculinity in a junior school. British Journal of Sociology of Education 21/2, 95-109.

Talbot, M (1988). Beating them at their own game? In E Wimbush & M Talbot (eds) Relative Freedoms: Women and Leisure. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Talbot, M (1993). A gendered physical education: Equality and sexism. In J Evans (ed) Equality, Education and Physical Education London: The Falmer Press (74-89).

Talbot, M (2002). Playing with patriarchy: The gendered dynamics of sports organisations. In S Scraton & A Flintoff (eds) Gender and Sport: A Reader. London: Routledge.

Taylor, S (2001). Locating and conducting discourse analytical research. In M Wetherell, S Taylor & S.J Yates (eds) Discourse as Data: A Guide for Analysis. London: Sage.

Therberge, N (1985). Toward a feminist alternative to sport as a male preserve. Quest 37, 193-202.

Therberge, N & Birrell, S (1994a). The sociological study of women and sport. In D.M Costa & S.R Guthrie (eds) Women and Sport - Interdisciplinary Perspectives. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Therberge, N & Birrell, S (1994b). Structural constraints facing women in sport. In D.M Costa & S.R Guthrie (eds) Women and Sport: Interdisciplinary Perspectives. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Therberge, N (1997). Its part of the game: Physicality and the production of gender in women's hockey. Gender & Society 11, 69-87.

Therberge, N (2002). Challenging the gendered space of sport: Women's ice hockey and the struggle for legitimacy. In S Scraton & A Flintoff (eds) Gender and Sport: A Reader. London: Routledge.

Thing, L.F (2000). The female warrior: Meanings of play-aggressive emotions in sport. International Review for the Sociology of Sport 36/3, 275-288.

Thompson, S (1994). Challenging the hegemony: New Zealand women's opposition to rugby and the reproduction of a capitalist patriarchy. In S Birrell & C.L Cole (eds) Women, Sport and Culture. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Thompson, S (2002). Sport, gender, feminism. In J Maguire & K Young (eds) Theory, Sport and Society. Oxford: Elsevier Press.

Thorne, B (1993). Gender Play: Girls and Boys in School. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Titscher, S, Meyer, M, Wodak, R & Vetter, E (2000). Methods of Text and Discourse Analysis. London: Sage.

Volman, M & Ten Dam, G (1998). Equal but different: Contradictions in the development of gender identity in the 1990's. British Journal of Sociology of Education 19/4, 529-545.

Walsh, C (2001). Gender and Discourse: Language and Power in Politics, the Church and Organisations. Longman: London.

Wedgewood, N (2004). Kicking like a boy: Schoolgirl Australian Rules Football and bi-gendered female embodiment. Sociology of Sport Journal 21, 140-162.

Weedon, C (1987). Feminist Practice & Poststructuralist Theory. Oxford: Blackwell.

Weedon, C (1999). Feminism, Theory and the Politics of Difference. Oxford: Blackwell.

Wesely, J.K (2001). Negotiating gender: Bodybuilding and the natural/unnatural continuum. Sociology of Sport Journal 18/2, 162-180.

West, C & Zimmerman, D (2002). Doing gender. In S Fenstermaker & C West (eds) Doing Gender, Doing Difference: Inequality, Power, and Institutional Change. New York: Routledge, pp 3-23.

Westkott, M (1990). Feminist criticism of the social sciences. In J.M Nielson (ed) Feminist Research Methods. Colorado: Westview Press.

Whaley, S (2003). Why I'm playing: A first-person account from the first woman to qualify for a PGA Tour event. Sports Illustrated: Golf Online January 2003.
<http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/golfonline/whaley/jan03/> First accessed 10/11/2003.

Wheatley, E.E (1994). Subcultural subversions: Comparing discourses on sexuality in men's and women's rugby songs. In S Birrell & C.L Cole (eds) Women, Sport and Culture. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Whisenant, W.A (2003). How women have fared as interscholastic athletic administrators since the passage of Title IX. Sex Roles 49/3, 179-184.

White, A & Brackenridge, C (1985). Who rules sport? Gender divisions in the power structure of British sports organisations from 1960. International Review for the Sociology of Sport 20, 95-106.

Whitson, D (2002). The embodiment of gender: Discipline, domination and empowerment. In S Scruton & A Flintoff (eds) Gender and Sport: A Reader. London: Routledge.

Whitson, D & Macintosh, D (1989). Gender and power: Explanations of gender inequalities in Canadian National Sport Organisations. International Review for the Sociology of Sport 24, 137-149.

Wigmore, S (1999). Well it just is, isn't it? – An examination of the masculine hegemony of sport. The Bulletin of Physical Education 35/1, 14-22.

Wilkes, D (2006). Gambler, womaniser, drinker and brawler. So that's why John Terry has been made captain of England. The Daily Mail 10th August 2007.
http://www.dailymail.co.uk/pages/live/articles/news/news.html?in_article_id=400034&in_page_id=1770&in_a_source First Accessed 19/9/2007.

Williams, A & Bedward, J (2002). Understanding girls' experience of Physical Education: Relational analysis and situational learning. In D Penney (ed) Gender and Physical Education: Contemporary Issues and Future Directions. London: Routledge.

Williams, Jean (2003). A Game for Rough Girls? A History of Women's Football in Britain. London: Routledge.

Williams, Jean (2004). The fastest growing sport? Women and football in England. In F Hong & J.A Mangan (eds) Soccer, Women, Sexual Liberation: Kicking Off a New Era. London: Frank Cass.

Williams, John & Woodhouse, J (1991). Can play, will play? Women and football in Britain. In John Williams & S Wagg (eds) British Football and Social Change: Getting into Europe. Leicester University Press.

Williams, Z (2006). The acceptable face of sexism? The Guardian 14th November, 2006. http://football.guardian.co.uk/News_Story/0,,1947293,00.html First accessed 17/11/2006.

Williamson, D.J (1991). Belles of the Ball. Devon: R&D Associates.

Wilson, F.M (2003). Organisational Behaviour and Gender (2nd ed). Aldershot, Hants: Ashgate Publishing.

Winner, D (2000). Brilliant Orange: The Neurotic Genius of Dutch Football. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Wodak, R (2001a). What CDA is about – a summary of its history, important concepts and developments. In R. Wodak & M. Meyer (eds) Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis. London: Sage.

Wodak, R (2001b). The discourse-historical approach. In R. Wodak & M. Meyer (eds) Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis. London: Sage.

Wood, E, Desmarais, S & Gugula, S (2002). The impact of parenting experience on gender stereotyped toy play of children. Sex Roles 47, 39-49.

Woodhouse, D & Williams, J (1999). Offside? The Position of Women in Football. Reading: South Street Press.

Wright, G (1999). Changing gendered practices in physical education: Working with teachers. European Physical Education Review 5/3, 181-197.

