University of Alberta

The End of the Road?: Discipline and Retirement in British Professional
and Semi-Professional Football

by

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Abstract

Overman (2009) has noted that there is no single representative experience of retirement in sport; however, it is clear that retirement from sport is challenging (Sparkes, 1998). Despite over sixty years of sports retirement research, problems continue to be reported amongst retiring athletes (Wylleman, Alfermann, & Lavallee, 2004) and specifically British footballers (Drawer & Fuller, 2002). Roderick (2006) suggested that knowledge of football retirement is limited. This study uses a post-structural understanding of power to discover how young men negotiate the challenges of enforced retirement. Data was gathered during in-depth interviews with 25 former players between the ages of 21-34.

Markula and Pringle (2006) illustrated that adopting Foucault (1991) allows the researcher to consider an athlete as being produced *via his sporting experiences* that are structured within relations of power. Adopting Foucault's analysis of discipline, I examined the practices and relationships experienced within football and considered how, through various techniques of discipline, a docile footballing body is produced. The extent to which this docility influences a player's retirement experience is also explored. I identified the arts of distributions, control of activity, the organisation of geneses and the composition of forces that influence football player development. Furthermore, how through hierarchical observation, normalisation, examination, and the panoptic arrangement of working football, docile football players are produced.

Retired players reported confusion and relief as a result of their initial removal from the highly disciplined environment of football. Furthermore, as a

result of their exposure to discipline and the ability to 'normalise' using confessional practices, over time, retirees became docile bodies in new alternate realms. Finally, I problematised how retired players are told to negotiate their athletic identities once evicted from the localised disciplinary football environment.

This study suggests that the current 'truth' of how to develop and produce players in football must be re-conceptualised. This 'truth' is restricting and ultimately detrimental to the transitional capacity of working football players. In order to influence player experiences during and after their careers, 'marginalised knowledges' (Foucault, 1987) surrounding what it means to be a footballer must be evoked.

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My participants, without these men, who try so hard and please so many, this would not have been possible.

> "*It is simply no good trying to keep any thrill: that is the very worst thing that you can do. Let the thrill go – let it die away – go on through that period of death into the quieter period of interest and happiness that follow – and you will find you are living in a world of new thrills all the time*" (C.S. Lewis, 1942).

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"My decision to stop playing ended something in me" (Gilbourne, 2002, p. 81).

"Football players are often unable to detach themselves from the game once their careers come to an end. A 'footballing illusio' becomes part of their very being, and it is understandable why players near to, or in retirement often express a desire to remain within the game" (McGillivray, Fearn, & McIntosh, 2005, p.106).

"The ex-athlete is like a butterfly caught in a reverse metamorphosis; he must shed his brilliant identity and take on a new less flattering one" (Overman, 2009, p. 170).

"Great athletes all grow old, but not all great athletes grow" (Gogarty & Williamson, 2009, p. 212).

"This isn't training. We train dogs. We educate people." Brendan Rodgers (2012) - Manager Liverpool FC

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The French philosopher Michel Foucault (1991) noted that an experience is something that you come out of changed. The process of retirement from sport is clearly one in which the individual feels considerably changed. The quotations listed above illustrate the transformative nature of the experience of retirement

from sport, including from men's professional association football in the British

Isles (from here onwards referred to as football). Although Overman (2009) has

noted that there is no single representative experience in sport (and I would

agree), there is sufficient data available to suggest that the universal athletic

process of retirement is a challenging period in the lives of elite level

sportspersons (Blinde & Stratta, 1992; Sinclair & Orlick, 1993; Sparkes, 1998).

Foucault (1991) also noted that individuals are formulated and changed by

the relationships and places they are exposed to. The experience of retirement is

in this respect no different to any other. In this study, I considered how long-term

exposure to British football has contributed to the framing of the lifelong

retirement experiences of British players and how they consider who they are in

retirement. This work is not only meant to reveal the negative circumstances and

experiences of British players during periods of retirement, but also to trace and

understand the experiences of retirement in greater depth.

Enforced retirement from professional football happens in many different

ways. Each player's own circumstances dictate how his retirement occurs. For a

few, retirement is an abrupt ending clearly defined by a certain point in time, by

injury, or a meeting that ends in contract termination. For the majority however it

is less likely to be an epiphanic moment (Denison, 1994), and is a gradual

process. It often occurs as players fail to overcome injury or maintain their status

at a club, they may then pursue trials at other clubs or drop into non-league

football in an attempt to bounce back up into the professional game. Often, they

cannot return to their previous level, and as a result fail to receive the continuation

of a professional contract at a League or Conference club. Many bounce from club to club and trial to trial trying to remain employed, but eventually give up the life of the 'journeyman' player and accept retirement.

In this study I explore a multitude of career and retirement experiences. The players in this study have had retirement from league or conference football enforced upon them (some forcefully, others more discreetly) through de-selection, injury or lack of contract renewal or 'being left out in the cold'. Although some may now have accepted their retirement, none of the men interviewed would have exited this profession if they had been given the opportunity to continue. Retirement may have been accepted, but for none of these men was it voluntarily chosen. If they could still be playing League or Conference football, they would. None of these men chose to no longer have the opportunity to work as a professional footballer. This study considers the stories of those who have experienced enforced retirement; however, their experiences do not simply fall into the category of abrupt termination. The various complexities of the working football environment and its highly competitive and unforgiving nature mean that often footballers simply cannot continue with their vocation/profession as they might wish. As Butt and Molnar (2009) noted, many players recognise that they have become surplus to requirements and see 'the writing on the wall'. Some are not ever forcibly evicted from their positions but instead experience severe shunning. Although not 'fired' these men are still required to deal with the difficulties of an unwanted transition into retirement, often without a final termination point to establish 'closure' to their careers.

It is plausible that a retired football player understands himself in retirement as a result of career experiences. This study investigates the socio-cultural impact of a sporting career upon a retired athlete. Currently, the process of negotiation a retiring sportsperson endures is considered as a journey of expansion, a journey that encompasses the idea that change is not about abandoning who we are, but rather, it is about expanding who we want to be. This is a sentiment that on the surface seems appropriate, and is therefore promoted as "identity work" and an "ongoing life project" (Carless & Douglas, 2009, p. 64) that all professional athletes have to embark upon. In order to develop away from their previous sporting lives, former professional football players are told that they have to expand themselves to deal with a difficult negotiation process which is "enduring" (McKenna & Thomas, 2007, p. 29) and "lifelong in its nature" (Gilbourne, 2002, p. 87). This is an unquestioned narrative and one that this study examines in greater depth.

My retirement research does *not* concentrate upon an individual's characteristics or personality traits, as has been the dominant trend on the past (Baille & Danish, 1992; Kerr & Dachyshyn, 2000; Lally (2007). Neither does this research suggest how to cultivate, diversify or disengage with a self so that it is multidimensional (Carless & Douglas, 2009; Coakley, 1992). Rather, the approach adopted here will specifically take into account how a football player has come to understand who he is in retirement. To achieve this I consider the culturally prescribed sporting experiences and relationships his playing career allowed.

I am not attempting to quantify, to measure or describe a universal pathway that highlights how retirement is negotiated. Neither am I attempting to identify the amount of 'narrative resources' (Carless & Douglas, 2009) that a player possesses. Instead, my study utilises a new perspective to understand retirement from professional football of any code. I suggest that in the process of expanding who footballers want to be, the important elements that needs to be considered are the nature of the spaces once inhabited by players and the spaces into which they move after their enforced retirement.

The notion that athletes develop an athletic identity as an anchor for their lives is an unquestioned and taken-for-granted assumption in professional sport, as several studies have attempted to reveal (Adler & Adler, 1989; Brewer, Van Raalte, & Linder, 1993; Sparkes, 1998). The pervasive nature of this assumption can be identified across elite sport in the representational terminology widely used to describe athletes. This is also evident in how athletes talk about and describe themselves (Hickey & Kelly, 2008), for example, 'having it within themselves, 'living for the sport', 'he was born to play the game' and 'natural winner'. As a result, coaches are forever searching for certain character traits that reveal that an athlete possesses a coachable self (Cassidy, Jones, & Potrac, 2004). Despite these prevalent assumptions, little is really understood about the implications of this 'truth', how it has become so entrenched within the sporting world and, in this context, the implications it has for retired British football players.

What is the nature of this athletic understanding footballers are required to develop? How is it composed, sustained and formed? Why does it carry so much

respect within the realm of elite sport? What happens if it evades the individual as a result of enforced retirement? These are the questions that need to be asked if sports retirement research is to progress and produce better post-sport outcomes for professional athletes (in this case, British professional football players). Before these questions can be asked, I present a brief look at football and the academic research surrounding it as a cultural phenomenon.

Football, more than any other sport, has cultural significance across the globe (Foer, 2005), not least in the UK (Hornby, 1992), Brazil (Bellos, 2003), the Netherlands (Kuper, 2003) and Argentina (Archetti, Giulianotti, & Williams, 1994). Several scholarly works have considered this unique and culturally rich field, supplementing the array of biographic and documentary recollections that take into account the individual, social and political histories of the game in various regions (Cronin, 1999; Foer, 2005; Giulianotti, 1999; Giulianotti & Robertson, 2004). These studies have attempted to uncover the wide ranging "social, cultural and historical complexities of the game" (Giulianotti, 1999, p. xi) on a global and national level, thus strengthening an understanding of the position of football in a given socio-cultural context. Existing football studies have provided an insight into what football means to individuals and communities. They have also shown how football is used as an ideological and political tool, how football can foster nationalism and commercial practices, and how football can be used to understand a particular community.

Existing work has shown that on a macro scale; football should not be considered as outside of, or neutrally existing within, the discursively produced

relations of power that persist in any given society. Although I recognize that no study into football can disregard these broader observations, what these existing works have yet to specifically consider (due to their broad social agendas), is how the culture of the professional sport of football in Britain impacts upon a player's experiences, including that of his retirement. As my specific interest here is centred upon sports retirement, I have identified a significant lack of understanding surrounding the culture of football and how it contributes to the retirement experience of its players. In order to develop understanding of retirement and the influence of discipline in this process, I utilise the disciplinary analysis of French philosopher Michel Foucault.

Markula and Pringle (2006, p. 30) noted that "the participant in soccer is also subject to the workings of various discourses that shape their identities as soccer players". However, during this research I do not specifically interrogate the broader discourses in British culture that have been identified as framing the field of British football (globalization, nationalism, and commercialism, Giulianotti, 1999). It is true that any study into football cannot ignore the influence of these prevalent discourses; however, this was not the central aim of this particular piece of research. That expansive objective was beyond the scope of my interest in the retirement of former British football players.

It is important to realize however that these discourses will influence the manner in which British footballers choose to speak. It is accordingly vital that the presence and impact of these discourses and the consequent broader workings of power must first be acknowledged, for it would be folly to undertake a

Foucauldian study and ignore the broader relations of power and domination under which the specific site of this study plays out. As Foucault (1994, p. 327) noted, in order to attempt to understand an aspect of culture "we have to know the historical conditions that motivate our conceptualisation". I therefore cannot disregard the impact of these discourses upon a footballer's career and retirement; rather I specifically concentrate on a particular site where they are acutely manifested. To achieve this I examined the day to day space and practices of professional football. These included football training practices, relationships with coaching staff and fellow players and striving for first team football.

Foucault (1991) believed that any institutionalised norms that are found at a particular cultural location have been prescribed over time by the workings of wider inherent discourses. In this case the institutionalised norms under examination are the norms of football, a pervasive element of British society. Therefore, I further recognise that the experiences and interactions of players scrutinised here are framed by human relationships. Relationships that are *themselves* shaped and stimulated by the unique cultural practices and institutionalised norms of football.

Football is a cultural entity that has been infused, stabilised and disturbed equally over time by the historic and contemporary prevalent discourses in British society. To study this cultural space without at least a humble recognition of how it has been framed would be naive and methodologically weak. To this end it is stated unequivocally that the cultural practices studied here are not constants or 'true organic practices', rather they are generated by a multitude of overarching

discursive influences. As Foucault would say, the influence of discourse has a "certain effect upon all other relations" (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1988, p. 64), including those influenced by prevalent institutionalised practices. These include the relationships experienced by sportsmen and women, and the manner in which sportspeople utilise language.

In spite of this recognition that any location cannot be removed from the formulaic discursive patterns which framed it, much can still be learned through the analysis of such cultural formations on the more micro, 'shop floor level', or as Fox (1994) suggested, at the site of action. Foucault (1991) encouraged researchers to look closely around them to observe the workings of power at a local level, as he perceived power to be directly productive wherever it comes into play. This illustrates that one need not necessarily perform an expansive research project to 'capture the essence of discourse', rather it is perhaps more fruitful to engage with a familiar location where a sensitivity to the nuance of interaction may shed light upon that which a Foucauldian study perhaps should seek. That is in this instance, the workings of power upon a disciplined individual in an everyday setting and the impact of this practice upon an individual.

This study informs understandings of sports retirement by learning from the unique relationships and cultural practices prevalent in British football. These relationships and practices are reviewed here in order to catalyse a rethink for the entire process of player retirement in British football. This study was enacted and undertaken at what Foucault might call a 'capillary level', distinctly aware that at any location the influence of power can permeate, as Foucault (1991, p. 93) noted,

"power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere'. However, from the acute observation and interrogation of a specific cultural practice or practices, scope remains for an understanding of the operations of power at a local level to be developed. As power is ever present, Foucault (1994) encouraged the researcher to try and identify the point of its application. In this instance, I examined the specific and shared process of retirement as influenced by exposure to everyday disciplinary techniques.

1.1 A Fresh Perspective on Retirement

Moorhouse (1998, p. 231) noted that "those who really want to understand what is happening to football as its traditional forms and institutions change, need to set themselves new objectives and higher standards, and forsake what are limited, and limiting, academic traditions". This study adopts a poststructuralist approach to sports retirement research. I challenge existing approaches that have attempted to understand the social composition and effects of professional football and retirement from professional football in the UK. In order to achieve this aim, the thoughts of Michel Foucault and his disciplinary analysis are utilised.

Foucault (1991) revealed how the penal system, as an imposed form of discipline in society, played a significant role in sustaining a modern appreciation of the 'knowledge of man'. The research of Cushion and Jones (2006, 2012), Giulianotti (1999) and Roderick (2006) has demonstrated that the environment of professional football in the British Isles could be considered as a significantly disciplinary cultural institution. This research reveals how the disciplinary institution of professional football in the United Kingdom (UK) (although not an

explicitly carceral institution) sustains a specific 'knowledge of man' that influences those men who have retired from this scene. Here I consider the potential of connections between the disciplinary practice of the 'modern discipline' (Markula & Pringle, 2006; Shogan, 1999) of professional football and the existing dominant understandings of retirement from the game. I also reveal how these 'truths' surrounding retirement have come to be so prevalent. I further reveal how these dominant 'truths' of retirement stem from (and are considerably fostered by), the disciplinary environment of elite professional football.

Foucault (1991) was particularly interested in the slow formation of experience and how individuals begin to understand themselves as subjects within power relations (Markula & Pringle, 2006). Foucault's theory of discipline (1991) is utilized here to map the sport of professional football as it pertains to the retirement experience. Football players are individuals that are clearly exposed to a rigorously disciplinary lifestyle for much of their youth (Brown & Potrac, 2009) and early adult existence (Giulianotti, 1999), and much may be learned from these young men with regard to retirement in sport.

As already mentioned, this study considers the local rather than the macro, and in doing so explores previously unknown ground. Johns and Johns (2000) noted that the utilisation of a Foucauldian disciplinary perspective permits the body (in this case that of a British footballer), to be situated at the centre of a research question. This circumstance also invites an investigation that can ask questions that might not have been posed in past research into retirement.

Foucault's analysis of discipline therefore provides a sound theoretical foundation to understand retirement from professional football in the UK.

Rail and Harvey (1995) noted that of all of Foucault's theoretical concepts, discipline has had the most impact on sports sociology. Significant effort has been made to understand the disciplinary process through which a body becomes a sporting body, and how it acquires characteristics and abilities which favour the execution of sport performances (Dostie, 1988). These studies have helped to re-conceptualize sporting activities as an ensemble of disciplining and normalizing practices that produce and put under surveillance, multiple bodies (Cole, 1993). What then are the specifics of Foucault's (1991) disciplinary theory which may help aid this investigation into retirement in British football?

As a result of observing several prisons and insane asylums, Foucault (1991) suggested that within these institutional spaces, power operates through the fabrication of individuals into an organised social order. Consequently, the production of a body occurs as a result of the imposition of discipline. Markula and Pringle (2006) noted that this fabrication process is commonly achieved through the prescription of disciplinary practices that normalise individuals into 'docile bodies'. For the purpose of this research it is important to consider how this fabrication can be observed in the sporting context and its effects on athletes' retirement experiences.

Foucault (1991, p. 138) noted that "discipline produces subjected and practised bodies, 'docile' bodies" and also that "a body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved" (p. 136). Is this not an exacting

description of the consummate, successful or coachable athlete or sportsperson?

Denison (2007, p. 373) noted that to a degree, discipline (as a necessary element

of elite sport) can be a good thing, as "athletes need to be dedicated and repeat

routines in order to execute skills efficiently and automatically". The

predominant interpretation of a successful athlete is an individual who can be

disciplined to learn skills, appropriate attitudes, strategies and the cultural nuances

required to succeed at one specific location. Chase (2006, p. 233) added that

"sport can be seen as one of the most significant mechanisms through which

bodies can be disciplined". Shogan (1999) also summarised this point neatly

when she noted that:

> For participants in high-performance sport, discipline refers to an ability to
>
> stay on task and to execute skills correctly without being distracted.
>
> Success in high-performance sport requires and produces athletes who can
>
> persevere, who do not give in to competing desires, and who are strong
>
> willed...Discipline in sport requires control of athletes' bodies through the
>
> acquisition of skill and a sophisticated body of knowledge focused on how
>
> to produce skilled athletes. (p. 18)

Shogan's (1999) observations mirror those of Heikkala (1993) who noted

that discipline is both a means and prerequisite of sport. Heikkala also

highlighted that the features of sport as a disciplinary practice are "not entirely

visible" (p. 410). The central, yet simultaneously seemingly incoherent nature of

discipline within professional football, and the lack of attention that it has

received, reveals the necessity for this study. Therefore to address this, I considered football's disciplinary practices and their links to the retirement experiences of those who have worked in football.

The ideas of Foucault and specifically his analysis of discipline have been utilised in the context of elite sport by several authors (Chase, 2006; Chapman, 1997; Heikkala, 1993; Johns & Johns, 2000; Shogan, 1999). Denison (2007, 2010) and Denison, Mills and Jones (2013) have also noted that Foucault's work should perhaps be considered as an appropriate framework for the study of practices across elite sport. With this recommendation in mind, this study utilises Foucault's understanding of discipline and the consequences of the fabrication of sporting individuals (Markula & Pringle, 2006) in order to shed light upon an aspect of elite sport, specifically, the retirement experiences of British football players.

This research is an investigation based upon Foucault's understanding of disciplinary practices into the long-term impact of the nature of British football upon player retirement. This study ventures further than any previous observation of sports retirement and examines the precise nature of the sport of football and how this nature contributes to the experiences of those who have retired from the game. This is not a simple process. Heikkala (1993) recognised that due to the achievement and progress that can be readily attributed to discipline, it is an extremely difficult phenomenon to question or problematise. Indeed, it will never be possible to totally understand or reconcile the full extent of the disciplinary factors experienced by a footballer (even in this particularly isolated location).

This would be true for any individual in any realm. However, regardless of these anticipated difficulties, this work reveals how an individual player's retirement experiences are, in the most part, framed by his significant exposure to the intensely disciplinary conditions found in football, a unique, yet widely distributed 'modern discipline'. It is my belief that Foucault's (1991) disciplinary analysis has helped tremendously to frame the experiences of elite athletes. As a result, I adopted it here to examine retired professional footballers' understandings of the various challenges associated with enforced retirement from a career in which they so heavily invested.

Where to start then in order to achieve this challenging yet essential ambition? Foucault (1991) suggested that in order to understand the workings of disciplinary power, one should begin with institutionalised practices. The sport of professional football in the UK became a widely integrated cultural institution after the start of the professional game in the late 19th century (Mason, 1980; Walvin, 1975). Football is clearly a major part of the fabric of British society (Hornby, 1992) and continues to remain at the forefront of the public imagination. Therefore an investigation into the impact of the institution of professional football is where this disciplinary interrogation will concentrate.

Before this detailed exploration is undertaken however, it is first necessary to present a summary of the large body of work that has concentrated upon sports retirement from various perspectives in the field of sports studies. This process will help to identify where the ambitions of this study can contribute to progressing contemporary approaches to retirement across elite sport.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Retirement from Football

This study questions existing understandings of retirement in professional football with the aim of developing new ways of thinking about this area of sport. A look at how sports retirement has been previously researched acts as an entry point, as it will serve to reveal where a contemporary contribution may occur. The majority of literature on this subject examines what Stephan, Bilard, Ninot and Delignieres (2003) identified as a problematic adaptation to a new life outside elite sport. Baille and Danish (1992) perhaps summed up the difficulties experienced by the retiring athlete most concisely when they noted that:

> Transition out of a career in sports has been suggested as being a difficult and disruptive process for many athletes. An early and enduring identification, familiarity, and preference for the role of athlete may cause its loss to be a significant stressor for the elite, Olympic or professional athlete. (p. 77)

This is perhaps the best of a multitude of possible quotes that reveal the significant challenges that contemporary post-athletes must face during a "post-athletic career" (Wylleman, Alfermann, & Lavallee, 2004, p. 7). Denison (1996, p. 351) also noted that "the loss of participation, camaraderie, competition, excitement, and identity associated with the athletic role requires serious adjustment". Coakley (1983) has suggested an alternative view, that perhaps too much emphasis is placed upon the negative impact of sports retirement. He advocated that retirement should be perhaps considered more positively as a

progressive and healthy transition. According to Coakley then, retirement from

sport can and perhaps should be considered a "beginning rather than an end" (p.

2).

Athletic retirement research is not a new field. Decades ago, when

investigating the fortunes of retired boxers (Weinberg & Arond, 1952), baseball

players (Bookbinder, 1955), athletes (Hallden, 1965) and soccer players

(Mihovilovic, 1968), sports scholars began to shed light upon the need for the

facilitation of an elite athlete's withdrawal from active participation in a sports

career. Much more recently, researchers have identified that retirement from

sport is less problematic when it is planned for as a process, rather than if it occurs

as an actual, relatively sudden event (Lally, 2007; Torregrosa, Boixados, Valiente,

& Cruz, 2004). These studies noted that the gradual consideration of retirement

from a certain point in an athlete's career decreases the level of uncertainty about

the future. This supports another well-established finding; specifically that

gradual retirement is distinctly preferable to an instant or unplanned removal from

a sporting life (Mihovilovic, 1968; Kerr & Dachyshyn, 2000).

In order to stimulate better preparation for life after competition, many

scholars continue to lobby for post-athletes and suggest recommendations for

lives after sport (Lally, 2007; Torregrosa et al, 2004). All these studies are still

advocating that more be done for the same group of post-athletes that Mihovilovic

(1968) investigated many decades ago. The very presence of continued research

and continued identification of post-athletic problems illustrates that much more

still needs to be done for the contemporary post-athlete community as they drift

away from the sports nexus of the 21st century. This is especially true in the sport of professional football as the numerous high profile examples of social problems associated with de-selection and retirement illustrate. What are the reasons for these widely reported difficulties associated with retirement remaining?

Perhaps it is the nature of a particular sport and how this contributes to how an athlete becomes disciplined that needs to be re-considered when looking at retirement experiences? Consequently, this study complies with the recommendation that retirement be planned for, rather than reacted to, but does so in a fashion that has not yet been readily adopted. Through a study of the disciplinary nature of the game, rather than the 'make-up' of any particular athlete's identity or coping resources a new understanding of retirement is promoted through this research.

This research considers the exposure to disciplinary practices of a professional footballer's body, and how this may pertain to his consequent retirement. This includes an appreciation of the experiences that are associated with the specific role of a professional player and how they frame his retirement.

2.2 Reported Difficulties in Retirement from Professional Football

On the 10th of November 2009, six months before the 2010 FIFA World Cup, the pinnacle of any player's career, the German national team goalkeeper Robert Enke tragically took his own life. Enke's body was found after he had jumped in front of a regional express train at a level crossing in Eilvese. The suicide came as a total shock to the German footballing community and global football as a whole. Along with the loss of his young daughter, Enke's wife

attributed much of his personal trauma to being terrified of 'losing his sport'.

Upon learning of Enke's death, I was sadly reminded of a team mate who also

devastatingly took his own life while still a teenager. My former team mate may

not have reached the heights of the international stage; however, he took his life in

an identical manner, his depression contributed to by his de-selection from a

professional football club in the UK.

Football has a sad history of suicide and depression. Of course many

factors influence suicide and it would be wrong to simply attribute all cases to

impending retirement. However, several other high profile cases of depression

experienced by Stan Collymore and Sebastien Deissler, and more recently, the

troubles with depression and alcoholism reported by Brazilian forward Adriano

indicate that football and retirement from football are challenging experiences.

Despite a number of high profile examples, confusion and strong scepticism still

reigns. Indeed, "Some outside the world of football will question how anyone

with the adoration of thousands, the financial security the game provides and the

self-worth that comes from reaching the pinnacle of any sport, could ever become

depressed" (Amies, 2009). The clear and numerous instances of depression,

alcoholism and criminal behaviour across professional football however, do

appear to highlight that this is a dangerous phenomenon that deserves thorough

attention. A particular sample that is at risk within this population is the retiring

player.

One practical reason reported for the depression and difficulty identified

by footballers is that retirement is not only for aging men in the British game.

Retirement often has to be confronted by young men and even boys of an extremely tender age (Brown & Potrac, 2009). Gearing (1997) noted that the length of a career in the professional game is an average of around eight and a half years. However, as Anderson (2007) has noted, for every athlete who is highly regarded by sport, there are many more that do not make the cut. Retirement from a high level of football therefore happens for most, before any career is begun and happens for the vast majority during their formative adolescent years (Brown & Potrac, 2009; Green, 2009). Parker (1996) has noted that in the UK, very few apprentice footballers are offered professional contracts. Even if a contract is granted, there remains a long and treacherous road to being able to consistently demand a sustainable professional wage. Indeed, 75% of players who join the game at sixteen no longer remain within its environment at the age of twenty-one. In effect, only one in four remain in the game at *any* regarded professional or semi-professional level (Monk, 2000). Roderick (2012) has also noted that 600-700 players are released each season. The chances of playing for a regular professional wage are much less than 1 in 4, however, a supplementary income can often be made due to the depth of semi-professional non-league football in the UK (Potrac & Jones, 2009). These observations reveal the difficult landscape to which a large number of young men commit themselves in an attempt to build careers that are socially canonised by their immediate culture.

In a quantitative study of retirement in English football, Drawer and Fuller (2002, p. 34) found in a survey of 500 retired players, that only 32 (19%) were satisfied with the education they received for their post-career lives. These

authors also noted that this indicated most players receive a "low level of advice" about their potential needs after retirement. This is an unacceptable state of affairs for Gordon and Lavallee (2004), who believed that regardless of the employment scenario or cultural setting, it is the employer's enduring responsibility to prepare their employees (in this case athletes) for their inevitable retirement from competitive involvement.

Andy Tillson, a former professional player with QPR, Bristol Rovers and Walsall (among other professional clubs), and now the current assistant coach at Exeter City FC, recognised the difficulties experienced by many players when faced with change. He discussed in Jones (2007) that, "when you finish as a player, that is difficult to cope with", and also when asked about dealing with a cessation in his own playing career, he further noted that "one minute you're a footballer, the next minute you're not. You get very little help with that. You're out in the big bad world on your own" (p. 202). Peter Kay, the CEO of Sporting Chance in the UK, further expressed in Amies (2009) the difficulties associated with being a professional player when he noted that:

Players live in a total fantasy world, cocooned by the clubs from reality. While clubs and soccer in general are not to blame, they are *culpable*. From the age of eight and nine in some cases, young players are given everything which the club hopes will make them into a star. There are few top players who can have a normal life... and they never have to live in the real world. (Too Tough to Open Up section, para. 4)

Not only do these players reside in a bubble-like environment (McGillivray, et al 2005) but one that is in actuality, significantly hostile (Cushion & Jones, 2006; Giulianotti, 1999; Roderick, 2006), and as Kay again revealed, is contrary to popular opinion, a very lonely and insular place (Adams & Ridley, 1998).

The above comments of Tillson and Kay illustrate how difficult times can become for professional football players. The observations of these experts from within the inner workings of British football are fully supported by reports of anxiety and depression in retired and playing footballers that have been identified by rigorous medical studies (Turner, Barlow, & Heathcote-Elliot, 2000).

It is also important to note that it is not just those in retirement who experience difficulties. There are a multitude of personal recollections in high profile player autobiographies of difficulties in dealing with the expectation placed upon individual players during a playing career (Adams & Ridley, 1998; Merson & Ridley, 2000). This recognition of depression, coupled with increasing instances of active player misbehaviour including multiple examples of driving and public disorder offences of high profile players such as Tony Adams, Lee Hughes, Steven Gerrard, Joey Barton, Ashley Cole, Jermaine Pennant, Stephen Pienaar, and Jermaine Defoe to name a few, lends further weight to the problem of athlete lifestyle (including retirement) negotiation being one that is very real.

Existing research upon depression and stress in sports retirement has predominantly attempted to identify certain characteristics possessed by elite athletes that enable them to cope with the stress of high-performance sport (Crocker, 1992; Crocker & Graham, 1995; Gould, Eklund, & Jackson, 1993; Park,

2000). In response to traumatic experiences in elite athletes, these sports psychologists have attempted to identify the presence or deficit of certain character traits that they recognise as being beneficial to performance and dealing with performance associated stressors such as injury, de-selection, impending and actual retirement. This approach posits that once a character trait is identified, it can be worked upon for improvement, or utilised to further performance or deal with the stress of retirement processes. While this approach may identify certain qualities in the population of elite sportspeople, it also serves to re-emphasise the athlete as the location where fault may be found (Coakley, 1992; Denison & Winslade, 2006). Correspondingly this perhaps falsely suggests that the athlete is the predominant location where change needs to occur.

This study does not identify what is 'right' or indeed what is 'wrong' with British football players, neither does it suggest any specific coping strategies for their retirement experiences (some of which can be traumatic). Rather, I suggest that studying the individual athlete as the location where the 'problem' originates (as has been the dominant trend in the past) fails to take into account the broader relationships and cultural norms that frame an athlete's retirement experiences.

In order to stimulate smoother transitions and less traumatic retirement experiences for footballers, football scholars need to fully reconsider the lifelong formation and development of players. Most importantly they need to consider the disciplinary practices players are exposed to/have to negotiate over time. Part of gaining an informed understanding of these experiences is framing the context

within which these young men grow up and the reasons why they strive to play this sport at a professional level.

In the following sections I outline the specific interpersonal reasons why youngsters in the UK commit to a future in professional football, then go on to discuss how footballers' understandings of who they are, are configured by their exposure to their unique environmental context. Furthermore, I suggest that there are concrete links between the context of elite football and player retirement experience. I also suggest that it is these links that need to be examined in order to promote more ethical and manageable retirement transitions in the population of retiring professional footballers in the UK.

2.3 British Football in Context

So what then are the specific characteristics of football in the UK that affect the lifelong experiences (including that of retirement) of those who play it? To understand these particulars a closer look at the day to day working fabric of British football is required.

The context of professional association football in the UK that frames a player's experience during his playing days is extremely complex in its nature (Amies, 2009). This unique nature is primarily due to football's sheer popularity, historical resonance and the function it is perceived to hold as a means of representation for British nationality, masculinity, community and class (Hargreaves, 1986). Polley (1998) noted that organised sports have historically developed class characters, and have as a result been associated with certain groups. Nowhere is this more clearly evident throughout the history of sport than

with football and its symbiotic relationship with the various classes in British society, but predominantly the working class (Carter, 2006; Hargreaves, 1986; Walvin, 1975). As Jones (2007) has already noted, "Association football in the UK generates global interest and provides entertainment, cultural affiliation and employment for millions. Players at the top of the game are given celebrity status...teams are fanatically supported and analysed both in the public and the media" (p. 200). Indeed the professional footballer in Britain has for over a century been the 'working class hero' and been repeatedly allocated star status in certain contexts (Critcher, 1979; Woolridge, 2002).

The depth of the relationship between football and the British working class has been reported at length elsewhere and several scholars have clearly illustrated the development of the game in the UK at length (Holt, 1990; Holt & Mason, 2000; Mason, 1989; Walvin, 1975; Walvin, 1986). In doing so, these works have provided an informed foundation from which to understand the cultural legacy of football in the contemporary era. The importance of the relationship between football and British society should not be overlooked in any discussion surrounding football in the UK. Although this study primarily examines the specific context of contemporary 21st century professional football, as discussed at the outset, it would be unwise to ignore the wider influence of the football's cultural place in the UK. The resonance of the game as an ingrained cultural institution is summed up by Gearing (1999) who revealed the magnetism of professional football and why the game remains so popular in the UK when he noted that:

Football, involves courage, risk taking, much uncertainty and tension, and

an overriding preoccupation with winning and success. All this is played

out in a public arena before intensely partisan crowds and frequently on

television. The sheer excitement and intensity can lift players out of the

everyday world into a kind of high octane, intoxicating existence. (p. 47)

It is the elements identified by Gearing (1999) that lead to a deep sense of

belonging associated with the fandom and participation in this particular sport.

Hornby (1992), in one of the most revered accounts of the British game, revealed

the unique nature of British professional football culture through the lens of

fandom in 'Fever Pitch'. In his reflection about the evolution of football and

football fandom throughout the 1970's and 1980's, Hornby delved into the many

multiple faces of the British game, including fandom and hooliganism.

A key theme presented by Hornby (1992) throughout his book is that of

belonging. As a dedicated fan of Arsenal football club in London, England, the

game provided Hornby with a community with which he could attach himself to

in contemporary Britain during his formative adolescent and young adult life.

This in itself illustrates how ingrained the game is within British culture, but also

reveals why as McGillivray et al (2005) and Green (2009) noted, it is 'Every

Boy's Dream' to become a professional football player in the UK. These young

men dream of the highs of this career, but mostly they dream of belonging.