Wright, G & Clarke, G (1999). Sport, the media and the construction of compulsory heterosexuality: A case study of women's rugby union. International Review for the Sociology of Sport 34/3, 227-243.

Young, K (1997). Women, sport and physicality: Preliminary findings from a Canadian study. International Review for the Sociology of Sport 32/3, 297-305.

Young, K & White, P (1995). Sport, physical danger and injury: The experiences of elite women athletes. Journal of Sport and Social Issues 19/1, 45-61.

APPENDIX 1: NEWSPAPER ARTICLE, SEPTEMBER 2007

CHINA EVENTS HAVE GOT US BOYS TALKING ABOUT THE GIRLS

David James: The Observer, Sunday September 16, 2007

<http://football.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,,2170132,00.html>

As the England boys prepared to face Russia on Wednesday, there was only one topic of conversation going round the dinner table: how the women had fared against Japan the previous day. It was good to hear all the lads talking about it, along with the other results from the Women's World Cup. I suppose most people don't expect we'd be interested.

It really winds me up. Even when I was collared to film a good-luck message for the girls, after the Israel game, the guy started explaining the tournament and all the fixtures to me. I thought, 'I know, that's why I'm doing a good luck message, I do follow their games.' Both of England's matches were of excellent quality. Although it was frustrating watching them miss their chances against Japan, the defensive performance against Germany on Friday was immense. We had the game on in the Portsmouth changing rooms and then in the canteen, and all the apprentices sat there watching the second half. There were some John Terryesque clearances and tackles going in from the England back line, Birgit Prinz barely had a chance. As for our keeper, Rachel Brown, she kept England in the match. The save right at the end, with her foot, was top drawer.

People are often surprised to hear that I've been a fan of the women's game for some time. I took my sons to watch the European Championship in 2005, and they loved it, although one of them did say to me: 'Dad, she looks like a man,' about one of the foreign players. I had a bit of a job explaining that one.

I keep in touch with a few of the England girls because our paths have crossed through work. I met Rachel Yankey at an England kit photoshoot and we've stayed in touch ever since. I took her photo on my phone so I could sketch her and text it over, and we had a good chat the week before the tournament started. I've had long discussions with Hope Powell about coaching and I remember standing on the sidelines a few years back on a cold and rainy day watching the England girls train ahead of the Euros.

The women's World Cup is inspirational for young girls, so it's really important that they are able to watch the games and hear about what's going on out there. My partner's daughter - she's only seven- keeps saying to me she wants to be a footballer when she grows up. I've already got her the Pompey kit, so I'll have to get her an England one now as well.

For young girls to be watching a player the quality of Kelly Smith can only be a good thing. All the England lads were saying it after the Japan game - she is a phenomenal player; with her positioning on the ball, she wouldn't look out of place in a men's side. One of the lads put it deftly when he said: 'She's a manly player - without looking at all manly,' which made me chuckle. She's definitely the real deal. Come on, England, we're all backing you to beat Argentina tomorrow.

APPENDIX 2a: COVERING LETTER

Hello

I am writing to ask for your help with a piece of research I am doing about what it is like for women currently playing football in the UK. The first part of my research involves finding out about the structure and organisation of women's football, in particular how closely associated it is with men's football. To find this out, I am conducting a survey of all female football clubs in the Midlands region to get an idea of how involved they are with a men's club, and what implications this involvement may have for the clubs.

I have enclosed the short questionnaire, which shouldn't take you more than ten minutes to fill in. Most questions just require you to tick a box, but some ask you to try and explain your answer by adding more detailed comments. Please try and complete the questions as fully as possible, telling me as much as you can about your club. When you have finished, please return the questionnaire to me in the stamped addressed envelope provided. I would appreciate it if you could return it by the *****.

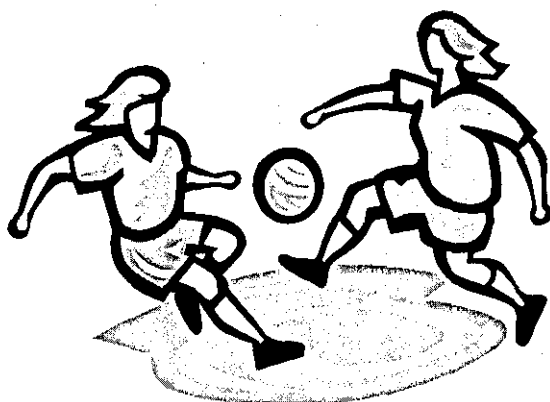
All answers you give are confidential. I can ensure you that any comments you make will simply be added to everyone else's comments, and separated from the person that they were made by. Also I would like to stress that this research is not funded by or connected in any way to the Football Association, and therefore any information that you give me is for the sole use of this project, so please be confident that you can be honest with your answers and comments.

Thank you for your time, and I look forward to receiving your responses. I hope that you find the questionnaire interesting to complete, and enjoy voicing your opinion on the sport that you are involved in, and probably takes up a great deal of your time. By the end of my study I hope to make recommendations about the future of women's football, so please see this as an opportunity to highlight your opinions on the sport, including any strengths *and* weaknesses.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Kind regards

Joanna Welford
J.Welford@lboro.ac.uk



APPENDIX 2b: QUESTIONNAIRE



SECTION 1: CLUB PROFILE



About you and your club.....

1.1 Your Name: _____ 1.2 Your role at club: _____

1.3 No. of years at this club: _____ years 1.4 No. of years playing football: _____ years

1.5 Name of current club: _____

1.6 Previous club(s) played/worked for: _____

1.7 When and how was your current women's football club formed?

1.8 Have you had any major changes in your club set up? (eg name changes, merges)

1.9 How many players are currently registered at your club? (all female teams, inc juniors): _____

1.10 What teams does your club offer? *Please tick all that apply*

Seniors ☐ Reserves ☐ 'A'/Development ☐ U-16 ☐ U-14 ☐ U-12 ☐
Other(s) ☐ (*please specify:*) _____

1.11 How is your club managed? Eg committee positions & team(s) management:

1.12 How is your club coached? Eg do you have one coach for all teams, or a number of coaches?

1.13 Number of male coaches at club: _____ Number of female coaches at club: _____



SECTION 2: LINKS WITH A MALE FOOTBALL CLUB



This section intends to find out what kind of links your club has with a male football club, if any. Being 'linked' with a male club refers to any type of assistance or association you may have with a male club, for example occasional help, use of facilities, or being fully integrated into the club. If you do not know the set-up of your club, please feel free to ask someone who does to help you.

2.1 Is your club currently linked to a male football club in any way?

Yes ☐ No ☐ *if yes, please move to question 2.5*

2.2 Have you ever tried to make links with a male football club?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, could you explain what happened?

2.3 Why do you have no links with a male club? Eg lack of opportunity, do not want any

2.4 Do you see your club becoming linked to a male club in the future?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If you currently have no links with a male football club, please move onto Section 3 (p4).

If your club is linked to two separate male clubs, eg if your reserve team or juniors play at a male club's ground that is a different club to the one that supports your first team, please detail the second club on the extra sheet enclosed. Use this section for the main supporting male club.

2.5 For how many years have you been linked to this male club? _____ years

2.6 What kind of practical support do you currently receive from this club, either occasionally or regularly (on a weekly or yearly basis)? Please tick the appropriate boxes

	Regularly	Occasionally	Never
Financial Grant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use of pitch	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use of training facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Playing kit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Help with sponsorship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coaching/other staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Training equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clubhouse/social facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

2.7 What are the benefits of this support to your club?

2.8 Has this assistance ever created any problems for your club? If so, what kind?

2.9 Do you receive any promotional assistance? Eg in the male teams' programme or website?

Programme: Yes ☐ No ☐

Website: Yes ☐ No ☐ Other: _____

If so, what are the advantages and disadvantages of this?

2.10 Do you receive any non-practical assistance from the male club or its members? Eg support at matches?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, what are the advantages and disadvantages of this?

2.11 If you have junior girls teams at your club, do they play mixed or single-sex?

Mixed ☐ Single-sex ☐ Both ☐ No girls teams at club ☐

If mixed-sex football is played at your club, up to what age does this occur? _____

2.12 Are you satisfied with the amount of support your club receives from the male club?

Yes ☐ No ☐

2.13 Do you think anything could be done to improve links between your club and the male club, and the support you receive as a result of these links?



SECTION 3: THE MANAGEMENT OF WOMEN'S

FOOTBALL

This section intends to find out your opinions on the running of women's football in the UK, based on the experiences of your club. You are reminded that answers are confidential and any comments made will not be connected to you as an individual or club.

3.1 How would you rate the organisation and management of women's football on a regional level (in your county only), by your regional Football Association? (1 = Excellent, 5 = Very poor)

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ not sure ☐

3.2 How would you rate the organisation and management of women's football overall, on a national level, by the Football Association? (1 = Excellent, 5 = Very poor)

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ not sure ☐

3.3 What do you think are the advantages of women's football being run by the Football Association?

3.4 What do you think are the disadvantages of women's football being run by the Football Association?

3.5 Please indicate how aware you are of the following Football Association initiatives, and please use the space below to make any comments on them that you may have:

➤ The 'pyramid' structure currently being applied to women's football to match the organisation of men's football?

Very familiar with ☐ Heard of ☐ Not heard of ☐ Not sure ☐

➤ The FA's aim to increase the professionalisation of women's football?

Very familiar with ☐

Heard of ☐

Not heard of ☐

Not sure ☐

➤ Efforts made by the FA to increase the number of women and girls playing football?

Very familiar with ☐

Heard of ☐

Not heard of ☐

Not sure ☐

3.6 What sort of impact do you think the Football Association have had on the organisation and management of women's football?

Positive impact ☐

No impact ☐

Negative impact ☐

Not sure ☐

Do you have any comments on this, regardless of your answer?

3.7 What changes or future developments would you like to see for the future of women's football, if any?

3.8 Would you say that you usually have male referees for your matches?

Yes ☐ No ☐

3.9 How happy are you generally with the standard of refereeing for your matches? (1= Very happy, 5= Very Unhappy)

1 ☐

2 ☐

3 ☐

4 ☐

5 ☐

not sure ☐

3.10 Would you like to see more female referees in women's football?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Not sure ☐



SECTION 4: ANY FURTHER COMMENTS



Please use this space for any further comments you would like to make about the links between women's and men's football that you feel could be of benefit to this study, or any problems you have had that have not been covered in the first two sections. Please continue on a new page if necessary.



Thank you very much for your assistance in completing this questionnaire, all information provided is greatly appreciated and will be of significant help to my study. Following this survey, I am hoping to explore some of these issues more fully. If you would be willing to be contacted about this, please provide either an email address or phone number:

Email: _____ Phone Number: _____ Day ☐ Evening ☐

Again, many thanks, and good luck with the rest of the 2004-05 season.

APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

No rigid 'schedule' as such, took questionnaire in, started discussing responses then took it from there, often moved backwards and forwards, no particular ordering to discussions, topics as prompts rather than a schedule

Made sure club links/FA were covered, and talked about interviewees own role

Most areas of this schedule dependent on the role that the interviewee held

Introduce myself and background, introduction to study

Talk briefly about club – based on page one of questionnaire

How and when formed, if involved, what know about early days of club

Size of club, different teams

Junior section – how/why, of not why not, would you like one? Parents involved?

Current structure – committee, players?

Who coaches/manages etc, male/female coaches, where coaches come from

Successful club? – How success defined. Successful season? Talk about experiences

Growth/or not – where players come from, too many/not enough?

How is club financed – subs, fundraising, sponsorship, direct assistance

Future ambitions for club

Club links

When/how came about – why?

Any changes over history

Previous relationships – when/how ended/feelings about this

What relationship entails – what support received

Facilities – happy? How would this compare to not being linked

How male club feel towards you?

Support/watch each other?

Benefits/problems/improvements

Are links working?

Hopes for the future

Communication, interaction, involvement between clubs, coaching links/help

Do you and the male club have the same kit, ground, facilities, social events etc

How would your club run differently if you were not linked to a male club?

If not linked, how/why, where play, any problems, plans to link, how feel perceived as an independent club, benefits/problems of this

How would your club run differently if you were linked to a male club?

Role within club

What role is, what exactly entails on a day-to-day basis

Any other roles previously held

How did you get involved in the club

Coach/manage?

Representation on committees, past/present/future

Best/worst bits about role

What keeps you in the role/in football
Future in football
Support football? Especially if don't play

If play/played

Playing experiences – eg early experiences, current experiences, talk about season
Enjoy, what get out of playing, benefits, any problems

If coached...

Who/when – ages, boys/girls, men/women, how feel
Qualifications held
Coaching courses – experiences of these, mixed/female only, recommend?

If on committees...

When/where
Representation of women
How perceived as a woman
Feelings towards women's football
Influence decision-making?
Particular experiences
Enjoyable?