Cushion and Jones (2006) noted that this notion of belonging is prevalent

due to the high level of 'social capital' that can potentially be accrued through a

life in the game. Social capital in football is accrued through experience, success,

and adhering to the distinct culture of the professional game. This social capital, gained through involvement in professional sport, is valued by broader society (Wacquant, 1995). Access to this social capital stabilises and promotes the notion of dreaming and/or actually working towards becoming a professional footballer as a valid and highly regarded career pathway or vocation for young British men. Football then, is a cultural entity to which the desire to belong is almost unavoidable to young British males, or at least the idea that one has to belong is extremely hard to escape. Swann, Taylor and Ward (1994) have also noted the intensity of the sport when they described football as an 'excitement arena'. Within this 'excitement arena' the skills required to play at such a high level of football are highly revered and given elevated status by fans and players alike (Gilbourne, 2002).

Footballer's perception of their sport is very much in line with those reported by Wacquant's (2004) ethnographic study of Chicago boxers. Wacquant noted that boxers, like footballers in the UK, differ from other youths of a similar demographic "by virtue of their stronger social integration relative to their low cultural and economic status" (p. 46). This status is one that is preserved at all costs, and like Wacquant's boxers, British football players "maintain ...this precarious status by entering a profession that they perceive as a skilled manual trade, highly regarded by their immediate entourage, which furthermore offers the prospect - however illusory - of big financial earnings". Baker (1988) emphasised this circumstance when he noted that working class players see football as a route toward social recognition within a meritocratic environment and as a channel of

access to life chance opportunities that they are denied elsewhere in society. Gilbourne (2002), followed this theme, when he noted that being a professional footballer provided him with 'street-cred' that led to him being different, from an occupational perspective, to his relative peers.

In the words of Bourdieu (1984), it is the 'social' and 'cultural' capital that can be possessed through affiliation with the realm of professional football that leads to this profession being so highly regarded in British society. It is the *illusory* nature of this prospect however that is the problem. Parker (1996) and Monk (2000) are two of many authors who have illustrated the difficult nature of making it all the way to professional status in the British game. It seems therefore that as McGillivray et al (2005) have unfortunately explained, the majority of young British footballers are "guided from an early age toward sporting careers that, although offering the hope of transcending their objective conditions, invariably deceives them with optimism" (p. 120). As Heikkala (1993) also noted, the negative consequences of professional sport are rarely obvious.

Many English players of this and previous generations have grown up prior to the 1990's and the Premier League and have not been exposed to modern coaching or training approaches (Monk & Russell, 2000). Carter (2006) and J. Williams in Thomas (1995) noted that English football clubs are commonly renowned for displaying 'anti-intellectual attitudes', especially with regard to external education, vocational practices and even coaching. Even if these attitudes do not appear on the surface level in the media presentation of clubs,

they certainly still remain at a working level during day to day training (Kuper & Szymanski, 2009). As Simmons and Smith (2004) noted:

> The culture of professional football can be quite closed...Tightly constructed networks are often difficult to innovate in, which may explain why innovation in the English game is perceived to occur slowly...In some ways the closed culture gives the professional game strength...Coaches and ex-players have the tacit experience and knowledge of what it takes to be a professional player...The flip side is that the closed culture and patterning potentially lead to the slow adoption of new ideas. (p. 24)

These thoughts mirror the findings of Schön (1983) who identified the lack of innovation or reflective thinking in hierarchical environments characterised by inflexibility. Furthermore, Cassidy, Potrac and Jones (2004) also highlighted how hard it is to develop new practices in the sports coaching context given the strength of existing rituals, norms and traditions associated with sport. This situation has recently begun to change at the highest level of football in the UK, as professional academies have begun to innovate and standardise the manner in which young players are recruited and developed (Burdsey, 2007). This is a significant and noteworthy step towards abandoning age old meritocratic and networked development pathways; however there is still a long way to go. Research indicates that the legacy of traditional disciplinary practices in this particular context remains strong (Cushion & Jones, 2006), especially at the lower levels of the professional game (Roderick, 2006). The impact of this disciplinary

legacy can be highlighted by a closer look at studies that have attempted to uncover the affect upon players of exposure to the professional game.

2.4 Football Studies

Although research surrounding football and its impact upon cultures around the world has already been discussed at the outset, it is important to note that a scattering of investigations have concisely visited the inherent cultural practices in professional football, (Giulianotti, 1999; McGivillary et al, 2005; Parker, 1996, 2000; Roderick, 2006), including work from the field of sports coaching and coach education (Christensen, 2009; Cushion & Jones, 2006; Jones, Armour & Potrac, 2003; Potrac & Jones, 2009). These studies have served to better inform the environment of British football's coaching and day to day environments. They have also highlighted that the process of playing and coaching professional and semi-professional football *could* be considered an extremely disciplinary practice and can be radically different from what is often perceived by the lay person.

Despite this recognition, Parker (1996, p. 107) would still be accurate in saying that within British professional football, "insightful and substantive revelations regarding the day to day activities of players, coaches and managers are few and far between". The number of micro based investigations into the specific experiences of the game's players is minimal. This has led to a deficit in the appreciation of the impact of football culture upon her players.

The study of football as a potentially disciplinary field has not really ventured beyond the handful of studies listed above, and hence there remains a

significant lacuna of understanding of the everyday workings of contemporary football culture in academia. Several sources attribute this circumstance to the closed, 'bubble like' environment of the professional game, which views outsiders and innovation with extreme caution and scepticism (McGillivray, et al, 2005; Kuper & Szymanski, 2009; Simmons & Smith, 2004). This state of play, coupled with the limited number of interested parties who possess insider status has limited investigation into many aspects of British football culture.

By initiating a discussion into the nature of the sport of football, it is hoped that a greater understanding of the problems that occur when players are confronted by the "void" of retirement from the game (Gilbourne, 2002, p. 86), may be developed. Here, I study the aspects of the game which contribute to making this void so apparent. It is clear that even a relatively successful player is significantly exposed to the high tempo and expectant cultures of the sport of football, often for a lengthy period of his youth and adult life. Consequently the relationships and experiences formulated within this environment impact immensely upon experiences of retirement.

There are a few observations from existing studies that begin to explore the full extent of the disciplinary impact of professional football. For example, Giulianotti (1999), drawing on Foucault's (1991) notions of discipline, noted how professional football clubs as carceral institutions, demand certain behaviour from players. He noted that the temporal and spatial organisation of these clubs served to discipline players through panoptic and literal surveillance that regulates expected behaviours. According to Giulianotti, the regimes observed in football

clubs and the nature of the refined spaces afforded to players, coupled with the regular examinations of players by those in expert positions (such as coaches, nutritionists and fitness instructors) mirror many of Foucault's disciplinary tools and are an example of panoptic surveillance. Giulianotti noted that this disciplinary environment served to develop players with the 'right mentality'. This is a player who is seen as having a stunted personality, but, an obedient respect for authority. Giulianotti explained at length the subtle nature of the disciplinary environment that English players reside within:

> In the UK, professional players have common occupational routines, rising for training in the morning, having the afternoon free for recreational sport and leisure, then socialising more widely at night (though still within a particular network of relationships). This highly competitive, often violent ethos of professional football is accepted as 'part of the game'. Friendships and senses of empathy exist among players at different clubs, but when the match starts such sentiments go 'out the window' for the 'true professional'. Some deviation is tolerated, but players who do not fit in with the dressing room banter are socially marginalised. Players tend to have the same limited educational background, conservative social values, and codes of communication that are 'restricted' in meaning to fellow professionals. (p. 114)

Here the established 'true' view of English players who have been disciplined into certain ways of being is discussed. Roderick (2006, p. 51) also noted how in failing to express their feelings and misgivings and in conforming to the

institutionalised norms of the game, "players reinforce the existing values, norms and power relations in professional football". Giulianotti has also illustrated how the repetitive and closed everyday lifestyle of an English player disciplines them. Further to this generic discipline, a specific example of the disciplinary nature of the British football environment comes from the norms surrounding the coaching practices that pervade this space.

Christensen (2009) and Cushion and Jones (2006) primarily illustrated the distinctly authoritarian nature of the coaching process, but along with McGillivray et al (2005) they also exposed several important coach-player interactions that are in play within the football context that contribute to the disciplinary nature of the field.

Cushion and Jones (2006) identified the English professional football club as what Bourdieu might call a 'field'. The positions of individuals within this field are more or less dominating, reflecting each individual's access to certain capital within this field (Jenkins, 1992). In order to describe a footballer's experience in this field, Cushion and Jones utilised the concept of 'habitus' to explain behaviours and attitudinal adherence. According to these authors, in the context of the English professional football academy they studied, a learned 'habitus' is developed that is predominantly based around maintaining and displaying a recognisable 'professional attitude'. This 'habitus' disposes the actors (in this case developing footballers) to behave in a certain way, and often occurs in a process that exists beyond conscious control or awareness. Each player will have his own 'habitus' based upon their varied experiences at the club,

as the authors noted, within this context players often are categorised into groups such as 'favourites', 'peripherals', or 'rejects'. These authors also noted the constant review and evaluation of young players by their coaches, both subjectively and objectively. Indeed the coaches "used authoritarian actions to define and categorise players as good or bad" (p. 158). An example of this was the specific targeting of an out of form fringe player during a training session and bombarding him with overtly aggressive negative feedback and derisory comments. This particular example is one of several that illustrate a heavy climate of expectancy and an abundance of authoritarian coaching justified by traditional practice. It is within this climate of expectancy and symbolic violence that a football player's 'habitus' is produced. Certain principles were internalised and a 'habitus' similar to that of the coaches was learned in order to make the grade, or be seen as conforming in attempt to 'make the grade', that is, to succeed in becoming a professional. Those whose 'habitus' does not appear to conform to the prescribed model are labelled as rejects and often denigrated and exposed through symbolic violence and "hostile training conditions" (p. 154) most notably represented via derisory comments or shamming. Potrac and Jones (2009, p. 558) supported this finding when they also identified that coaches are likely to "tease, cajole, flatter and bully" to achieve their desired performance outcomes from players.

At different stages throughout their research Cushion and Jones (2006) referenced the theoretical thoughts of Bourdieu (1984, 1998), Foucault (1977, 1991) and Goffman (1959). The notions of 'habitus' and 'capital' were

introduced and utilised to illustrate how symbolic violence exists in this context, and secondly how the development of a recognisable and constantly displayed good attitude occurs through this enforced discipline. Cushion and Jones' (2006) study managed to accurately reveal elements of the complex experiences of developing players in a football club and the essentiality of taking into account relations between coaches and players that serve to discipline players.

A critical look at talent identification and development processes found in professional football can further reveal the disciplinary nature of the realms of this sport. Christensen (2009), Cushion and Jones (2006), Roderick (2006) and Williams and Reilly (2000) have all revealed that certain subjective components of football talent are valued by the expert observer. Christensen, in challenging the notion that talent identification is a rational objective process, noted that top level soccer coaches use what Bourdieu (1998) called their 'practical sense' to establish the quality of developing players. Christensen suggested that using Bourdieu's theories of practical sense, classificatory schemes and taste, could highlight the role of an expert coaches incorporated and tacit knowledge in the talent identification process. He found that the highly subjective variation in taste among soccer coaches illustrated "their power as the ultimate arbiters in top-level soccer" (p. 377). Christensen, therefore, highlighted talent identification as a "self-perpetuating cycle of construction and reconstruction", which "nurtures the talent it wishes to replicate" (p. 278). Talent development processes in professional football are dominated by expert individuals who value certain characteristics and therefore discipline players into certain ways of being.

The studies of Christensen (2009) Cushion and Jones (2006) and Giulianotti (1999), although insightful in their revelations of disciplinary practices present in football, have at no stage begun to consider the potential link between discipline and how footballers view themselves in retirement. Instead these studies concentrate upon the hierarchical structures which contribute to an overtly disciplinary environment, simply highlighting the negative aspect of discipline rather than considering its full often productive effect.

As mentioned, the long-term consequences of residing within a football environment have not been visited in any detail. There are however some studies in sport, and in particular British football that do consider the importance of a player's experiences and identity formation during his career. It is therefore necessary to briefly consider the findings from this research to understand how identities are developed in this professional environment.

2.5 Football and 'Athletic Identity' – Storying a 'Footballer Identity'

Overman (2009) noted that athletes develop an identity composed almost entirely from their involvement in sport. Indeed the impression he took from reading the life stories of hundreds of North American male professional athletes was that "athletes identify with their sport and their lives are defined by their sport" (p. 61). Messner (1987) also identified that the longer athletes remained in a sport and the better they became at that particular sport, the more likely they were to be influenced to promote their identity as that of an athlete. Given these observations it is important to consider any work that has considered the impact of football upon a professional player's perception of his own identity.

Several studies into elite sport have utilised Foucault's (1991) concept of discipline to specifically illustrate how being disciplined into an athletic identity contributes significantly to how athletes experience their lives during and after participation in competitive sport (e.g., Hickey & Kelly, 2008, Shogan, 1999; Stevenson, 1999, 2002). Hickey and Kelly (2008) in particular found that the environment of professional Australian Rules (ASL) football is extremely disciplinary in its nature, especially with regard to the development of player identity. These authors found that when attempting to deal with the expectations of enforced retirement, the identity constructs learned during a player's career became detrimental and often a hindrance to his activities after his playing days were done. The importance of Hickey and Kelly's study of ASL football players cannot be understated here. This work is among the first to suggest that retirement and a disciplined identity need to be considered as relational, and therefore need to be studied together. I completely concur with this finding and this notion has significantly helped when framing this research project.

Consequently, this study promotes an examination of the disciplinary nature of British football when exploring the experiences of retired players. This is because, despite Hickey and Kelly's (2008) illustration of retirement in Aussie rules football, as yet, no work exists that investigates the explicit link between the disciplinary nature of professional association football and players' experiences of retirement. No connections between the relational aspects of a career or the everyday practices undertaken in a career and how a player experiences retirement have been made in any code of football.

Although there is a clear gap in the research here, there are studies that go

some way to highlight the disciplinary nature of football in the UK. One study

undertaken by Roderick (2006) does entertain in depth how the context of British

professional football (as a working environment) frames a player's lived

experience or *work* (including elements of retirement). This is a significant study

that has attempted to engage with the closed context of British football and how it

frames the athletic identity of players. Roderick's research considered the various

day to day working experiences of playing, injury and uncertainty from a large

sample of current and retired players from across the four professional divisions

in England. He placed the players at the centre of a sociologically informed study

upon English professional football, an approach that had not been fully embraced

in the past. Utilising his own background as a former professional player to gain

entry into this traditionally closed realm, Roderick interviewed a multitude of

professional players about their various experiences within the game, including

selection, injury and transfers. His clearest finding was that to succeed in

climbing the ladder in the professional game, adherence to a certain 'self-

presentation' or identity construct was considered an essential pre-requisite.

Throughout his research Roderick returned to the "constant reminders to players

to be 'good professionals', and to display an appropriate 'attitude'" (p. x).

Roderick (2006) is not alone in his identification that the possession of a

good attitude is seen as a major barometer of how committed or indoctrinated a

player has been to the performance of an athletic 'football identity'. This idea of

good attitude could also be described as being in the possession of a visible,

inherent desire to make it as a player (Gilbourne, 2002). This attitude is also summarised in football parlance by a display of sacrifice and the propensity to 'get stuck in' (Carter, 2006; Watt, 1995) regardless of the circumstance. Roderick noted that a professional player is always cognisant of the need to display this attitude and Gilbourne noted how if this attitude is fundamentally possessed by a player defeat becomes a "crippling experience" (p. 85). This 'good attitude' construct has been noted elsewhere with regard to professional sport, but has been termed the "committed athlete" (Smith-Maguire, 2002, p. 296).

Possession of such characteristics indicate to an expert observer or coach that an individual will be adept at transferring these talents into the current perceptions of athletic prowess, or may potentially be moulded into successful players for the future. Indeed the possession and expression of a strong sense of identity, has also been previously recognised in other areas as an aspect of peak performance such as dance (Privette, 1981), as 'coachability' in the field of sports coaching (Cassidy et al, 2004), and remains inherently so in British football (Cushion & Jones, 2006; Roderick, 2006).

The possession of a good attitude is valued above and beyond any objective measurements or even subjectively decided innate technical abilities in the sport of professional football (Christensen, 2009; Cushion & Jones, 2006; Gilbourne, 2002; Will, 2000; Roderick, 2006). Indeed Christensen noted that "The decisive factor in the development of a young soccer player is his 'character' or 'attitude' toward training and games" (p. 376). Cushion and Jones, Gilbourne, Will and Roderick found that the adherence to a strong professional attitude and

the willingness of individuals to accept and internalize the expectations of the coaching staff was highly regarded and integral to a player remaining or progressing as a footballer in the English game. As Cushion and Jones noted "The significance attributed to such behaviour by the coaches was considerable and more often outweighed any innate talent possessed by the players" (p. 152). This finding was further revealed by the opinions of the professional coaches interviewed by these authors who remained embedded within the talent development process of the English game. These coaches identified that the attitude of players is 'everything'. It is what they look for first and foremost and that only once a good attitude has been identified will coaches then look for the secondary assets of technical skill and athletic ability.