The FA

Why given ratings on questionnaire...on from there
Do you have any contact/interaction with FA? Eg speak to individuals, attend meetings
Perceptions or organisation
Help provided by FA – individually or in general
Advantages/disadvantages/improvements
How feel FA treat women's football – promotion etc
How do you think women's football would run independent of the FA? What would this look like? What would be the advantages/disadvantages of this?
Thoughts on pyramid structure, any other initiatives that have an effect
Any experiences pre-FA takeover
Charter/community standard – if hold, what are benefits of this, thoughts on initiative

Men's/women's football

Any differences?
If so, what...
Would you like to see the women's game moving closer to men's football?
Male/female coaches, either preferred? Why? Any differences
Perceptions of women in football/stereotypes/taken seriously
Junior football – thoughts on, reasons for growth, attitudes of boys/girls at club

Any other issues, if time, or if brought up by interviewee

England national squad – success or not, why, what would help
Professionalisation/elite women's leagues/players
Media and women's football
European Championship 2005 (interviews took place around time of competition) – did you get to any games? Watch on tv? Thoughts...
Refereeing – male/female, good/bad, different experiences, done any?
Anything else to add?

APPENDIX 4: SURVEY RESULTS

SECTION ONE: CLUB DEMOGRAPHICS

Interviewee Information

NUMBER OF YEARS AT CURRENT CLUB			
1-2	3-5	6-9	10+
9	16	19	10

NUMBER OF YEARS PLAYING FOOTBALL						
NONE	1-2	3-5	6-9	10-19	20+	NO ANS
12	0	8	6	17	10	2

NUMBER OF PREVIOUS CLUBS				
NONE	1	2-4	5+	NO ANSWER
21	18	4	4	8

POSITION HELD IN CLUB						
Secretary	Captain	Player	Treasurer	Manager/ coach	Chair/vice chair	Other
25	4	4	5	10	6	1

Club Information

HOW CURRENT CLUB WAS FORMED	
INDIVIDUAL	5
GROUP OF PLAYERS/PARENTS	15
FROM JUNIOR GIRLS TEAM	9
FROM BOYS/MEN'S CLUB	6
PREVIOUS CLUB FOLDED/LEFT OTHER CLUB	9
COMMUNITY/COUNCIL INITIATIVE	5
NO ANSWER	6

NUMBER OF YEARS CLUB HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED				
1-2	3-5	6-9	10+	NO ANSWER
10	6	18	12	9

ANY MAJOR CHANGES SINCE FORMATION				
NONE	MERGED WITH OTHER CLUB	NAME CHANGE	OTHER	NO ANSWER
26	15	9	4	1

NUMBER OF REGISTERED PLAYERS						
<30	31-50	51-75	76-100	101-150	150+	NO ANS
21	6	10	8	2	3	5

RANGE OF TEAMS OFFERED AT CLUB			
1 SENIOR TEAM ONLY	SENIOR + RESERVE TEAM	SENIOR(S) +1/2 JUNIORS	SENIOR(S) + LARGE JUNIOR RANGE (U10-U16)
19	2	7	27

NUMBER OF MALE COACHES AT CLUB				
0	1-2	3-5	6-9	10+
7	22	10	9	7

NUMBER OF FEMALE COACHES AT CLUB				
0	1-2	3-5	6-9	10+
11	24	13	6	1

(12 CLUBS HAD MORE FEMALE COACHES THAN MALE COACHES – 22%)

SECTION TWO: LINKS WITH MALE FOOTBALL CLUBS

LINKED STATUS OF CLUBS	
LINKED	INDEPENDENT
40 (73%)	15

If Independent...

ATTEMPTS TO MAKE LINKS		
TRIED	2	- didn't put as much effort in to organisation as women, were generally unreliable - played at ***** United's ground until club went into receivership so had to find alternative playing arrangements
NOT TRIED	13 (87%)	

REASON FOR INDEPENDENCE	
DON'T WANT LINKS	7 (54%)
DON'T NEED LINKS	2
HAVE TRIED TO MAKE LINKS	2
NO OPPORTUNITY	2
NO ANSWER	2

PLANS FOR LINKS IN FUTURE		
YES	NO	MAYBE
0	13 (87%)	2

If Linked...

BENEFITS OF SUPPORT				
	REGULARLY	OCCASIONALLY	NEVER	UNSPECIFIED
Use of pitch	24 (60%)	6	10 (25%)	0
Clubhouse/social facilities	24 (60%)	4	12	0
Playing kit	17 (43%)	9	14	0
Use of training facilities	20 (50%)	4	16	0
Help with sponsorship	9 (23%)	14	16	1
Coaching/other staff	12 (30%)	9	18	1
Training equipment	10 (25%)	8	22	0
Transport	7 (18%)	9	24	0
Financial grant	3 (7%)	8	28 (70%)	1
Other	Joint insurance, notepaper, pay for kit to be washed, physio, charity cup			

PERCEIVED BENEFITS OF BEING LINKED TO A MALE FOOTBALL CLUB	
(respondents could give more than one answer)	
Status/ Attention (19) (48%)	Attraction of players (7) Better image/publicity/exposure/profile (7) Marketing/Awareness/generate support through PR stuff (6) Use of name (4), eg 'Carrying name of pro club sometimes a benefit when talking to media' Status (3) Taken more seriously
Practical (16) (40%)	Free facilities (7) Pitch (4) Transport (3) Good quality pitch and training facilities (2) Kit Clubhouse after home games Indoor facilities Have benefited with practical help but not financial

Development (15) (38%)	Attraction of players (7) Coaching and support/Access to coaching courses (4) Shows progression for players (3) Helping to develop as a team/Player development (3) Male club has girls centre of excellence – one exit route from club Creates role models for youngsters
Financial (14) (35%)	Free facilities keeps cost down/Saves money (7) Financial benefits (4) Fund-raising (2) eg 'Introduced to people who can help with all aspects of fund-raising' Improved opportunities to obtain grants (2) Easier external sponsorship Better marketing
Organisational help/stability (9) (22%)	Enables both social & sport side of club to run smoothly/Stability (2) Knowledge and experience (2) Work together/All one club – any manager can help any team (2) Well-run club Good to have someone to help, saves time
Involvement (5) (13%)	Good community support/links (2) Matchday involvement All one club, any manager helps any team Feel part of club
None (4) (10%)	Not much/very little (2) None More of a benefit to men's club

PERCEIVED PROBLEMS CAUSED BY BEING LINKED TO A MALE FOOTBALL CLUB (respondents could give more than one answer)	
None (21)	No/none (20) Not to date
Practical (9)	Pitch (5) – eg 'Occasional match postponement when men's teams have wrecked pitch on a Sat ' 'Would be nice to play on 1 st team pitch sometimes rather than at training ground' Sometimes can't train at facilities Low priority with kit suppliers Have to have volunteers to upkeep promotional stuff – difficult to do
Financial (5)	Administration [of male club] directly affected amount of support Getting sponsorship (4) eg 'Leading businesses sponsor men's teams and assume that they in turn help us' 'Sponsors expect to get something in return from male club' Conflict of interest between media company & club (financial ties) Been turned down locally for grants as it was felt that male club should help us
Expectations (3)	Expected to help out with men but they give no support Pressured by men that do not put enough back in financially Formation of ladies team by men's manager has lead to some problems – men's team seem to think we are in competition for his attention & training facilities etc
Status (2)	Low priority with kit suppliers End up promoting male club more than they promote female team
Communication (2)	Players told one thing by manager then receives call from club saying otherwise Lack of communication, don't come to committee meetings
Other (2)	Non-practical support not given but expected Sometimes support on sides can be abusive, with negative comments

PROMOTIONAL ASSISTANCE RECEIVED (respondents could give more than one answer)	
YES PROGRAMME	26 (65%)
YES WEBSITE	19 (48%)
NOT ANSWERED	18

NON-PRACTICAL ASSISTANCE RECEIVED	
YES	20 (50%)
NO	15 (38%)
NOT ANSWERED	5

SATISFACTION WITH RELATIONSHIP	
YES	22 (55%)
NO	17 (42%)
MAYBE	1

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS (respondents could give more than one answer)	
None/none expected (20)	No/not really/not at present/happy (10) Difficult to get more help (4) Already integrated (2) Don't expect support Are invited to weekly meetings & get there when can (2) Don't have a bad relationship and every effort has been made to improve things, just think that ladies football isn't supported v well by male clubs
Financial (7)	Financial support (4) eg 'Keep trying but boils down to money' 'Don't see women as earning profit for club so reluctant with amount of financial support given' Would like more help with transport to cut costs Help to find sponsorship Don't understand how self-funding we are – have to pay for everything
Communication (6)	Communication could be improved (4) Get together more often (2)
Involvement (5)	More involvement/committee links (3) Their 4 teams get priority over 1 women's team in everything from refs to pitches Would like to get a fairer deal Lot of people feel that the men's section is only interested in the men and only want the ladies for lottery grant and money
Practical (3)	Better support in terms of kit and playing facilities Better training facilities in winter Would like more help with transport to cut costs
Development (3)	Would like to improve links between male club and youth set-up Help with qualified coaches Need to accept and encourage women's football more
Support (3)	Would like to be more socially linked Male players/committee members coming to matches Need to accept and encourage women's football more
Promotion (3)	Dedicated weekly page in the programme Women's football more commercially profiled eg tv Raise profile

SECTION THREE: THE MANAGEMENT OF WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

RATING FOR ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT OF WOMEN'S FOOTBALL BY LOCAL FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

1 (excellent)	2 (very good)	3 (average)	4 (poor)	5 (very poor)
1 (2%)	15 (27%)	18 (33%)	13 (24%)	8 (15%)

RATING FOR ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT OF WOMEN'S FOOTBALL BY NATIONAL FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

1 (excellent)	2 (very good)	3 (average)	4 (poor)	5 (very poor)
2 (4%)	20 (36%)	22 (33%)	8 (15%)	2 (4%)

PERCEIVED ADVANTAGES/BENEFITS OF WOMEN'S FOOTBALL RUN BY THE FA

(respondents could give more than one answer)

Status/Profile/ Visibility (18)	Publicity/promotion (8) Profile (5) More highly recognised Visibility Status
Organisational help/structure (15)	Unified/organised/successful structure for all teams (9) Co-ordinated approach (3) Control (2) Good communication links Monitoring
Developmental (14)	Better coaching/coach education/coaching opportunities (6) Support (4) Better opportunities (3) Finance available for development Equity and inclusion
Financial/resourc es (11)	Financial support (5) Greater funding/access to funding (4) Full time paid coaches that can get into schools to promote women's football Resources
Links to men's game (10)	Same opportunities as men/seen as equal (5) Run by same association as men (3) Treated like/compared to men (2)
Acceptance/ Respectability (9)	More respect from male football (5) Seen as equal to men (2) Taken more seriously (2) Acceptance by clubs/reputation (2)
Knowledge/ Experience (7)	Experienced management (3) Knowledge (3) Professional (2)
None/Not sure (6)	None (4) Not sure (2) Not many
No Answer (8)	No answer (8)

PERCEIVED DISADVANTAGES/PROBLEMS WITH WOMEN'S FOOTBALL RUN BY THE FA (respondents could give more than one answer)	
Assigned status/ priority (16)	Men/men's football get priority (8) Unequal support/treatment (4) Slower development/not taking enough responsibility for development (4) Not taken as seriously as men's football (2)
Male dominated/sexist/ traditional (13)	Don't listen to women (5) Traditional/rigid (3) Male dominated (2) Lack of female role models/women with a voice (2) Sexism Rigid with rule changes, can limit opportunities
Elitist (11)	Don't listen to/make right decisions for/promote grassroots level (5) 'Bigger/more popular' clubs recognised/favoured (4) Too elite
No/not sure (8)	None (5) Don't think there are any (2) Not sure Can't envisage it being run any other way
Organisation (7)	Haphazard development (5) Communication is poor Too bureaucratic
No understanding/ interest (6)	No interest/involvement (4) No knowledge/understanding (3)
Financial/ resources (5)	Not enough financial support (3) Not enough resources (2)
Treated like men (4)	Treated like men (3) Compared to men (2) Want a totally separate organisation
No Answer (13)	No answer (13)

FAMILIARITY WITH FA INITIATIVES				
INITIATIVE	VERY FAMILIAR	HEARD OF	NOT HEARD OF	NOT SURE
PYRAMID STRUCTURE	31	20	3	1
PROFESSIONALISATION	23	23	7	2
AIMS TO INCREASE PARTICIPATION	28	21	6	1

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS/FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS (respondents could give more than one answer)	
Category	Changes/Developments
Funding/resources (17)	Improved/more facilities (6) More financial help available to grass roots/struggling/small clubs (4) More/consistent funding in general (4) More fundraising/investment in varying sections (4) More funding for coaches, training etc (2)

Equality/more like men's football (11)	Moves towards a professional structure/status (6) Equality (3) Male coaches & managers becoming involved in the game Same fixture programme as boys
Development (11)	Increase in female coaches (4) More/accessible academies (3) Better developmental plans put in place/adhered to (2) More help & encouragement for girls to play football for enjoyment (2) Communication (2) Changes to age groups/boundaries (2) More qualified referees
Promotion (9)	More media/tv coverage/publicity (8) More advertised (3)
Female involvement (8)	More women on committees/higher levels of FA (4) More female coaches/paid (4) Equality in decision making
Organisation (8)	Better organised divisions of power/links between regional/national FA's (3) Better liaison between schools/clubs/academies (2) Changes to promotion & relegation (2) Needs to be a big shake-up
Acceptance/taken seriously (5)	Recognition (2) Taken more seriously (2) More respect
Not specified (9)	<i>Not specified (9)</i>

WHETHER CLUBS USUALLY HAD MALE REFEREES	
YES	54 (98%)
NO	1

RATINGS FOR GENERAL STANDARD OF REFEREES				
1 (very happy)	2 (happy)	3 (average)	4 (unhappy)	5 (very unhappy)
1	19 (34%)	21 (38%)	13 (24%)	1