Cushion and Jones (2006) illustrated that an expert football coach's understanding includes that having a good attitude is a characteristic of paramount importance to the promising player. This is an attitude that must be evident at an early age, improved upon and sustained throughout a developing career. Williams and Reilly (2000, p. 658) also noted that the criteria used to identify this strong attitude, alongside other central components, include "Acronyms such as TABS (Technique, Attitude, Balance, Speed), SUPS, Speed, Understanding, Personality, Skill) and TIPS (Talent, Intelligence, Personality, Speed)". The presence of these acronyms strongly indicates the pervasiveness of the need for this good attitude or personality in the eyes of the expert, so much so that it is safe to say that it is common place in the game's development ethos. It is not only the display of the positive elements of this attitude that is resonant however. Roderick (2006) noted

that it is the rejection of any objection to the prescribed required behaviours that is as much a component of this good attitude as anything else, including willingness to please. He noted that the player

> Has to come to accept that he is, and will be treated as, 'a piece of meat'.
> He would 'never turn around and say anything', for the cultural values of
> professional football require players to hide their resentments and
> anxieties behind a demeanour of enthusiasm for the job. In the social
> context of the job he needs to show to significant others that even though
> he knows the manager may treat him like a piece of meat, he still 'loves
> the job'. For the sake of his reputation as a player, it is incumbent upon
> him to continue to display the characteristics of a 'good professional
> attitude', despite the levels of 'spiritually demanding play acting' (Terkel,
> 1975) this behaviour may require. (p. 158)

Clearly therefore, the possession of a good attitude is an essential component of the life world of professional footballers of all ages and stages in the UK.

Roderick (2006), using predominantly the theoretical tools of Goffman (1959) and on occasion Bourdieu (1984), Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) and Wacquant (1995, 2003) highlighted how a football player gradually adheres to an athletic identity (one that is primarily based around being an unquestioning worker). Roderick showed how professional footballers derive an identity from the activity of football which they have to so regularly engage in to attain an income or achieve status or 'capital'. This was reported in the most part, to be due to the intensely physical and emotional components of the sport and also that

for many players football is "the only thing they have ever done and the only thing they know how to do" (p. 16). When fulfilling this fantasy, players are happy, feel "like a fish in water" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 127). Part of this comforting feeling stems from their day to day interaction and completion of activities with fellow players who also inherently develop a sense of working community that is formed while existing within the cultures and 'workplace' of the game.

In the specific context of football, several other studies have explained how the identities of English football players are heavily influenced by their participation and experiences as apprentice and professional players (Cushion & Jones, 2006; Gearing, 1999; Gilbourne, 2002; McGillivray et al, 2005). Gearing (1999, p. 48) in his presentation of retired players' experiences noted that due to their constant intense involvement, footballers often seem to get their "professional and masculine identities intertwined". Gilbourne (2002, p. 72) noted that his participation in professional football still influences to this day his relationship with his family and the connection between my lived body and his own identity. Gilbourne also noted that while a player, his sense of worth was "firmly anchored to my sporting prowess" (p. 76). Lastly, McGillivray et al (2005) noted how an existence within football "represents more than just an activity" for its players and instead "colonizes the life world of its participants" (p. 120), so much so that in the words of Wacquant (1995, p. 507) it becomes inseparable from a player's "innermost identity".

It is not surprising therefore that so many players attempt to describe themselves and display the properties of such a sought after identity construct. Many of the studies reviewed in this section (Christensen, 2009, Cushion & Jones, 2006; Giulianotti, 1999; Parker, 1996, 2000; Roderick, 2006) reveal implicitly or explicitly how adhering to a 'footballer identity' is vital. These studies noted how important adoption of this identity is should an individual desire to reach, succeed and remain within, the higher echelons of this particular professional sport.

Given these clear revelations that training for and working as a footballer plays a central role in a player's self-configuration, it has been suggested that the removal of the ability or the denial of opportunities to participate in the sport will be a challenging and difficult experience for any player (Roderick, 2006). Gearing (1999) clearly noted this when he said, "The challenge for the professional footballer when he stops playing is to replace, or somehow come to terms with, his former identity as a player" (p. 48). McGivillary et al. (2005) have highlighted more precisely the dilemmas that face the footballer who becomes singularly committed to his playing identity through residence in the unforgiving environment of the British game.

> In this marriage of sport and identity formation, it is little wonder that Holt (1989), Gearing (1999), and Jones and Armour (2000) each argued that football players are often unable to detach themselves from the game once their careers come to an end. A 'footballing illusio' becomes part of their very being, and it is understandable why players near to, or in retirement often express a desire to remain within the game. (p. 106)

Following this sentiment, Roderick (2006) also noted that despite a multitude of sociologically informed studies of football reviewed above, most totally neglected to mention the experiences of those central to the sport...the players. These are players who dedicate their lives to learning and performing the game, moving through and remaining within the various sub-cultures and levels of the sport, until they are confronted with retirement (often being expelled from familiar surroundings in the process).

2.6 Athletic Identity and Resistance to the Challenges of Retirement

In the above section, the links between working as a professional football player and the development of an athletic identity have been explored. The prevalence of athletic identity as an accepted concept has led to the manipulation of an athletic identity as a means to negotiate retirement. Carless and Douglas (2009), in their interpretive analysis of two former professional golfers, have provided several suggestions for the negotiation of retirement from elite sport. These authors have suggested that by expanding the stories they tell about themselves, healthy athletes develop a resilient multi-dimensional self. This is a self that allows a sense of personal depth, coherent self-awareness, authenticity and positive mental well-being during and following retirement. According to Carless and Douglas (2009), once retired, the dominance of the performance oriented narrative that pervades elite and professional sport renders this expansive self-construct as difficult, but not impossible to retain. These authors contrast the experiences of a one-dimensional and troubled retired athlete with another who engaged in expansive alternative behaviours throughout her career. They suggest

that it is possible and indeed necessary for an athlete to avoid exclusively "storying their life around the contours of a performance narrative" (p. 64). This notion purports that expansion of an athletic self or identity during and after a career is the most beneficial means to avoid trapping oneself by relying upon "monological stories" (p. 64) surrounding one's athletic career.

In Carless and Douglas' (2009) analysis of sports retirement, importance is placed upon exposing retiring athletes to alternative opportunities during their career. The athlete needs to develop the capacity for re-imaging themselves as something other than simply an athlete, defined by athletic success. This detailed review of athletic experience reveals the acute impact that an elite athletic career has upon the athlete. These authors also encouraged, through the work of Spence (1982), the nurture and sustenance of the narrative thread that composes the core of one's identity. This is a narrative thread that potentially, through its armoured character, is cultivated through practice and can resist and reject the pervasive knowledges of a time and space. Through this resistance, the individual is capable of negotiating for their own ends the politics and process of subjection occurring in the context where they reside. Importantly, however, given the ontological framework (interpretive) adopted by these authors, the external effects of power that influence an individual in the social body are not recognised.

Similarly, a recent study conducted by Roderick (2013) has investigated 'job-loss' from British professional football. This study also utilises athletic identity as the central concept that a player needs to 'work upon' in order to negotiate the challenges of his enforced retirement. However, this research

suggests a footballer can negotiate the challenges of retirement through a process of 'dis-identification'. Roderick identified that to resist the oppressive working environment of football, players who have had their careers ended "intentionally dis-identify with their social roles to protect particular elements of their personhood" (p. 2), despite the fact that this action "challenges the dominant performance ideology of sport" (p. 4). Building on Carless and Douglas (2009), Roderick suggested that "A more adequate reading would be to conceptualise athletes' subjectivities as dynamic and relational with recognition to the 'work' they do on their self-identities" (p. 4). This study reveals that the player himself can take active steps to 'soften the blow' of job loss and it is through an engagement and re-working of his athletic identity where this takes place. Instead of being downtrodden by the harsh realities of this profession, Roderick suggested that players transiting away from the game resist by cynically creating "an interior space in which they feel relieved of their commitment to this social role as true-believing 'docile' employees" (p. 14).

This need to expand or dis-identify sounds sensible and appealing, and has many recorded benefits for the retiring athlete (Carless & Douglas, 2009; Coakley, 1992; Lally, 2007; Roderick, 2013). Carless and Douglas promote a narrative of retirement that so far has only been examined from an objective or interpretive lens, where the various complex workings of power that percolate to influence an individual have not been fully entertained. Roderick approaches enforced retirement from football from a critical perspective that considers football only as a hegemonic, oppressive power.

Both Carless and Douglas (2009) and Roderick (2013) produce an apparently sensible strategy for negotiating retirement. So, one might ask: why critique such apparently healthy suggestions? How could this process of healthy expansion or dis-identification with a toxic space possibly be considered from a negative viewpoint? What is important to consider is if it is realistic or proper to expect a player to individually negotiate through the manipulation of their own identities the tricky transition away from their work. The overall implications of adhering to an identity expansion or dis-identification after retirement have yet to be problematised through a socio-cultural, post-structurally informed lens. These implications are addressed in this research, specifically in chapter seven.

2.7 Summary of Sports Retirement Research

British professional football players and other retired athletes clearly experience significant challenges during their competitive careers and also when adapting to a lifestyle away from their own sporting realms once their elite or professional status is lost (Blinde & Stratta, 1992; Brewer, Van Raalte, & Linder, 1993; Sinclair & Orlick, 1993; Sparkes, 1998). Dryden (1983, p. 14) summarised potential reasons for these challenges by beautifully noting that "If it is true that a sports career prolongs adolescence, it is also true that when that career ends, it deposits the player into a premature middle age. For while he was always older that he seemed, he is suddenly younger than he feels".

The experiences that are so commonly reported could easily be summarised by Oriard, (1982) who noted that, "Sport offers an escape from life, but no return passage" (p. 130). This lack of 'return passage' is often magnified

by, and attributed to, the movement into new realms where alternative notions of identity may be required (Carless & Douglas, 2009; Douglas, 2009). What is clearly evident though is that despite a significant increase in the attention devoted to this area since the mid 1980's, elite players and athletes who lose their elite status are still an extremely large population who continue to experience difficulties negotiating their complex lifestyles and experiences. To continue Oriard's metaphor, many of those who have lost the opportunity to compete feel stranded, without knowing how to catch the return voyage, or even how to buy a ticket.

This review of sports retirement research has shown that this notion is echoed in British football where a large population of former deselected and retired players has been highlighted as having been "left behind" (McGivillary et al, 2005, p. 102). These players are still reporting similar personal problems to those first exposed at the outset of investigation into football retirement back in the 1950's and 1960's (Mihivilovic, 1968). Heikkala (1993) has noted that although sport is not forced labour it does include a strong element of voluntary action. Unfortunately, the long-term consequences of voluntarily adhering to the life of a professional footballer are often invisible to those who start down the path at a young age (McGillivray et al). As Chapman (1997) identified, the disciplinary components of an activity that determine the nature of athlete experience are all too often "masked from view" (p. 221). In the past, the negatives often only become apparent when retirement is confronted, and despite a plethora of investigations into the realm of sports retirement in general, the same

patterns of loss and difficulty are being regaled in the current generation of players approaching, and in the midst of retirement transitions or periods away from the game (Adams & Ridley, 1998; Gearing, 1999; McGillivray et al, 2005; Merson & Ridley, 2000; Roderick, 2006). In this study the disciplinary aspects of a career that may have contributed to these negative experiences are brought into the open and considered as essential to the understanding of retirement in British professional football.

Record numbers of recruits to football academies in the UK reveal that British football players clearly continue to pursue their careers despite these forecasted dangers (Green, 2009). These are dangers that include the very real risk of young players rejecting educational cultural capital in favour of investing everything in their (always degenerative) physical or bodily capital (Bourdieu, 1984; Wacquant, 1995). Due to this uninformed, impulsive career approach, released or post-players may have a greater need for assistance than the much smaller population of elite athletes or practising players that researchers in sports studies and especially sports science, seem forever dedicated to. This is made even more pertinent by the fact that when at their peak, athletes tend to be rooted in the present and spend much of their energy concentrating on immediate events such as output and performance, and athletic identity sustenance and protection (Adler & Adler, 1989; Roderick, 2006), instead of post-career contingency plans (McPherson, 1980).

There is also concrete evidence of a need to facilitate planning for the post-career stages of athletes' lives (McKenna & Thomas, 2007). Several sources

have indicated that even in the 21st century sports nexus, many professional athletes are ill prepared for their exit from sport (Overman, 2009; Lally, 2007; Torregrosa, et al, 2004). For example, research indicates that few elite athletes consider their post-athletic career concerns (Allison & Meyer, 1988; Gordon, 1995; Pearson & Petitpas, 1990; Thomas & Ermler, 1988).

Taylor, Ogilvie and Lavallee (2006) have expressed that this may be due in part to the large salaries that provide a false sense of security. Within the context of professional English football however (especially at the lower levels), Roderick (2006) has shown that those who receive the media reported 'huge salaries' are without doubt the exception rather than the rule. He noted that "the rewards available to professional footballers are in short supply for all but the most elite players" (p. 111). Overman (2009) has also noted the myth surrounding athletic income, noting that few athletes can support themselves from their accumulated earnings once they retire. It must also be noted here that financial recompense or status is hardly a healthy barometer for any kind of happiness or health, especially within a young population.

It is clearly evident then that not all players can financially or emotionally support themselves once retired or released, and furthermore that many struggle to deal with transitory periods in their lifelong negotiation of who they are (Gilbourne, 2002). It is this lifelong negotiation undertaken once they enter into the retirement phase that this study considers at length, predominantly through a closer look at how players are influenced during their careers within the modern game.

2.8 Retirement in Football Studies – What Next?

Roderick (2006), in his examination of the working experiences of British professional footballers, has provided an excellent portrayal of the working nature of the sport of professional football. Through his pioneering study into the daily lives of British players, he has for the first time brought to light the intense and treacherous elements of an always uncertain playing career. In viewing the sport of football as a profession, Roderick has helped to expose many of the day to day practices that help frame the life of a British footballer, including; the necessity of dealing with injury, transfer from one club to another, the exposure to a multitude of different relationships from a young age and the incessant adhering to the cultural norms of the sport. Roderick not only described the practical implications of adhering to this profession, but also revealed how working as a footballer contributes to the development and attachment to a certain identity. At no stage however, did Roderick explore the multiple possibilities that the utilisation of Foucault's theory of discipline may provide into the study of professional footballers retirement experiences. Roderick also falsely identifies professional football as a whole as a "technology of self" and although he correctly intimates that Foucault's work is relevant for the working football environment, he fails to clearly elaborate how this may be so, primarily because of his limited engagement with Foucault's tools of analysis.

Roderick (2006) briefly examined early retirement as a result of an injury or lack of contract renewal in his study into the work of professional football, however, the after-work, retirement experiences of these individuals were not

visited at any length as they were for the first time in this study. Roderick did note that on multiple occasions retired players moved into positions in "related or adjacent fields" (p. 26), but further explanation surrounding this transition was not elaborated upon in this research study.

The only existing research that has considered retirement in British football has suggested that the majority of footballers are unprepared for (Gearing, 1999; McGillivray et al, 2005) or fear (Giulianotti, 1999; Roderick, 2006) retirement. This common finding is useful to set the scene and also confirms a solidarity and congruence with the existing research in sports retirement. However, no existing research studies provide any great depth or detail regarding how this long and complex stage of a football player's life is negotiated once professional status has been lost. As previously noted, some studies have reported that a problematic adaptation to retiring from sport is common (Stephan et al, 2003), even leading to suicide (Frith, 1990).

Coakley (1983) cautioned the sports scholar not to assume that every retirement experience will be negative. Roderick (2006) has echoed this sentiment and also warned against the assumption that the majority of retired players experience overly traumatic social difficulties once they leave the professional ranks. In his study, Roderick has suggested that for some of the players that he did discuss retirement with, it appeared to "provide a degree of relief" (p. 172). This finding again mirrors Coakley's suggestions when he noted that retirement should not be branded universally traumatic, or universally cathartic.

Despite Roderick's (2006) brief observations of retirement, it is quite clear, as he puts it, that due to the conflicting findings from across studies into retirement, that, "the subject of managing retirement from the game needs further scrutiny by social scientists" (p. 173). To clarify the status of research into retirement in British football, it is worth quoting Roderick at length:

> While players may harbour genuine concerns about future employment and may be inappropriately equipped for a second career, a step away from professional football is not necessarily experienced negatively. *The experience of retirement from football is one that requires much further research (emphasis added).* (p. 172)

My research study begins to address this lacuna of knowledge surrounding the retirement experiences of this population. Roderick's work has helped to identify the restrictive aspects of this volatile profession for "working bodies" (p. 25). However a deeper appreciation of football as a modernist construct or a 'modernist discipline' (Markula & Pringle, 2006; Shogan, 1999) is necessary to fully understand the impact of a football career on retired players.

2.9 Research Question

This research study establishes an understanding of how the relatively unknown population of former male professional footballers negotiate retirement. The 'bubble-like' environment of the British game (McGillivray et al, 2005) means that little is known about the day to day workings of its professionals (Roderick, 2006) and even less is understood about those players who have experienced unexpected retirement. Hardly anything is known about the

experiences of the young adult male players who are discarded by this intensely competitive environment.

An extensive review of research has revealed that the nature of the modern environment of British football has a significant impact upon its players while they are performing the different stages of their careers (Brown & Potrac, 2009; Cushion & Jones, 2006, 2012; McGillivray et al, 2005; Roderick, 2006). No study exists that primarily suggests that an understanding of the socio-cultural fabric of a particular sport needs to be at the forefront of a research philosophy when interrogating the experiences of that particular sport's post-career individuals. This innovative approach therefore seems prudent as retired footballers are individuals who, during their career, spend a large amount of time within this enclosed cultural space.

The young male participants in my research study have been confronted with an unexpected retirement and are therefore forced to deal with this life altering moment (Gilbourne, 2002) with much greater immediacy that they might have expected at the outset of their footballing pathway (Brown & Potrac, 2009). This is despite enforced retirement through de-selection and injury being identified and explained to players as an extremely common occurrence (McGillivray et al, 2005). Tillson, in Jones (2007) illustrated that these young men are extremely vulnerable when they are confronted with this transitional stage. When the professional football clubs "wash their hands" of them (Brown & Potrac, p. 152), players face a testing and confusing period in their still formative lives. Brown and Potrac have also revealed the difficulties experienced

by youth players who are 'let go', before even reaching the fully professional ranks or gaining first team league appearance (a real barometer of success in the game, according to Roderick, 2006).

The young adult men in my research study are all continuing to negotiate an enforced retirement transition. It is through a critical engagement with the experiences of these retired players that the most about the difficulties of navigating the liminal space of retirement can be learnt. The enforced displacement from the uterine environment of the game (Kay, in Amies, 2009) and the relative immediacy of their removal from the familiar scenery of football (with which they have been so familiar, Gearing, 1999; McGillivray et al, 2005; Roderick, 2006) are key factors to consider. These factors allow greater insight into the phenomenon of retirement in football than any previous study. This investigation allows for a detailed and graphically revealing insight into how a player's football days perhaps still resonate deeply as they deal with their ongoing and lifelong retirement (Gilbourne, 2002) from the professional and semi-professional ranks of the British game.

It must also be noted that these players forgo, ignore or are actively discouraged from engaging in educational opportunities (Brown & Potrac, 2009; McGillivray et al, 2005; Roderick, 2006), mirroring the decisions of other performers from other global footballing codes (Hickey & Kickey, 2008) and other performance arts such as ballet (Privette, 1991). Unlike the released youth players of Brown and Potrac's study, or players who entered into retirement voluntarily, these are young men who have somewhat reached their goal and then

had their desired vocational pathway abruptly removed. This removal occurs despite these young men remaining (in most cases), physically capable and highly motivated.

It is no surprise that these men take significant time to navigate this readjustment process. Existing research has also indicated general dissatisfaction with the educational and alternative vocational provision made for retiring football players (Brown & Potrac, 2009; Drawer & Fuller, 2002; Hickey & Kelly, 2008; McGillivray et al, 2005). This dissatisfaction, coupled with the continual difficulties reported by retiring footballers (Gearing, 1999, Kay, in Amies, 2009; Tillson, in Jones, 2007; Turner et al, 2000; Woods et al, 2004) first identified as early as the 1960's (Mihivilovic, 1968), clearly indicates that intervention still needs to occur on behalf of this population. In order for fresh recommendations can be made, research that considers not only the individual player, but the socio-cultural implications of his exposure to the realm of professional sport must take place. Therefore, in order to fill this research void, this project asks,

How does working within the 'modern discipline' of British professional football impact upon footballers' retirement experiences?

By asking this question, this study contributes to the lack of research regarding the human experience of retiring from sport (McKenna & Thomas, 2007). Through this question my research adopts an approach similar to that proposed by Shogan (1999) and Markula and Pringle (2006) who, in advocating a Foucauldian approach conceptualised athletes as being "produced via their sporting experiences that are structured within relations of power" (p. 100). Sport therefore

is an activity that significantly impacts upon an athlete's life during and after his playing days. In conceptualising contemporary athletes in this manner, it is necessary to regard sport (including professional football) as a "modern discipline" (p. 100) that serves to produce athletes as subjects. In the chapter that follows I highlight how the sport of football in Britain is a 'modern discipline' and will reveal the components of this disciplinary space. Although Giulianotti (1999) has provided a brief description that football is a disciplinary space, I undertake this exercise in order to reveal that significantly more detail is required in order to provide the foundation to suggest a connection between localised discipline, the production of docile bodies and after-sport experiences related to this docility.

3.0 Foucault's Disciplinary Analysis and British Professional Football

In his book *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison,* Michel Foucault (1991), through his examination of penitentiary systems and systems of punishment, developed a critique of conventional understanding of modernity (Cole, Giardina, & Andrews, 2004). Foucault identified that the system of punishment advocated under sovereign rule was losing its effect with regard to the control of an increasingly modern society. Foucault (1980, p. 151), identified that "changes of the eighteenth century made it necessary to ensure the circulation of power through progressively finer channels, gaining access to individuals themselves, to their *bodies (emphasis added)*, their gestures and all their daily actions". Foucault observed that in reaction to an age increasingly influenced by rationality and humanism, operations of power evolved that were more efficient, productive and co-operative and could indeed gain access to the individual and their body. Foucault (1991) also believed that due to its relational nature, power existed in multiple forms, however at this earlier stage of his work, he was particularly interested in what he identified as "disciplinary power" (p. 105). Foucault (1980, p. 93) saw this form of power as capable of producing certain "discourses of truth in society" that resulted in "potent effects upon the individual". Markula and Pringle (2006, p. 38) identified that "The 'potent effects' he was particularly concerned about referred to the control, judgement and normalisation of subjects in such a way that they were 'destined to a certain mode of living or dying'". Hence, Foucault (1991) identified an increasingly

prevalent means through which the bodies of those in society were controlled as modernity blossomed.

Foucault (1991) also identified that this type of power (disciplinary power) was exercised through technologies of discipline and fundamentally operated upon the "control and discipline of bodies" (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 39) and that the body was "the object and target of power" (Foucault, 1991, p. 136). Fundamentally, he began to examine how as a result of techniques of discipline, docile bodies were produced that were economically efficient and politically obedient.

Foucault (1978) demonstrated that power pervades the entire social body and is therefore constant in all social interactions. According to Foucault, the omnipresence of power indicates that sport does not occur in a political vacuum separate from the influence of power. Consequently, in order to appreciate the social effects of a sporting culture, power cannot be ignored. Sporting contexts are localised environments were power is constantly at play, and where individuals are subjected to power as a result of their commitment to a sporting role. Markula and Pringle (2006) noted that the nature of sport as a modernist pursuit has the effect of producing docile bodies. Sport is therefore a clear location where discipline 'ensures the circulation of the effects of power' (Foucault, 1980). Discipline is a vehicle for the filtration of power and is responsible for the production of docile bodies in sporting spaces; therefore, a mechanism that can help to articulate the influence of power upon an athlete is extremely helpful. Existing research has shown that Foucault's (1991)

disciplinary analysis has proved fruitful in better understanding the relations of power that influence the lived experience of athletes in elite sport settings (Heikkala, 1993; Shogan, 1999). It is for this reason that Foucault's disciplinary analysis is adopted here in order to explore retirement from British professional football. All human interactions are distinguished by power "at every point" (Foucault, 1978, p. 93), subsequently all football retirement experiences are also governed by the influence of power. In order to understand retirement experiences, one cannot simply focus on the possessed characteristics of a retired footballer; rather one should examine the relations of power within which he has been produced as a docile body.

In several sports studies, elements of Foucault's (1991) analysis of discipline have been utilised to attempt to explain how the physical environments where elite sport takes place have been devised to discipline athletes into the performance of various required aspects of sport. These include basketball (Shogan, 1999), track and field (Denison et al, 2013, Denison, 2007; Heikkala, 1993; Shogan, 1999), aerobics (Markula, 2003), swimming (McMahon, Penney, & Dinan-Thompson, 2011; Jones Glintmeyer & McKenzie, 2005; Stevenson, 2002), gymnastics (Barker-Ruchti & Tinning, 2010; Johns & Johns, 2000) and rugby (Markula & Pringle, 2006; Pringle & Markula, 2005). These studies have predominantly adopted Foucault's analysis to identify instances where a sporting individual becomes a docile body through exposure to various arrangements of space, activities, time and forces (Markula & Pringle, 2006; Shogan, 1999).

Denison and Avner (2011) have suggested that it is not just sport in general, but specifically the interrogation of everyday coaching practices through a Foucauldian understanding that can benefit athletes' welfare and enhance coaches' effectiveness. This is an important standpoint to recognise as it illustrates the need to apply Foucault's analysis to existing coaching practices and to help identify the outcomes of these practices (including the long-term impacts of practices for those in retirement). The social impact of coaching practices as they pertain to the working experiences of professional British football has been studied to an extent (Roderick, 2006). However, the dynamics of how discipline is circulated in this context, specifically with regard to how retirement experiences are negotiated, has yet to be visited. In order to excavate the influence of the coaching practices and day to day interactions of professional football upon retirement experience, a re-visitation of football as a 'modern discipline' is first necessary.

3.1 Power in British Professional Football - A 'Modern Discipline'

Foucault (1980, p. 148) noted that "the procedures of power that are at work in modern societies are numerous, diverse and rich". Here I reveal that the organisational structure and history of working British professional football is a power-laden cultural phenomenon. Foucault encouraged the socially aware researcher to consider a 'history of the present', to identify how cultural norms and practices have come to exist as they do. Foucault (1994, p. 327) noted that in order to attempt to understand an aspect of culture "we have to know the historical conditions that motivate our conceptualisation". This short history of

British professional football highlights it role as a disciplinary tool for the distribution of power in modern British society.

As a product of modernisation, codified amateur and professional football clubs have consistently had a disciplinary impact upon those who perform the role of a footballer. Since the conception of football as a professional sport, footballers have been referred to as 'slaves' and 'working class heroes' (Crichter, 1979), and more recently as 'workers' (Roderick, 2013). It is clear that football has historically been a working environment within which a certain section of the British populace, predominantly the working class, (Jones, 1992) has been the target of a 'disciplinary' agenda (Hughson, 2009). Hughson has revealed how the production of modernist pursuits such as football helped with the 'disciplining' of the working class populace in industrial Britain throughout the 19th and early 20th century, a trend that has remained (Hornby, 1992), and was re-emphasised during the 'hooligan years' (Armstrong & Harris, 1991). Football is a space where power influences multiple interactions, including the interactions and experiences of working football players.

Korr (1978) noted that although unanimous opinion has not been reached upon the distinct origins of British football as a peasant game, it is clear that numerous forms of games did take place across Pre-industrial Britain (Walvin, 1975). As a result of the modernisation of British society, football in its various guises was taken from the countryside and "civilised" (Mangan, 2008, p. 171) during the industrial era of the 19th century. Within a few decades, codified football emerged out of the British public school system because of its capacity to

build character and to teach the values of leadership, loyalty and discipline

(Giulianotti, 1999). Much has been written about the impact of public school

athleticism and 'Muscular Christianity' upon the codification of modern sport

during the 19th century (Holt, 1989; Mason, 1980). It is not my intention to

contribute further to this discussion, save to identify that 'Muscular Christianity'

is an excellent example of a disciplinary ethos, in line with what Hughson (2009)

identified as the mission to 'discipline' the British populace at this time of

blossoming modernity. Codification and regulation of 'football' within British

public schools led to the gentlemanly mastery of the principles of courage and

strength taking president, young men were to 'function' as valued members of

British society. This preparatory ethos replaced an emphasis based purely upon

the possession of raw physical and humanistic characteristics, and could easily be

categorised as a disciplined, organised response to the onslaught of modernism at

the turn of the 19th century. Walvin (1975) explained the evolution of British

recreation as a result of modernism. In this evolutionary process, codified

football was the cornerstone.

> The contrast with pre-industrial leisure was stark. The new forms of
> leisure were as disciplined, regulated and even timetabled as the industrial
> society which spawned them. The irregular, undisciplined and violent
> recreations of an older society gave way to the stringency of more modern
> recreations. (p. 56)

Specific days of the week emerged where football was to be regularly played,

most commonly on Saturday afternoons, but also sometimes on Wednesdays

(Walvin). This emergence of organised timetabling is another clear example of Hughson's (2009) disciplinary agenda reaching fruition, organising the British populace into a working week and re-creative weekend schedule. Football became a focal point in most urban societies, creating an excellent site for congregation and community where the modernising influence of power could continue to be localised despite the working population not being at their primary place of work (the factory etc.).

In 1863 the conception of the football's governing body (and most influential institution) the Football Association (FA) arrived at a time when the industrialisation of English society was accelerating (Butler, 1996). This acceleration was substantiated by the growth of population, immigration from rural communities to the ever expanding and increasingly mechanised cities, and the development of national railway networks (Baker, 1979). After its humble beginnings in 1863, the FA grew in stature and the level of organisation within the game across the whole country expanded. Due to the subsequent monopolistic control the FA acquired they established control over the British game, and this led to their influence permeating all aspects of football for the majority of the following century (Butler, 1996; Walvin, 1975).

As the professional game grew and mirrored the growth of accelerating modernity in British society, an authoritarian and increasingly disciplinary culture blossomed within the confines of the professional game (Carter, 2006). This ethos for the most part replaced the residue of simplistic amateur ideals from public school origins and the 'cult of amateurism' (Holt, 1989). Professionalism

pushed forward and football developed into an institution that demanded

"regimentation, rules, punctuality and commitment that did not fit in with the

more casual amateur approach" (Birley, 1993, p. 238). Carter in his study of

football management noted that as a result, throughout the 20th century, military

techniques and a 'management of fear' were the norm. Managers utilised violent

and abusive language, direct personal castigation and scornful humour as a key

disciplinary techniques to reinforce player subordination. As we have seen, these

are elements that still pervade the professional levels of the game today (Cushion

& Jones, 2006, 2012). Carter also noted that most managers were, and still

usually are former players and have been immersed in these authoritarian habits;

consequently they are passed on from one generation to the next (Day, 2013). It

is through this cyclical process that the "authoritarian tendencies" (p. 7) found in

professional football have remained and continue to influence coaching practices

(Cushion & Jones, 2006; Roderick, 2006), and mould player experiences in the

contemporary game.

Roderick (2006, p. 23) has noted that football is "highly skilled manual

labour". Foucault (1980, p. 161) noted the function of labour in a modern society

when he identified that "there is always present this triple function of labour; the

productive function, the symbolic function and the function of *dressage, or*

discipline (emphasis added)...The symbolic and disciplinary functions are very

important". For Foucault (1980), the importance of any form of labour in the

production of power relations was evident. Any close observation of today's

organised professional football labour environment will reveal that it remains a

fiercely disciplinary context, even in what Giulianotti (1999) has coined

'football's post-modern era'. Parker (1996, p. 61) identified that the realm of

British football still has an "explicit institutional logic which incorporates notions

of personal integrity conscientiousness, discipline and the development of a

healthy professional attitude". Furthermore, Roderick's (2006) description of

uncertainty in the working football environment echoes many of the elements of

control of individual players and speaks to discipline from a Foucauldian sense.

Indeed, Roderick stated his intention to develop a deeper understanding of how

'working bodies' are subjected to institutional control and how they subsequently

behave. Although football is obviously a sport, the working nature of the game

and the intense physical labour of the role cannot be overlooked here. A

professional player from Roderick's (2006) study emphasised this when he

recognised football was a working position, as a result he submitted to the job and

felt that he had improved.

> There was a point where I realised that I needed to go and do this and this
>
> to do with work and I was disciplined enough to go and do it...I got to
>
> thinking 'I've done my work, so there is no reason why I shouldn't have a
>
> good game tomorrow'. (p. 39)

Neither Giulianotti (1999), Parker (1996) nor Roderick (2006) undertook a

detailed analysis of the specific disciplinary components of professional football

(in a Foucauldian sense). Roderick's study reveals some previously unknown

intimate details of a footballer's working life, but as yet, no comprehensive

investigation of the composites of football as a day to day disciplinary practice

exists. However, it is clear that any observation of the historical make up or the contemporary elements of British football culture will reveal that it is without doubt a disciplinary space. Therefore, an exploration of how these components impact a retired player's experiences also remains absent from socio-cultural research of football. This study addresses this research gap. To achieve this, my research study into retirement from football uses Foucault's analysis of discipline to build on Roderick's work and specifically attempts to identify how the disciplinary practices of professional football have contributed to a player's career experiences and the legacy of those experiences in retirement.

Giulianotti (1999) briefly attempted to apply Foucault's (1991) disciplinary analysis to football by revealing how the aspects of time, space and activities are controlled in the football context:

> In these settings, the individual is removed from routine social relations and relocated within a confined space. The body is subjected to new and rigid disciplines, and examined by 'experts' or other figures of scientific authority. The diet and fitness of players are constantly monitored. Sexual relations are prohibited in the days before matches; some clubs remove players from the family home and place them in special training camps. During training, players are put through a complete regimen of repetitive exercises day after day. (p. 109)

Importantly, Giulianotti made an attempt to explain how the nature of the professional football environment disciplines players through the control of the

space, time and activities that Foucault identified as fundamental to the imposition of discipline upon a body.

3.1.1 Docility.

Foucault (1980, p. 92) described power in modernity as "the multiplicity of force relations immanent in their own sphere". In order to 'activate' this power, disciplinary practices emerged within certain spheres with the intention of creating a useful body capable of enacting power. This was a body with efficient movement and certain productive characteristics appropriate for the task that was required to further the ambitions of the 'force relations' present. As a result Foucault (1991) noted that a docile body is one that "may be subjected, used, transformed and improved" (p. 136). A docile body absorbs power through discipline, and as a result becomes efficacious in its sphere, influencing practices, attitudes and societal truths. Foucault (1980, p. 155) noted that, "If one can succeed at the level of a small group, one can extend the procedure to take in the whole of society".