RESPONDENTS WHO WOULD LIKE TO SEE MORE FEMALE REFEREES IN WOMEN'S FOOTBALL		
YES	NO	MAYBE
42 (76%)	2 (4%)	11 (20%)

SECTION FOUR: ANY FURTHER COMMENTS

COMMENTS
Do not want links to a male club because men do not pay subs, so will not let a young player subsidise an 18 year old male. Aim to link with boys club, not male. We joined a sports club that has both male & boys teams, although none of the clubs were linked. Within one yr we had grown so quickly they said they couldn't fit us in, giving priority to boys/male teams. The sports club had been given funding for girls football but don't fully support it. We are only girls club, coach in local schools. Applied to the county FA for funding, which they would only give to a boys team? Say must join a boys team? Yet clubs are coaching to poor standards, players are becoming disrespectful, yet county FA's are not focusing on the real issues. I am boring myself.
In [] (& probably nationwide) women's football is still second class. Long way to go to catch up but still relatively young compared to men's. County FA tolerate rather than encourage women eg blank page on website. Local media does cover but teams need to send in reports, but nothing shown on where to send. Our team gets regular coverage as emails reports. Academies poach players - [] City run one & formed team from players attending our club, & others in county, now we refuse to send players
Not really a split as such so all help each other
Women's football has been going for a while and is starting to get well-known. Its not as well known as men's football as we all know, but in the future I see w football being just as big (well I hope). Women will also be playing with men. [] Town Ladies isn't a well known team but we do have support and a great lot of ladies players. I just hope that we have a future in women's football and can show the people out there who we actually are.
On the subject of referees, the standard varies widely. Whilst those we have for our home games are generally above average. The wider opinion is that male referees do not take women's football seriously. At a recent game, a decision was given by a male referee which both sides disagreed with. When asked after the match, he replied 'well its only women'. Also each year we are given new 'rules' handed down from the FA. Some are good some are not. We are never asked what we think of the changes, what impact it has, or why the rule has been changed. Small-sided games are now a way of life, but they have a massive strain on playing area availability. There are moves a foot to bring in possibly 7,8 or 9 a side matches with 3/4 style pitches. These would cause utter chaos on an already overloaded system.
Always had the impression that men look at women's football in a very demeaning way, think this is gradually changing. Need more recognition, but also same level of attention such as equal amount of coaches, physios, managers (maybe female?) put into women's football as men's.
Refereeing - every men's match you see players are getting away with poor tackles & abusing officials, if this is the standard set male refs too easily send females off for similar tackles & poor language. Youngsters coming through football see one standard set by media but then have to play to a diff standard. Many refs send girls off 'because girls shouldn't be like that'. Surely the standards should be the same across the board. If they send us off they should have the guts to treat the premiership the same way!
Not sure about female refs, not just for the sake of it, only if they have the required knowledge and experience!
Although team not attached to a male team, aware via position in league & speaking to others that they are very much considered as 'poor' relations. Instances of male clubs starting/adopting women's teams to qualify for grants/funding. Once this has been paid, interest soon wanes with women's teams not seeing much benefit. Ultimately, FA working towards developing women's game, some of this is mere 'lip-service'. Women's football needs taking seriously & major investment made at grassroots & financially if we are ever going to see women's game turn pro.
Recent attitude toward women's football is 100% better than in the past. Local FA's have been forced to accept us, & are now encouraging, with some exceptions eg [].
Standard of referring is diabolical. Local County FA's have no real mentoring process for refs - often incapable. FA has policy that no cautions can be appealed - makes FA money. Stupid plans with Wembley meant that funding promised to girls/women was withdrawn, detrimental to many players. Initially (when took over) FA was completely disorganised & 'threw together' organisation which has caused problems trying to change things. "Pyramid" is new and has taken too long, male game been like that for years, lack of intelligence at FA didn't think to copy & modify male system before. FA run mostly by men who are uninterested & are old school in way they run things. Make decisions with no hands-on experience & still think it's a boys game like most refs. Organisation is ridiculous & they need to address these issues immediately for the good of the thousands now playing female football at

whatever level.
Women's & girls football has come on leaps & bounds in last 5 years which is good for football. Just think there should be more female football coaches. Male coaches from my point of view treat some female players like male players...and physically and mentally we are totally different. This is from observing male coaches when managing own u12 team.
Some men's teams seek a women's team to join their club as a way to receive lottery money. Fine if mutually beneficial but can create obstacles, & men's team may take the majority of the funding & priority of facilities. Women's football needs to be taken more seriously overall & not compared to the men's league/game. They are very different & not 'obviously' comparable.
We play in [] and the county FA in particular don't seem to give a damn most of the time. Won county cup 1 yr & I've never seen such a crap trophy. We tried to get it mended but couldn't because it was too far gone, & 3yrs later still same. Would like to see more female refs but only if well qualified - not just for the sake of it. Have had some very poor female referees & some very good men. Over the years played at a number of men's clubs. All wanted us to join & take their name but none prepared to help financially or with equipment or kit. All just wanted to use us to get grants. At every club have resistance from youth teams who feel women have gone into the club & pushed them down the pecking order. This has led to a lot of bad feeling & was unpleasant, especially at [] where we were bad-mouthed about by their manager. There's still a great deal of feeling about that women's shouldn't play football.
Sometimes attitude of older male members of club & boards is disappointing & it's a real effort to try and 'win them over'. Attitude of younger male coaches at club is better, they are more welcoming & take it more seriously.
Would help clubs like my own if the men's pro clubs would employ someone to deal with the issues we have to on a day-to-day basis while doing full time jobs.
We are lucky because [] Town support us in any way they can. However, if you link to a men's club taking the name only with no help or involvement, this seems to defeat the object of linking with the club. We have gained support which has helped us financially, and now with the coaching, and even socially. This we hope could be an attraction for players looking to join a club in our area. It does take time for this partnership to develop but in our case it is definitely worth it.
At grass roots level links are not really any benefit. At more professional level playing for a well known club offers you the name and therefore girls want to play for the club. In our area such clubs as [], [], [], [] have to hold trials for the beginning of the season, we are just glad to have players turn up.

APPENDIX 5: CLUB AND INTERVIEWEE DESCRIPTIONS

Independent#1

Independent#1 is the only full club in the study that run as an independent female club. The senior team was formed in 1999 and grew out of a local 5-a-side team that gradually recruited more players. In 2003 the team qualified as coaches and began to promote girls football. Since 2003 the junior section has grown significantly – at the time of the interviews the club had over 250 affiliated players ranging from U4's through to the senior women's team. This rapid growth was described by both participants at the club to be a result of their close links with local schools, in having female players deliver coaching sessions in schools to introduce the girls to football. Participants saw the future of the club as growing into a mixed club by adding a boys' section to their established girls section.