Sports teams could be described as small groups compiled of docile bodies. Currently in the field of sports studies, the disciplinary analysis of Foucault has been used to expose how disciplinary techniques are "fundamentally concerned with controlling the location of individuals and the production of work – via manipulation of pace or architecture, the organization of time and the use of graduated, repetitive and systematized 'exercises' – to help produce docile but productive bodies" (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 41). Giulianotti (1999) has identified that during every working day of a footballer's career, disciplinary

practices impact upon him, rendering him a docile body. The characteristics of the work of professional football clearly manipulate bodies to conform to normalised ideals in order that their required task of competing on the football field can be achieved with maximum efficiency. As a result, through docility, football players are influenced by power and are also influential in the dissemination of power in society. This has to have an effect on the players and those around them who are complicit in their docility. This research attempts to uncover what these long-term effects are.

Importantly, no-one has yet to explicitly excavate the particular day to day practices of discipline in a football context to discover how the experiences may have an important lasting effect upon the retired player. The long-term impact of any exposure to these practices is also unknown. Once these important fragments are understood with greater detail, a broader appreciation of the impact of docility upon retirement can be ascertained.

In this chapter I present a detailed outline of how Foucault (1991) observed disciplinary techniques "as a composite of his larger project concerning technologies of dominance" (Denison et al, 2013, p. 389). This exercise has been undertaken in order that any connections between the lived experiences of a professional football career and retirement might be observed in a manner not previously adopted. This grounding will then provide a foundation from which to address the potential impact of football's disciplinary practices upon her player's retirement experiences. Furthermore, Foucault's (1991) tools will provide me with the analytical concepts with which to carry out my study into retirement from

football. Foucault allows me to remove the focus from the individual player and to place the emphasis upon gaining a greater understanding of the impact of the socio-cultural fabric of football.

3.2 Components of Discipline in British Professional Football

As mentioned above, football clubs are historically locations where the workings of modern power have visibly influenced and 'disciplined' British society (Hughson, 2009). In this section I consider the impact of working within these power-laden locations upon retired players. I will achieve this through an examination of the disciplinary practices observable in those contexts. To reiterate, this research attempts to develop further an understanding of the complex relationship between the disciplinary technologies that exist in British football and player retirement. Specifically, I consider how exposure to localised discipline might contribute to the manner in which relatively young players who have lost their professional status respond to their enforced retirement.

Foucault (1991) described how certain methods can be articulated as 'disciplines':

An uninterrupted, constant coercion, supervising the processes of the activity rather than its result...exercised according to a codification that partitions as closely possible time, space, movement. These methods, which made possible the meticulous control of the operations of the body, which assured the constant subjection of its forces and imposed on them a relation of docility-utility, might be called 'disciplines'. (p. 181)

It is quite clear from the description of historical and contemporary football settings earlier in this chapter that football must be considered and studied as power-laden and one of these 'disciplines', in fact as a 'modern discipline' (Markula & Pringle, 2006; Shogan, 1999) with potential effects upon football's population.

Adopting Foucault's appreciation of discipline, Denison et al (2013) provided a detailed account of how certain essential techniques of discipline are pervasive in sports coaching across elite sport and specifically track and field. The effect of these techniques is to transform an athlete (or in this case a football player), into an "object of knowledge" (Heikkala, 1993, p. 401). This is so that he can efficiently perform skills, strategies and desired behaviours that are productive in their sporting context (training, responding to instruction, and displaying technique upon demand). Essentially, the effect of disciplinary practice is to produce an individual who increases his mastery of his own body and its function, rendering himself a 'docile body'. A body which Foucault (1991, p. 180) noted, "Obeys, responds, becomes skilful, and increases its force". As Shogan (1999, p. 30) highlighted, these techniques of discipline "penetrate individual bodies, enabling them to perform actions not otherwise possible".

To better understand the experiences of retired football players who have lost their professional status at a relatively young age, the first step that must be taken is to appreciate the day to day practical disciplinary process experienced by players during their career. In what follows, I utilise Foucault's (1991) analysis of discipline to exemplify the components of British football which can be

considered as disciplinary techniques. Again, it will be these specifically these concepts that I will use to structure my analysis of how footballers understand their retirement experiences.

3.2.1 The art of distribution in British professional football.

For power to be imposed upon an individual body through disciplinary techniques, Foucault (1991) identified that first and foremost, an allocated space was required, what he termed, an 'enclosure'. Within this enclosed space the body could engage with "disciplinary monotony" (p. 141) and production could become more concentrated, harbouring the influence of power. Moreover, within this allocated space the individual must be subject to "partitioning" (p. 143) so that the conduct of each individual may be assessed and judged at any given time by the expert coach, (a common practice in professional football, Christensen, 2009). This disciplinary 'enclosure' separates individuals and renders them easier to observe and control (Markula & Pringle, 2006; Spielvogel, 2002), eliminates imprecise distributions (Foucault, 1991) and allows for the influence of power to be acutely distributed at a focal point.

The body of a professional football player is exposed to a multitude of various spaces during their working career. Football has a multitude of day to day practices, the vast majority of which occur in regulated and controlled spaces behind closed doors (Roderick, 2006). This is an excellent example of Foucault's 'enclosure', one that is also further stratified (what Foucault articulated as being 'cellular'). For example, the various locations within the space of a football club are where most players spend their day to day lives. These spaces include the

various rooms and facilities of the football club including the changing room, the gymnasium, the physiotherapy room and the manager's office. When operating within any of these 'enclosures', a player is expected to perform specific work upon his body, be it strength and conditioning in the gym, rehabilitation work, relenting to bodily examination in the physiotherapy room, or discussion regarding performance or contract talks in the manager's office.

Most importantly with regard to Foucault's art of distribution, a football player spends a huge amount of time in a preordained space (a pitch), enclosed by the parameters of the touchlines. Not only is the football player intensely visible and surveyed by expert observers throughout this allocated space (Shogan, 1999), but he is often further restrained within this 'enclosure' by the 'function' attributed to his body by his playing position (goalkeeper, defender, midfielder, forward or utility player). This 'function' is an essential component of the art of distribution as it provides the individual knowledge of how to act/perform with the enclosed space, 'functioning' as a docile body.

Within a football club various other 'enclosures' can also be found. Several training pitches/areas are often found, each with its own significance. For example, space is claimed for youth team players, reserves and usually sanctified spaces for first team players. A further example is the hallowed turf of the first team stadium that signifies reaching the top of the institutional playing hierarchy at the club. This division of space where players are forced to exercise 'alone in a group' (Markula, 1993) depending on their hierarchical status, is a distinctive component of discipline.

Foucault (1991) also noted that "discipline is an art of rank" (p. 146), therefore, given the intensely hierarchical nature of a professional football club, the specific space within which a footballer's body trains and plays, partitions him into an allocated place within this hierarchy (trialist, youth team player, injured player, reserve team player and first team player). As Shogan (1999, p. 23) identified, this serves to "reinforce hierarchical boundaries", solidifying the potential for discipline to occur. Importantly for Foucault, individual bodies were not completely fixed within these spaces and the possibility of movement between these spaces existed. As Markula and Pringle (2006, p. 76) noted "each individual has the possibility of moving through ranks instead of being allocated a permanent position in the classification". In the football club context a player may move between youth, reserve and first teams depending on the output of his body observed within the 'enclosure' he occupies. Therefore his 'function' is not fixed and may change if his 'rank' is altered by those in control. This arrangement serves to mobilise and individualise "bodies by a location that does not give them a fixed position, but distributes them and circulates them in a network of relations" (Foucault, 1991, p. 146). The effect of this is that the football club and its various special enclaves very much constitute a 'disciplinary space', where the art of distribution of space serves to facilitate the distribution of disciplinary power. This is a primary phase in the production of a disciplined, docile body.

3.2.2 The control of activity within British professional football.

The second disciplinary technique that Foucault (1991) identified as responsible for the distribution of discipline was the control of the activity that an individual body performs within an 'enclosure'. He asserted that to ensure efficient and correct use of the body, prescribed activities must be delivered in a measured, co-ordinated and orderly fashion. This is typically done through the design and imposition of a timetable to ensure that nothing remains idle or useless, or "temporal organisation" (Denison et al, 2013, p. 392). For example, footballer's lives are governed a by a multitude of timetables; fixture lists, weight lifting programmes, dietary regimes and fitness schedules, to name a few. In the football environment, a player is constantly timetabled upon a weekly basis, and the activities are now commonly chosen based upon research from sports science, for example players are now exposed to the prescribed benefits of cardiovascular training sessions (Impellizzeri, Rampinini, & Macora, 2007), hydrotherapy sessions (De Nardi, La Torre, Barassi, Ricci, & Banfi, 2011) and strength and conditioning (Wisloff, Castagna, Helgerund, Jones, & Hoff, 2004). All these activities are carefully chosen, rigorously prescribed and controlled by the coaching staff at the club with the intention of manipulating specific outcomes from the players. As they are responsible for the planning and prescription of these activities, coaching staff members maintain the respect attributed to being at the summit of the hierarchy of the football club (Cushion & Jones, 2006; 2012; Jones, Armour & Potrac, 2003; Potrac, Jones & Armour, 2002) and their decisions remain unquestioned (Roderick, 2006).

Markula and Pringle (2006) have noted that most organised forms of physical activity clearly utilise time effectively to control activity by breaking time into segments such as warm up, activity, cool down, in order to maximise the effectiveness of the gathered time. Modern science and the measured mechanical responses of the human body have informed this trend. This trend has also been replicated in the football environment, where the influence of sports science has grown hugely of recent times (Reilly & Gilbourne, 2003). This reliance upon science is a perfect example of how Foucault (1991) observed how activities are controlled with the direct desire to facilitate optimum disciplinary outcomes. This trend is also highly visible in the professional football environment where months, weeks and days are broken down into sessions that are themselves carefully segmented according to team objectives.

Existing coaching knowledge that determines training programs in professional football is cemented by a multitude of soccer coaching resources that almost universally advocate structured templates that suggest the segmentation training sessions (Hargreaves & Bate, 2009). This segmentation has developed in response to the objective measurement of the physiology of players (Hoff, 2005; Reilly & Williams, 2003) that is regularly monitored and recorded through fitness testing (Dunbar & Power, 1997). Any detailed observation of a football coaching manual will reveal a recommendation that a training session should follow a similar pattern described by Markula and Pringle (2006). Any football training session should (according to the majority of coaching resources) include a warm-up, small sided game; technical development/strategy based functional work,

fitness and finally a cool down (Hargreaves & Bate, 2009). This indicates that within the football 'enclosure', activity is controlled with a reason/agenda, to maximise discipline, thus getting the most out of a player making him a 'productive worker'.

Foucault (1991) was also concerned with the efficient control and manipulation of any object that the body uses during an activity contributes to the disciplining of the body. This he named 'body-object articulation'. In professional football, the object that a player is continually articulated to is a football. All through a football player's career he is bonded to this object and, as such, this 'body-object articulation' is interwoven within, and is an essential component of, the everyday disciplinary practices he is exposed to. It is predominantly the coach who directs a player's 'body-object articulation' (as an expert within this enclosed environment); therefore it becomes evident that this particular means of controlling activity has regular and formidable impact upon a player and the development of his docility. For example, Shogan (1999) identified that the tempo at which athletes are encouraged to perform needs to be considered as an element of control. For example, football coaching staff may change a training drill from free-play to a restricted number of touches of the ball in order to influence the tempo of play (Hargreaves & Bate, 2009). This control of activity again stimulates docility amongst the directed population (working footballers in this instance).

The constant prescription of uniform training regimes in the form of timetables and the constant articulation with an object (a football) ensures that at

all times, a player's body is maximising the possibility of docility, and hence

being constantly exposed to disciplinary power. As Foucault (1991, p. 151)

noted, this control of activity is a technology of discipline that seeks to ensure that

"the body is constantly applied to its exercise". A footballer is constantly exposed

to disciplinary techniques as he performs his profession, not least because he is

required to follow without question intentionally directed use of time and space

by those of higher rank. Indeed, Roderick, (2006, p. 158) has noted that players

rarely resist this hierarchy as the "cultural values of professional football require

players to hide behind their resentments and anxieties behind a demeanour of

enthusiasm for the job".

3.2.3 The organisation of geneses within British professional football.

For Foucault (1991), one of the keys to the imposition of disciplinary

power upon a body was to ensure that the opportunity for "continual growth of

control over the body" (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 78) existed. For Foucault the

imposition of discipline was not simply a negative, stationary process but rather a

productive process that developed the body into certain modes of operation. In

presenting this particular technique of discipline, Foucault revealed that in order

to continue to exercise disciplinary power over an individual, their body must

repeatedly be exposed to activities that allow for a "linear progression" (Markula

& Pringle, 2006, p. 78) and the development of the education of the body.

Shogan (1999) summarised this articulately:

> What Foucault refers to as 'the organisation of geneses', involves the
>
> gradual progression and acquisition of knowledge in segments, building

on each other and making possible co-ordination with others. Through

repetitive, different and graduated exercise, tasks are imposed on the body.

Consequently, discipline not only analyses space and activities. It is 'a

machinery for adding up and capitalising time'. (p. 30)

This technique of discipline is prevalent in the elite football context, especially

during the development of young players. Recruited players are bought or

selected based upon their 'raw potential' and coached to play 'our way' over time

dependent on coaches' tacit knowledge (Christensen, 2009). That the head coach

or manager is an 'expert' of 'high rank' in the football club context is a commonly

excepted norm and therefore these individuals are often responsible for the (re)-

production of training plans throughout clubs. Coaches develop analytical plans

based upon their own tacit knowledge in order to cultivate athletes over time

(Nash & Collins, 2006). This is evident in football as research indicates coaches

play a "pivotal and powerful role in soccer" (Christensen, 2009, p. 367), including

the prescription of development plans that are designed to produce players in a

certain fashion. Once talented players have been identified, analytical

programmes that adopt sports science research are devised and prescribed in line

with the 'expected' physiological and psychological development of players

(Williams & Reilly, 2000).

This intentional manipulation echoes Foucault's (1991, p. 161) statement

that "exercise makes possible a characterisation of the individual" over time. A

football club's playing philosophy is prescribed to players as they progress

through its hierarchy and all the while, it is the exercise of daily training that is the

vehicle for this inculcation. Key examples of this include the appearance of the 'Liverpool Way', a successful philosophy of football based upon passing principles and the maintenance of possession (Williams, 2005), the 'Total Football' from the Netherlands national teams of the 1970's and 1980's of where every player was expected to possess the skill set to be able to 'function' identically, regardless of his on field position (Winner, 2001), or alternatively how the 'Crazy Gang' of Wimbledon FC gained success in the 1980's through a more aggressive, physical and aerially direct philosophy of play (Allen, 2005).

Not only are players prescribed space and activities by their coaches, but also the skills learnt throughout their development are intentionally chosen and distributed at certain times in a linear progression towards particular agendas chosen by those of 'higher rank', in this instance, expert coaches. Foucault (1991) identified this progression as being essential to the distribution of disciplinary power through the 'organisation of geneses'. Further examples of this are abundant in a football club setting, for example; the practices delivered to different age groups follow a logical pathway of development that is clear and rigidly implemented in order to cultivate players to play a certain way. Youth teams invest heavily in technical skill development (what we have seen as 'body-object articulation'), whereas reserves and first team practices are largely directed towards broader playing concepts such as width, possession and the implementation of desired team shape and strategy (Carter, 2006; Hargreaves & Bate, 2009). This organisation of activities at various stages of a playing career and the gradual inculcation of tactics is an appropriate example of Foucault's

(1991) 'organisation of geneses'. According to Foucault (1991, p. 187), in this context, football coaches are "technicians of discipline" who "elaborate procedures for individual and collective coercion of bodies". In this case, the coerced bodies are those of professional football players.

A major side effect of this coercive process is that players who are not sufficiently exposed to the correct progression of skill development, or cannot grasp the required level of skill, may not be able to compete with others who have been disciplined to acquire developmentally appropriate skills. Most likely however, given the intense surveillance of the individual body within a football club, if players are to survive in their profession they must become intensely disciplined. And, due to the nature of their work, are constantly exposed to activities that "carry the characteristics of activities for making docile bodies" (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 78). This has the effect of regulating and 'improving' such players, or alternatively highlights their lack of normalcy, leading to their eviction from this space. This 'normalcy' is described in athletic terms as 'coachability' (Cassidy et al, 2004) or the ability to absorb coaching direction. In essence it means to submit oneself to becoming a docile body and is seen as the key tenet when players are recruited (Christensen, 2009). Players without the ability to render themselves docile or those who fail to perform their required 'function' within this setting are abandoned and do not make it into the professional game (Brown & Potrac, 2009).

3.2.4 Composition of forces within British professional football.

Foucault (1991) identified that in modern society, better organised, smaller units of individuals led to more productive outcomes through the more efficient distribution of power. He identified that large numbers of people were no longer required to maximise a group's effectiveness as it functioned in a modern framework. For Foucault, discipline was not simply about correction and instruction; it was also focused upon the element of efficiency. This reduction in group size is illustrated clearly at a football club where the first team playing staff is composed of an exclusive number of men (usually around a core of players who have served the club for a long period of time). This segregation of players into a smaller unit from the wider population of aspiring players allows for the optimisation of discipline. This allowed for the development of a specific type of work in the modern era, that of the professional footballer. Football is a profession that typifies the production of a specialised yet small group of individuals focused upon a common goal, and is an excellent example of modernised labour (Roderick, 2006). Football disciplines its workers as a result of the small but efficient number of men working in an enclosed space. In a professional football team, each individual player within this team is an element of Foucault's 'efficient machine', a cog in the mechanism of the football club. The player becomes an individual worker, performing his function to produce a result. Each player's output needs to be in time with those of others to ensure the maximum productivity of the team (for example the timing of a pass, a run to keep possession or to prevent an offside from occurring). Shogan (1999, p. 34)

identified this process as the 'Synchronisation' of team play to produce an "efficient unit". The combined players are a machine that is developed in order to respond to precise, clear and concise commands, or "brief cues" which allow players to react "without an explanation of what is involved". One only has to listen to a football training session or match to hear multiple examples of such commands which include 'time', 'man-on', 'over', 'first-time' or 'left-shoulder' etcetera. These commands are governed by coaches who adopt controlling mechanisms such as whistles, gestures, body language, physical intervention and demonstrations.

3.3 Mechanisms of Surveillance in British Football

The competitive nature of British professional football and the increasingly hazardous financial territory within which it plays out (Hamil & Chadwick, 2010) means that the strict observation, surveillance and examination of football players will remain as the norm. Football clubs are run as businesses and players and managers are employees who are responsible for the generation of profit (Storm & Nielsen, 2012). In a capitalist society where the demand for profit is unceasing and the popularity of British football continues to grow globally, it is unlikely that this norm is going to be reversed or altered in the near future (Sandvoss, 2003). This financial reality normalises player behaviour, creating footballers who are docile bodies. As a result, in order to complete their jobs as required, players are continually subjecting themselves to someone else's idea of normal. This docile behaviour is endemic and is undertaken regardless of the longer-term implications of such behaviour upon retirement. Players accept

this norm because of the cultural capital associated with the role. So, how does this 'normalisation' occur?

Foucault's (1991) disciplinary analysis explains why grown men are voluntarily prepared to engage in/attempt to work in, what could be described as damaging activities. Why do football players submit themselves to the physical danger of playing through injury (Roderick, Waddington, & Parker, 2000), the uncertainty of future income (Roderick, 2006), symbolic violence and emotional abuse from coaching staff (Cushion & Jones, 2006) as well as racial abuse (Jones, 2002), homophobic abuse (Adams, 2011) and threats of violence from the terraces?

As well as identifying how disciplinary practices incur docility, Foucault (1991) also suggested how strategic surveillance sustains docility in an enclosed context. Foucault (1991) proposed that power emanates from action and 'exact observation'. It has been demonstrated in this chapter that the disciplinary methods adopted by coaches in a working football environment are always something 'done' to bodies. These practices never occur in isolation and during these practices that are 'done' to footballers, expert observation, judgement and examination are constant.

As already mentioned, football players are essential parts of a working machine in an extremely competitive and fickle market (Hamil & Chadwick, 2010). Given this environment, leaving football players unsupervised is a risky business, similar to ignoring the regular maintenance of expensive mechanical hardware at an industrial plant. It is no surprise that football players (like

expensive machinery) have their outputs recorded and observed. There are

multiple examples of this type of surveillance in the football club setting; new

players who arrive at clubs are subjected to a thorough medical assessment

(Roderick et al, 2000), coaches use their 'tacit knowledge' survey training

sessions and trial games for clues to player excellence (Eriksson, 2003), study

endless hours of video (Carling, Bloomfield, Nelson, & Reilly, 2008), measure

player output through physiological examination (Carling & Dupont, 2011) and

make decisions for team selection based upon the 'data'/'statistics' gathered from

these 'exact observations'. Not only are players observed and measured by those

in their immediate hierarchy but they are also judged by spectators at the football

stadium and 'expert' pundits on television (Gearing, 1999). These actions are all

part of what Foucault (1991) describes as 'hierarchical observation' and they

ensure that power is constantly operating upon the individual, functioning "like a

piece of machinery" (p. 177), to produce the kind of docile player required.

The intense and constant surveillance of working footballers exists as a

discreet and taken-for-granted part of the football club culture. The discretionary

nature of this surveillance means that it does not explicitly suffocate those docile

bodies under inspection but it also means that its effects are powerful due to its

constant, intense and continuous nature. As a result, the observation of working

footballers on a day to day basis as a 'truly disciplinary' practice (Foucault, 1991)

remains unquestioned and normal practice. This surveillance creates a template

or a 'fixed set of truths' surrounding what a working footballer should be. This

template is normalised and all working players are judged against this commonly

accepted criteria (examples of this include players going for a trial at a club when out of contract or having contract discussions with members of a board). Using this criterion, regular 'expert' judgement normalises player behaviour and creates docile footballers. This normalisation is unquestioned and absorbed by the player who is eager to perform to guarantee further success in his chosen line of employment. To summarise, one of the key effects of continuous observation is the 'normalisation' of behaviours and attitudes that are considered appropriate for the player in his workplace setting.

For Foucault (1991) examination is the combination of observation and normalisation and is a process that enables a continual 'visibility' so that individuals can be judged. During this examination the individual is subjected to a new invisible power that objectifies him and produces concrete evidence of his abilities. The individual becomes a describable and therefore analysable object. For example, data on a player is collected by numerous sources including, club doctors, physiotherapists, fitness instructors, video analysts, media sources, and not least, their direct management. For a footballer, examination has direct consequences because it commonly directs the disciplinary practices that he will have to undertake in order to return to 'normal' should his examination reveal a deviation from the expected judgement criteria discussed.

How do the various 'mechanisms of surveillance' discussed here impact upon the lived reality of the working footballer? Tomlinson (1983) has identified that football culture acts as a form of control, 'normalising' players by firmly reiterating that they belong at the bottom of the club hierarchy. Roderick (2006)

has also repeatedly highlighted how in the working football environment dissention in the ranks is a social faux pas. Players learn to conform to the expected norms of their workplace, including subjecting themselves to derogatory abuse (Cushion & Jones, 2006), submitting themselves to regular judgement, and allowing themselves to be routinely examined by experts. This lifestyle of constant observation, "under the gaze of a permanent corpus of knowledge" (Foucault, 1991, p. 190) is a lifestyle that is not only significantly disciplinary, but also one in which the football player feels he has little or no choice but to comply with the expected norms associated with his role.

Foucault (1991) also proposed that the idea of the 'Panopticon' was appropriate to illustrate how all the discussed mechanisms of surveillance combine to facilitate docility. The 'Panopticon' explains how and why widespread coercion occurs, and why a group of 'free' individuals are prepared to endure football's regulated lifestyle conditions. Foucault used the description of 'panopticism' as a mechanism to explain how disciplinary power is irrigated and how it is subtly imposed upon an individual body in a disciplinary space. Through a detailed examination of Bentham's architectural prison design, Foucault revealed how the effects of disciplinary power could be exercised upon bodies as a result of a 'panoptic gaze', ensuring that disciplinary relations occur. A central prison tower in Bentham's design pervaded the space occupied by inmates, stimulating the fear of constant surveillance as a result of an inspecting gaze (regardless of whether the tower was actually occupied). Foucault (1980, p. 155) highlighted that the individual is constantly aware of "an inspecting gaze, a

gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorising to the point that he is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against himself. A superb formula." Foucault (1991) explained that within a heavily disciplinary setting the presence of a panoptic central physical structure contributed to incarcerated individuals monitoring and taking responsibility for their own behaviours (Markula & Pringle, 2006), regardless of the physical presence of a prison guard. As a result, the need to conform to expected behaviours spreads to the minds of the individuals, sustaining their docile state.

In an example of 'panopticism' the seemingly omnipresent surveillance and regulation experienced by professional footballers (Giulianotti, 1999) contributes to their own monitoring during (and potentially after) the cessation of their playing days. For example, McGillivray et al (2005, p. 107) identified that during a playing career a footballer is expected to "follow practices of abstinence and sacrifice, subordinating deleterious lifestyle behaviours to the imperatives of bodily care", in order to be able to function as a working footballer. The players in this study have followed this sacrificial lifestyle, conforming to the expected norms of their 'function' within an enclosed space. This 'self-regulation' is stimulated by the 'panoptic gaze' of coaching staff and fellow players. This is because the football club is "a space that organises and is organised by relationships of discipline, surveillance, normalisation and self-monitoring" (Spielvogel, 2002, p. 190). It is clear then, that adhering to socially prescribed norms has an integral role in professional football and "players have few alternatives other than to be active participants in their own self-discipline"

(Roderick, 2006, p. 169). Currently however, the lasting effect of the regulation of these norms upon retirement experiences has yet to be explored. I believe this is important because so little is known about the retirement experiences of this population and what is known is derived from placing the individual player at the centre of proceedings.

This study will contribute to sports retirement research by developing an appreciation of the impact of the disciplinary nature of football, rather than simply observing and reporting upon the measureable qualities or character of the individual at hand. Not enough is known about the disciplinary nature of British football or how learned docility might impact the retirement of a football player. Considering the football environment through a 'disciplinary lens' might better explain player retirement experience. This approach may expose the sources of player docility and highlight the undeniably influential mechanisms of surveillance in the sport, providing clues to understand retirement.

As well as exercising power in the refined physical spaces of a confined institution, Foucault (1991) also revealed that panopticism allows the exercise of power to be influenced by wider society as a whole. Rail and Harvey (1995, p. 167) stated that "panopticism represents a view of society that makes evident the ways in which surveillance and self-policing are used to ensure social control and order". In Foucault's eyes, power is not possessed by any individual, neither is it visible, and as a result it has the potential to be manipulated or interrupted from any quarter. A football player must not only endure the discipline of coaching practices and from day to day surveillance within his immediate space

(Giulianotti, 1999), but he must also contend with the broader gaze and expectations of society during and after his career. Often this occurs in a culture heavily invested in the performances, behaviours and displays of identity observed by the professional footballer.

In conclusion, modern football has maintained her historical disciplinary agenda. This is evident in its numerous practices. Players' retirement experiences and how they manage this transition are clearly affected by this culture of discipline. I believe football's disciplinary past and present is important to examine because in over fifty years of research examining retirement from sport, the problems have remained the same, despite increased attention, awareness and various interventions. Perhaps a new perspective needs to be considered in order to understand retirement and its associated problems. Instead of continuing to analyse the player and his mental qualities, coping skills, or narrative resources, maybe researchers should examine how the power laden practices of modern football disciplines its actors, influencing their negotiation of retirement. The concepts that Foucault (1991) used to outline his understanding of disciplinary control; surveillance, observation, normalisation, judgement, examination, 'panopticism', the art of distributions, the control of activity, the organisation of geneses and the composition of forces, are what I will use to inform my study. In the next chapter I outline in detail precisely how I will do this.

4.0 Methodology

4.1 Research Philosophy

Sports research methodologists Gratton and Jones (2010) have highlighted that any choice of sports research framework should be appropriate with regard to the objectives of the research study. Poulson and Wallace (2004) have also noted that it is imperative justify ones research framework. This study into the retirement experiences of British footballers adheres to what is known as a poststructuralist philosophical position. In order to remain loyal to a poststructuralist paradigmatic approach, this study adopts the theoretical concepts of Michel Foucault, specifically his analysis of disciplinary practice. For the purposes of this Foucauldian research, the descriptor 'poststructuralist' is adhered to with reference to the paradigmatic origins of the study. This distinction is important to note as it helps to differentiate from alternative popular adoptions of the term postmodern.

Markula and Pringle (2006) identified that since the 1980's, many sports sociologists have drawn upon a wider range of social theorists to help examine the broader workings of power that are at play in sport. Part of the diversification within this field has included the interrogation of sport using the work of Foucault (Andrews, 1993; Hargreaves, 1986; Heikkala, 1993; Rail & Harvey, 1995; Shogan, 1999). Consequently the applicability of Foucault's theorizing to the study of sport and the growing influence of his work has become evident within the sociology of sport over the last two decades.

Since the emergence of sports sociology informed by poststructuralist thought, (much of which adopts the work of Foucault), a new more sensitive line of approach has encouraged a deeper critical awareness of taken for granted and potentially dangerous practices within sport. This growth in Foucauldian theorizing illustrates that if correctly applied, much can be learned about a sport when it is examined through a Foucauldian lens.

As mentioned, Foucault's philosophy has been described within academic circles as poststructuralist (Heikkala, 1993). Foucault believed that the search for a metaphysical, singular, objective truth was a redundant exercise and his stance reflected a line of thinking beyond (or 'post'), existing ontological perspectives. Therefore any work that correctly utilises Foucault's theory (including this study of sports retirement) must be aware of the key epistemological and ontological foundations that underpin his theory. Central to this appreciation is an awareness of how Foucault viewed truth and reality. Foucault saw truth and knowledge as socially constructed, or as Smith (2006) noted, according to Foucault:

> There is no claim to truth that is innocent; there is no knowledge that simply falls into our minds from the sky, pristine and untainted. What might be claimed as obvious or self-evident is, in fact, covertly motivated by other interests – the interest of power. (p. 86)

Given Foucault's stance upon power, truth and knowledge, it is clear that he would not advocate that a study into sports retirement attempt to reveal any singular clear 'facts' about this period in an athlete's life. As Smith (2006) identified, no knowledge is ever pristine or occurring in a social vacuum,

(including the knowledge of a retired footballer). A quantitative approach motivated by the search for an objective measurement of retirement experience would not be appropriate for any study adopting a poststructuralist stance. Instead, a post-structural study should subjectively analyse any dominant practices or knowledge by members of a certain population (in this case, the recollections of retired British professional football players).

To examine power, truth and knowledge as Foucault (1991) would suggest, this research employs a poststructuralist appreciation of the subjectivity of knowledge. Simply put, in order to satisfy the ontological and epistemological traditions of the poststructuralist paradigm, this study utilises a qualitative methodology, allowing the multiple meanings surrounding football retirement to emerge.

4.2 Qualitative Approach to Research

Given the socially constructed and subjective nature of truth and knowledge acknowledged by the poststructuralist position, a research methodology capable of exploring the various subjectivities of retired footballer experience is implemented here. An explicitly qualitative research approach has been chosen and the merits and nature of a qualitative research approach are briefly discussed below.

It is difficult to discuss the merits of qualitative research without first defining the composition of this research approach. Several authors have attempted to explain the nature of qualitative research by providing extensive

definitions and identifying key elements that differentiate this approach from any other. It is therefore worth quoting these well respected experts at length.

Denzin and Lincoln (2000) attempted to reveal how in qualitative research, unlike many positivist approaches, the observer can never be considered as separate from the research taking place and can therefore never be totally neutral or objective. These authors offer the following definition of qualitative research:

> Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that makes the world visible. These practices...turn the world into a series or representations including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to the self...This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (p. 3)

Along with this definition of qualitative research, other authors have identified factors which distinguish this research approach from any other. For example, Van Manen (1997) has defined qualitative research as an investigation into how people perceive their experiences, their worlds, and what significance they attribute to their lives and experience. Given this observation, it is possible to suggest that findings identified through the adoption of qualitative enquiry enable the multitude of understandings of the world to be made visible (Denzin & Lincoln).

Snape and Spencer (2003) have warned that there is no singularly accepted means by which to conduct a piece of qualitative research. This is because of the numerous different types of research study that could be considered qualitative. How researchers conduct qualitative research depends on a large range of factors, including; ontological and epistemological perspectives, the purpose of the research, the characteristics of the research participants, the target audience for the research and not least, the position or bias of the researchers themselves.

So what does effective and high quality qualitative research look like? Snape and Spencer's (2003, p. 3) framework presents the "key elements which are commonly agreed to give qualitative research its distinctive character". These elements include devising aims directed at understanding participant's social world and material circumstances, experiences, perspectives and histories. Also, small scale samples, purposefully selected on the basis of salient criteria, as well as data collection methods that involve close contact between the researcher and participant are recommended. Finally, these authors suggested that rich, detailed and extensive data be generated and that any analysis of that data be open to emergent concepts and ideas. With this in mind, the means by which data will be collected for this particular poststructuralist qualitative research study will now be discussed at length.

4.3 Data Collection

4.3.1 Interviews.

This qualitative study into the impact of discipline upon the experiences of retired footballers utilised semi-structured interviews (Patton, 2002) to collect as

much rich, qualitative data as possible. In-depth interviewing contrasts sharply with quantitative research, and interviewing is considered by many to be an excellent tool for data collection in qualitative research (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Interviews are an appropriate tool for qualitative research studies as information that cannot be directly observable such as feelings, thoughts and intentions can come to light (Patton). An explanation of exposure to the disciplinary practices of professional football is a complex subject that cannot be easily ascertained through the impersonal response elicited via the use of a questionnaire or any measurement procedures. Therefore, in order to stimulate a discussion capable of generating a rich level of qualitative data, interviews were conducted at length with 25 former professional and semi-professional football players.

Interviewing is not an uncommon approach to qualitative research in this field, as Culver, Gilbert and Trudel (2003) identified. It is by far the most popular means of collecting data in the study of sport from a qualitative perspective. Gratton and Jones (2010, p. 155) clearly illustrated why adopting interviews is so appropriate for the qualitative research of sport:

> Interviewing is often associated with the collection of qualitative data, that is, the 'why' and 'how' of a phenomenon, from the respondent's perspective. Interviews can collect data concerned with concepts that are difficult and inappropriate to measure, tend to allow respondents much more freedom in terms of their answers, and tend to explore questions of 'why' and 'how', rather than 'how many' and 'when'.