Independent#1 had no formal links to a male football club, but all players paid to be members of a private sports club in order to use their facilities (mini and full size pitches, changing rooms, and clubhouse). A boys and men's football club, of the same name as Independent#1, are also affiliated to the same sports club, but there was no indication of any interaction either formally or informally between the two clubs that shared the facility. The club was described as female-dominated, in being run by and for women. At the time of the interviews, their committee of 35 people contained only 5 men; the majority of coaches were also female, but the majority of team managers were male (usually dads). This 'female domination' was considered as an important and successful feature of their club and both interviewees demonstrated a strong desire to provide equitable opportunities to as many of the girls in the local area as possible.

Two interviews were conducted at independent#1. Firstly, interviewee independent#1a was the club secretary, but described numerous other duties. She rarely played for the club any more, preferring to let 'the younger ones' do the playing. Her background was not in football, but in business, and her and her with her husband (club chair) applied a great deal of this experience to the way her football club was run. Offering football was often described as providing a 'product' to 'paying customers' (sub-paying players), run as professionally as possible with players and volunteers 'recruited'. Aside from duties

at her own club, this interviewee had also sat on various local FA committees, but eventually quit because the demands on her time was affecting the work she could do at her own club. Independent#1a was married with no mention of any children.

Interviewee independent#1b was included in the study, because on doing a follow up to the interview, independent#1a and her husband had left the club because their work had involved them moving abroad. The second interviewee at the club had taken over the role of secretary, and also managed and carried out the coaching in schools. She had a more significant playing role at the club, playing regularly for the senior team, but also coaching a junior side (as with the other senior players). Recently to the interview she had been made unemployed so was looking into jobs coaching football alongside the coaching in schools, and she was unmarried.

Independent#2

Club Independent#2 was a girls team, that was formed as an under 8's team - when independent#2's daughter wanted a team to play for - which had moved up to under 14's at the time of the interview. The team ran independently, with no links to a boys' team, using council facilities to play and train at. The junior club had recently been awarded FA Charter Standard, and it was hoped that another junior team would be added for the following season, and that the current team would eventually grow into a senior women's side. The team was loosely linked to the interviewees' employment in a community project to get more children from deprived areas involved in structured sport; through this employment, she also organised mixed football events and coached different sports all to local children.

A senior women's team was also discussed in the same interview, that was set up by independent#2 through her employment. In order to gain sponsorship, the team came under the umbrella of a local male club and used their facilities; the team also trained at different community facilities (including the provision of a female-only football night open to the whole area) that were funded through the project. At the time of the interview, independent#2 was concerned about the future of the club as the funding had been withdrawn early, before the end of the project, and there was uncertainty as whether she would be able to remain involved and keep the club going purely as a

volunteer. The interviewee both helped to manage and played for the senior team, alongside managing and coaching her junior team (above); this club is defined primarily as independent as the main focus of her attention was her junior team rather than the senior team that ran under a different name and geographically separate area of the city.

Interviewee independent#2 was employed on a community project to provide structured sporting opportunities to children, of which both the junior and senior teams was a part. Her football work was also often outside of this in her spare time; however through her employment she had gained coaching qualifications not just in football but also in a variety of other sports and was looking at gaining further football qualifications in order to find employment as a football coach. She was married, but her husband was not heavily involved in her football, and had school-aged children.

Linked#1

Linked#1 is the most independent of the 'linked' clubs, in having the name of a male professional club without being linked in any structural sense. Linked#1 moved from being linked to a local male club to a male pro club around 2002, but at the time of the interview, received no practical support. In this sense they run as an independent club, but are included in this category as the desire to retain this very tenuous link prevented the club from being considered a totally independent club. Alternative playing and training facilities have to be found, currently being a school and a community facility respectively; the club is also self-funded. Only one senior team currently represent Linked#1; in the season prior to 2005 they had also had a reserve side, but this folded after a year due to a shortage of players. There were no junior teams at the club.

Interviewee linked#1 was at 21 the youngest participant in the study, and had been playing football for 4 years. She was involved in her club committee as secretary, and worked outside of the club as a football coach, coaching both junior boys and girls.

Linked#2

Linked#2 had been running for approximately 12 years, having been founded out of local council attempts to offer football to women in the area. After a year playing at a

local sports centre, the club joined a local male football club in order to use their facilities, and changed their name and playing kit to match the male club. After two years, the facility was not available for the women's team any more so the club joined a different male club in 1997, changing their name and kit again. Facilities available to them were a clubhouse, changing rooms and pitch, although the women's team usually were given the reserve pitch to play on, which was a short drive from the main facility. Linked#2 also had only a senior women's team; both interviewees demonstrated a desire to set up a junior girls section within their club but felt that this was unlikely in the current relationship.

Two interviews were conducted at this club. Both had joined the club within the last 8 years, since the club became linked to the current male club. Interviewee linked#2a held the position of treasurer and team manager, which also involved some coaching as the team had had problems in acquiring a permanent coach. She also played for the team, but acknowledged that this was becoming more infrequent, and intended to remain purely in a non-playing role for the following season. This interviewee had played for a higher-placed club for a number of years before joining Linked#2 in 2001.

Interviewee linked#2b had not played football before joining the club in 1997, but played consistently at the time of the interview. As well as secretary, she was also a club representative on the local FA committee, and was involved on a separate league board that was formed to implement changes in the regional league structure. Outside of the club she worked at a petrol station and was married with young children.

Linked#3

Linked#3 was formed in 1999 by a group of women who had played together at school, and played a year of friendly fixtures before joining a league. After a year in the league the club moved to join a local men's club in order to use their facilities, and changed their name accordingly. This relationship had become difficult over the previous season, resulting in them being asked to leave due to a reduction in the number of teams using the pitch, so the club looked elsewhere for facilities and had just previously (1 month prior to the interview) moved to a different male club who were looking for a female team to join them. The club were intending to adapt their name slightly to incorporate

the male club for the forthcoming season, with the intention to change their name completely to that of the male club after the first year. Interviewee linked#3 was optimistic about this new relationship as individuals at the male club seemed more positive towards having a women's team than those at the previous club. Linked#3 had only a senior team, and often struggled for players, but the interviewee was hoping that both a reserve team and a junior section could be developed through the new relationship with the male club.

Interviewee linked#3 had played at her club since its formation and held the role of treasurer at the time of the interview. She worked as a nurse, was married, and her husband was heavily involved in both the running of her club (as club chair) and within local FA committees.

Linked#4

Linked#4 was a very well established and large club, with over 200 affiliated players spread over 3 senior women's teams (intended to be cut down to 2 the following season due to a shortage of players) and a junior section with U8 through to U16, but in a structurally complex situation of being linked to two male clubs. The club was initially formed as a supporters club in 1966 by a group of friends as a result of the surge in interest in football after England hosted and won the World Cup. Around 1990 the club became involved with a local male professional club, encouraged by the city council, as part of their community department but still needed to look elsewhere for playing facilities. The need for facilities lead to a link with a local male club in order to use their pitches, and over the past 6 years the relationship with this club has become closer as the support from the professional male club dwindled, in particular since 2003 with the development of a separate women's academy at the male professional club. Despite a significant drop in support provided, Linked#4 retains the name of the male professional club. There was however an uncertainty from the interviewee as to what was the best way forward for the club in terms of these two relationships.

Senior female players are encouraged (and funded) to qualify as coaches in order to help out with coaching junior teams. Interviewee linked#4 stated that she likes to have a male-female balance in decision-making and leadership positions at the club, utilising

the experience of men alongside the women. Playing at the combination level (2 leagues from the top of the pyramid, see Appendix 6), this club were the highest placed team in phase 2 of the study.

Interviewee linked#4 had been at the club 28 years, so had experienced a great deal of changes both within her club and in the wider football context. The only interviewee to have been involved in women's football prior to the FA takeover in 1993, she was encouraged by the vast changes in attitude towards female football that she had experienced. At Linked#4, she was both club secretary and senior team manager, but had previously held a variety of different roles. Outside of her club, at the time of the interview she had volunteered to help with the running of the local county league, and also sat on a regional FA committee. She had previously been involved with various local and regional committees, including the WFA prior to the 1993 takeover. Interviewee linked#4 was also a qualified referee, a qualified coach to FA level 2 standard, and in her employment as a secondary school PE teacher she also ran the school football team. She was married with grown up children.

Linked#5 (Academy)

The academy club, although being linked to a male professional club, is considered in a category of its own due to the closeness of links that have been developed as a result of the female section being started within the community department of the football club. This closeness is however not reflective of integration (clubs below) as the female teams are intentionally run as a separate section of the club, playing elsewhere and being financially self-sufficient. This is the only club of its type in the study, further set aside by its focus on elite talent development as well as competition.

Linked#5 was formed in 1999 as part of an FA initiative where professional football clubs were approached as potential 'hosts' for girls' football academies. Initially fixtures were only played as an academy team at FA festivals, against other academies, three or four times a year. In 2003 the teams joined a part-time league, with one game a month; in the forthcoming season at the time of the interview, the centre was to join a full time programme which involved players playing only for Linked#5 and leaving their local clubs. This was a result of FA concern at the number of matches children should be

playing, in terms of long-term athlete development, with the aim of producing players with the potential of progressing to the England squad. In the season prior to the interview, a senior women's team had been added to Linked#5 for the first time to retain talented junior players; the interviewee believed that a team capable of competing at the top level could be produced if they directed all their junior players into a senior academy team.

The interviewee at Linked#5 had been employed at the male professional football club as a coach for 5 years, and currently held the position of assistant academy director, which included administration work behind the scenes as well as coaching all ages. However her employment in the football in the community department of the club also involved organising and delivering coaching sessions outside of the club to the grassroots of the sport, including schools and local festivals. She played for the senior women's team at the academy, and was the highest qualified coach in the study having passed FA level 3 standard (also known as UEFA 'B') and was working towards qualifying as a tutor.

Partnership#1

Partnership#1 was formed as an extension to an existing boys club in 1993, with a senior women's team added after this time. The club was described as being run as a mixed club overseen by one committee, but with three sections of boys, girls and women's having their own representatives. A senior male team of the same name did exist, but was not connected with Partnership#1 in any way. Teams offered to girls ranged from under 9's through to the senior women's team, and an increase in players lead to the intention of starting a further 2 girls and 2 boys teams for the following season. Integration and running as a mixed club was clear – partnership#1 spoke of the ground as 'our ground', a facility where the whole junior club was based (the senior ladies team played matches at a different council venue). The club had been awarded FA Charter Standard and had utilised this to gain increased funding to develop their ground, and to ensure that all their coaches and managers were qualified at least to FA level 1 standard.

Interviewee partnership#1 joined the club 2 years ago when her daughter started playing, and currently held the role of secretary for the girls' section. This was her first

involvement with a football club and had never played the sport. This role involved a great deal of admin duties, often utilising her employment outside of the club to do football work. At the time of the interview she had volunteered to sit on the local girls' league committee, as it had been discovered that a number of the league representatives had resigned and she was concerned that without new volunteers, the league would fold, denying football opportunities for local girls. She was married with young children; her husband was also involved in the club.

Partnership#2

The second partnership club was again a junior-focused club that began when a male-only club began to offer football to girls around 1991. Initially the limited number of girls attending Partnership#2 played as part of the boys teams; as numbers grew, they were then able to offer female-only teams. The club currently had 16 girls' teams from under 10's through to under 16's, with one senior female side. It was described how the club was run as a tripod, with the girls, boys and women's section, with two senior male teams part of the club, but considered as a separate section with their own committee (although all teams, senior and junior, played at the same facility).

Interviewee partnership#2 had joined the club as a result of her two son's involvement, and her daughter began playing when the girls' section was started. She had been at the club for 8 years, had not been involved in football prior to this role, and kept her involvement at the club despite her children leaving. At the time of the interviewee she was club treasurer, Child Protection Officer and organised fixtures and tournaments. She was however in the middle of a difficult situation at the club where she felt she was being pushed out, due to personality clashes, and was looking into starting up a new club of her own. She was married with children and grandchildren, and her husband was also involved in the club as manager of a boys team.

Partnership#3

Partnership#3 also developed from an existing male club who in around 1999 were looking to provide girls football, but were struggling to get enough players in each age group. Interviewee partnership#3 worked at a local primary school and ran the girls

football team there, so with her husband they advertised for players in local schools and eventually became more involved in the football club. At the time of the interview the female section of the club had four junior sides from U10 to U16, and one senior ladies side. The whole club runs under one committee with representatives from the three sections of juniors, senior women and senior men, and all help each other out with coaching, referees etc. This was considered a benefit not only to the club but also to the community, as families often had sons and daughters playing for the same club, and there was believed to be a great deal of interaction between the boys' and girls' sections. Their Charter Standard status means that all coaches must be qualified to at least FA level 1, courses which the club finances; they were also in the process of applying for funding to develop their ground so all teams can train as well as play matches at the same place.

Interviewee partnership#3 held the roles of secretary and Child Protection Officer, seen primarily as an extension of her employment as a primary school teacher. This was considered a positive overlap as she knew a lot of the children and parents through school, and a lot of her school team also played at her club. On occasion she had represented her club at local league meetings. The interviewee at the club was married, with her husband heavily involved in the running of the club, and had children who were no longer involved in football.

APPENDIX 6: WOMEN'S FOOTBALL STRUCTURE