This description of the interview process illustrates that there are clear advantages for adopting this approach when undertaking qualitative research in the field of sport.

In order to collect the richest data from the interview, it should be conducted professionally and the interviewer needs to be well prepared. Patton (2002, p. 405) has noted that "a good interview lays open thoughts, feelings, knowledge, and experience, not only to the interviewer but also to the interviewee".

In order to reach a desired level of knowledge transfer an appropriate form of interview for the job at hand must be decided. There are various types of interviews that could possibly be applied to a qualitative research project. Fontana and Frey (2000) describe three main types of interview for qualitative research each with their own merits. Theses authors identified the three basic approaches to interview as (a) structured; (b) semi-structured; and (c) unstructured. For this research project surrounding British retired football players, an open-ended semi-structured interview approach was adopted. The reasons for this choice of interview approach are discussed below.

4.3.2 Interview strategy: semi-structured interviews.

A semi-structured interview is based upon a series of topics to be covered with suggested questions (Kvale, 1996). A semi-structured interview allows the participant to remain focused while also providing scope for any individual perspectives on the matter at hand or other relevant experiences to emerge. As Yin (1994) identified, the semi-structured interview allows the actor's rather than

the researcher's point of view to be at the forefront of discussion, this "allows the respondent to become more of an 'informant', providing data from their own perspective" (p. 80).

The interview skills of the researcher contribute a great deal to the quality of data elicited from the interview process. I conducted all the interviews for this study. I am a male individual, familiar with qualitative research practices and have over five years playing experience within working football in the UK. My possession of social capital (Bourdieu, 1984) and by being a 'football person', I was able to sustain interview discussion. As Lewis (2003, p. 65) noted "sharing some aspects of cultural background or experience may be helpful in enriching researchers' understanding of participants accounts, of the language these use and the nuances and subtexts". I believe this factor is important for this particular study as the football environment has its own particular vocabulary (Roderick, 2006). By utilising my position as a 'football person', I created an environment in which the interview participant's interpretive capabilities were "activated, stimulated, and cultivated" (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995, p. 17). The participant could relax and use his own mutually understood terminology to reveal his journey into and throughout retirement. I also enabled a greater level of relaxation by conducting the interviews in environments of the participants own choosing. As a result these men were much more comfortable talking about their retirement experiences in the interview context.

4.3.3 A Foucauldian inspired interview guide: three themes.

As mentioned, this study adopts the crucial elements of Foucault's (1991) analysis of discipline in order to greater understand the experience of retirement from the disciplinary space of British professional football. Foucault's concepts of surveillance, observation, judgement, normalisation and examination, as well as an appreciation of 'the arts of distribution' the 'control of activity', the 'organisation of geneses' and the 'composition of forces', were central in the compilation of the interview guide adopted for data collection.

Using an interview framework based upon Foucault's (1991) disciplinary analysis (see appendix), allowed this study to investigate players' everyday experiences of discipline in football. This was primarily done to explore how these disciplinary experiences impacted their everyday lives in retirement. An interview guide (Kvale, 1996) was specifically designed after consulting Foucault's disciplinary concepts. This guide emerged to consist of three thematic areas. These included (a) Player identification and development experiences; (b) Professional experiences of training, playing and relationships; (c) The 'Retirement Process'. Each of these three areas were specifically chosen as they all considered the disciplinary impact of the surveillance experienced through the different levels of coaching practices, relationships and hierarchies at different stages of a player's career.

In the first theme, 'player identification and development', questions were centred upon all kinds of early disciplinary experiences within elite football. For example, questions were asked about players' experiences of identification and

development in various football settings. These questions used the Foucauldian concepts outlined in chapter three to map the disciplinary nature of these early football practices. These questions were also designed to generate discussion about the long-term impact of these practices in retirement.

Foucault's (1991) disciplinary analysis allowed this study to formulate purposeful questions for theme one, such as 'When did you start performing organised training sessions in a designated space/enclosure?' or 'Do you recall when football became an organised or controlled activity?', or 'Do you recall being judged or examined during your young career, perhaps at a trial game?'. In theme one of the interview guide, questions were also posed that aimed to consider the impact of 'the organisation of geneses' found at football clubs upon developing players. For example questions like, 'How did your day to day training experiences change as you grew up through the various age groups at the football club?', and 'Do you recall being conscious of changing expectations throughout this progression?' allowed me as the interviewer to re-visit the early disciplinary aspects of a players career with a focused agenda – to uncover the nature and long-term effects of their disciplinary experiences in this retired population.

The second theme, 'Professional experiences of training, playing and relationships' involved discussion surrounding the day to day experiences of training, playing and being instructed throughout the participants 'playing days' as a first team footballer. This theme ascertained the day to day expectations and experiences of a participant's career and examined his relationships during this

time. This line of questioning examined the role that discipline played in the formulation of career experiences as specifically work orientated (Roderick, 2006, 2013). Chapter three has used Foucault (1991) to illustrate that football is a 'normalising' environment. The questions devised for theme two of the interview guide utilised Foucault to consider the 'normalisation' of a footballer that occurs during a football career and the legacy of this 'normalisation' in retirement. This builds upon existing research that has examined working football careers (Roderick, 2006, 2013).

The questions from theme two of the interview guide were included to ascertain **if** retired players attribute any of their current retirement experiences (be they positive, negative or neutral), to the highly disciplinary, 'normative' working football environment. Questions emerged that provoked discussion surrounding day to day surveillance, observation, judgement, examination and the need to conform to an expected pattern of behaviour in football. Importantly, these questions were chosen in order to identify any potential links between a player's past disciplinary lifestyle and his experiences of retirement.

The third and final interview guide theme was 'The Retirement Process'. In this theme, a line of questioning was devised to decipher the legacy of the career disciplinary practices upon the retirement stage and to examine how the retired player describes his post-career life. Foucault (1991) illustrated how the Panopticon was a metaphor for the self-surveillance experienced in a localised disciplinary context, but also for how power is disseminated throughout broader society. In this final interview theme, Foucault's mechanisms of discipline and

specifically his discussion of the 'Panopticon' were incorporated to devise several questions. These questions were specifically chosen as they provoked discussion that highlighted the continued impact of disciplinary power upon retired players, despite their eviction from the direct gaze of the hierarchical institution of British professional football. Sub-questions for this theme included: What are your experiences of being retired? What aspects of your playing days influence the way you approach your life now that you are retired? Has being immersed in the football environment for an extended period of time influenced how you negotiate problems in your day to day life? What pressures do you feel now in your post-career life?

Each theme above included a set of sub-questions and cues. This interview guide (see appendix) was by no means concrete, but rather it provided a framework that enabled discussion to flow, procuring detailed responses from the engaged participants. I ensured the appropriateness of the interview guide by discussing its content with my supervisor and by recruiting three critical friends (fellow graduate students). I believe the interview guide allowed the players a chance to indulge any "spontaneous wish to talk about subjects that interest them within the framework of the interview guide" (Christensen, 2009, p. 370). The three themes suggested allowed discussion to flow without deviating from questions intentionally informed by Foucault's (1991) analysis of discipline.

4.3.4 Interviewer bias.

Despite the well documented positives of utilising interviews to collect data, there is a significant aspect of this particular research project that needs to be

considered. A widely reported drawback of interviews when utilised for the purpose of qualitative research, is that the interviewer's personal bias may influence the responses of the participants. My previous exposure to the environment of British football and subsequent early retirement from the sport, although beneficial in terms of interview engagement, made it impossible for me to "remain neutral or passive" (Pringle & Markula, 2005, p. 480) during the interviews. This could have proven problematic if I was not conscious of my own bias, but equally it was productive due to my capacity for engagement and empathy of experience. Difficulties with interviewer bias must be negotiated by any interview based study. Another area that requires a significant amount of precision is the nature of the participant sample. Consequently great care is taken below to introduce and explain the chosen sample for this study into football retirement.

4.4 Sampling Strategy

A researcher undergoes the process of sampling to identify the most appropriate way to investigate his or her chosen population. According to Gratton and Jones (2010, p. 110), a population is "every individual case that possess the characteristics that is of interest to the researcher". Alas, to interview every single retired male professional footballer in the British Isles is impossible due to the huge size of this ever growing population. Despite it being impossible to interview every single retired male player in the UK, the process of sampling enabled this research study to collect data from a smaller segment of this

particular population, yet remain loyal to the principles of effective qualitative research.

Once a population has been identified (in this case retired male professional footballers in the UK), a sample that is representative of this population needs to be isolated. The process by which this isolated sample is identified and subsequently selected is named purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002). In order to elicit as much in-depth data surrounding retired football player's experiences of retirement this research adopted a purposeful sampling process.

4.4.1 Purposeful sampling.

This research study adopted a purposeful sampling process to identify a group of participants capable of providing rich data stimulating "in-depth understanding rather than empirical generalisations" (Patton, 2002, p. 230). Kvale (1996) has also noted that when undertaking qualitative research, purposefully selected samples are usually chosen as they are well known for producing rich data. Gratton and Jones (2010) further identified that any sampling strategy should be chosen in order to produce a sample that is representative of the population under study. This acute and purposeful selection of a sample allows for an in-depth understanding of the question and social field under study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

British professional football is a cultural entity that is over one hundred and forty years old, having originated in the 1870's (Walvin, 1975). It is therefore impossible to produce a sample capable of regaling such broad periods of history. However, Giulianotti (1999) has identified three main era's in the development of

professional football across the globe. He identified these eras as the traditional era, the modern era, and the post-modern era of football.

According to Giulianotti (1999), as a result of globalization, the de-industrialisation of society, and the increasing influence of televised media, the face of professional football changed dramatically in the early 1990's. Football in Britain entered into what Giulianotti described as a 'post-modern era'. This era is typified through the emergence of competitions such as the English Premier League and latterly the UEFA Champions League. An increasingly global distribution of televised football, coupled with football's role as an income generating entity (Hamil & Chadwick, 2010), led to a definite transition in the role of the working player. As a result of this transition, a player's career experiences were significantly altered as their role in this nexus changed from that found during football's traditional and modern epochs. While Giulianotti has recognized that the long-lasting, residual impact of football's traditional and modern eras should never be discounted (including its disciplinary nature), he clearly identified the early 1990's as a watershed for when the 'contemporary game' began to resemble what we see as professional and semi-professional football today.

For clarification purposes, the retired players participating in this study were all players who completed their playing careers during this 'post-modern era' (Giulianotti, 1999). This criterion ensured that any findings from this sample are as consistent with the current nature of professional football as possible, thus legitimizing their worth to the study of the sport.

4.4.2 Sample criterion.

In this study I interviewed a sample of 25 retired male football players from across the UK between the ages of 21-35. Although this was a relatively precise sample, precise sampling is an element of research design that has long been reported as being beneficial for qualitative research (Kvale, 1996). The sample size also allowed an in depth quality of data to be generated, and as Sparkes (2000) identified, it is the quality not the quantity of data that is relevant when considering the socio-cultural impact of sport.

Despite the precise nature of the sample used for this study, the number of years each player spent as a paid professional differed slightly. In the table below, I have listed each participant's football career experiences, including how many years he was a professional and the levels he competed at during this time frame. To contextualise each player's retirement, I have included his employment status at the time the interview was conducted, as well as considering if he continued to play non-league football at any level. The length of a professional career ranged from eight years to one year, as listed below.

Table 1

Participant Demographic Information

Pseudonym	Age	Playing Level	Professional Years	Playing Non-League?	Current Employment
Brian	33	League One, League Two	8	No	Manager at a Gym
Paul	28	Premier League, League One,	6	Yes	Courier

		League Two, Conference			
Nathan	28	Premier League, League One, League Two, Conference	5	No	Premier League Development Officer
Ron	31	League Two, Conference	5	No	Football Coach
Casey	24	Conference	4	No	Physical Education Teacher
Lawrence	28	League One, League Two, Conference	4	Yes	Sports Shoe Distributor
Andrew	27	Conference	3	Yes	Student/League Level Coach
Dennis	27	Conference	3	Yes	Electrician
Harry	31	League One, Conference	3	Yes	Property Director
Ian	26	League One, Conference	3	Yes	Construction Worker
John	29	League One, Conference	3	Yes	Self-employed (construction)
Lewis	27	Conference	3	No	Graduate Student
Matthew	22	Conference	3	Yes	Undergraduate Student
Will	32	League One, League Two, Conference	3	No	Director of a Football Academy at a University

Charlie	28	League Two	2	Yes	Physical Education Teacher
Colin	32	Premier League, League Two	2	No	Unknown
Dean	29	League One	2	Yes	Teacher's Assistant - Public Education
Eli	31	League One, Conference	2	No	Physical Education Teacher
Jeff	27	Conference	2	Yes	Administrative Assistant
Mark	27	League Two, Conference	2	Yes	FA Grassroots Development Coach
Arthur	32	League One	1	Yes	Football Development Officer and Coach
Bobby	33	League Two	1	No	Financial Sector
Tim	30	Conference	1	Yes	Administrative Assistant

The players interviewed had to comply with a designated criterion in order to be candidates for involvement in this study. These players had to have been: (a) a contracted professional or semi-professional player between the Premier League and Football Conference at some stage of their playing career; (b) male and between the age of 21-35 years old; and,(c) completely ceased participation as a player in football at the levels indicated above. Furthermore, these men could not have *voluntarily* retired from football through lack of interest or alternative

career choice. Asked the question, 'Would you still be playing professionally if you could?' all participants answered in the affirmative. As I mentioned at the outset, it is oftentimes hard to pin down an exact retirement moment, however, this question helped to establish clearly that all of the men chosen for my study felt that their career was taken away from them. They were forced by circumstance to retire while they still possessed a desire to work in the professional ranks of the sport.

This selection protocol was devised in direct response to the fact that beyond Roderick (2006; 2013), previous research had not concentrated upon this population of retired professional players, especially those younger men who would still be playing if it were up to them. I recognised therefore, that gathering information from this relatively unstudied group could significantly contribute to understanding retirement from football. Due to the precise nature of this purposefully identified sample, the footballing experiences regaled were likely to be relatively similar (as much as they could be). This factor contributed to the concise assessment of the self-awareness, relationships and disciplinary practices experienced in professional football that are under scrutiny in this study.

Although a large number of men participate in codified football across the British Isles, it is the specific nature of the elite levels of sport under examination here. Therefore, this study only interviewed players with elite experience, as Johns and Johns (2000) noted, "the strong commitment of athletes to sport is a clear manifestation of disciplinary power of which Foucault spoke" (p. 221). These were the disciplinary practices which this study intended to excavate and

explore, (as the purposeful design of the interview guide testifies). This need to identify the unique pressures and discipline experienced in British football significantly informed the sample of players that were interviewed (as illustrated by the above criterion).

Despite the dangers of overtly homogenous responses from this relatively similar sample, due to the widespread existence of professional football across the diverse socio-economic regions of the British Isles, participants still came from a variety of generational, regional and economical football backgrounds. This diversity allowed for the appropriate variety that is necessary in any chosen sample (Patton, 1990). This variety enabled the recollection of a multitude of player experiences from across clubs, pay grades and time frames, in turn contributed to the depth and breadth of the data collected.

4.4.3 Snowball sampling.

I utilised my capacity as a 'football person' to contact several players within the game who I have past and continued contact with. From these meetings I used a snow-ball method to increase the size of my sample (Patton, 2002). The snowball method of purposeful sampling has been reported to nurture a greater level of trust between researcher and subject leading to an improvement in the quality of data recovered (Gratton & Jones, 2010). And so it proved in this study as I found it perfect for this traditionally closed cultural setting (Kuper & Szymanski, 2009; Simmons & Smith, 2004).

4.5 Ethics

Gratton and Jones (2010) have suggested that any sports studies research needs to be socially and morally acceptable if it is to be considered ethical. Due to the in-depth nature of qualitative research, the ethical issues that emerge are often difficult to anticipate. This means that ethical considerations have a particular resonance in qualitative research studies (Lewis, 2003).

Any research study involving a sample of participants must gain their informed consent (Patton, 2002). This process involves making the participants aware of; the purpose of the study, how their individual responses will be used or represented, and what their participation in the interview process will entail. Informed consent is founded upon an agreement with the participant that involvement in the research study is voluntary. During the process of ascertaining informed consent from a participant, it is essential that the participant be made aware how their comments will be presented.

Any qualitative study that intends to ascertain personal information from its participants needs to be handled discreetly and with the appropriate amount of care. As this is a study into the process of retirement from professional football (an event reported as a difficult moment, Gearing, 1999; Giulianotti, 1999; Roderick, 2006), significant care was taken during the interview process as it involved the recollection of painful moments for the participating individuals. As well as taking appropriate precautions to be respectful of the participants, attention was paid to ensure the anonymity of the participants and to reassure

them that anything disclosed was to remain confidential, providing them with an environment in which they could share their thoughts.

Lewis (2003) noted that providing participant anonymity stipulates that the identity of the participant is unknown outside of the research team. Anonymity is especially important in the closed environment of professional football for several reasons. Firstly, although Magee (1998) has identified that it is difficult for long-lasting friendships to be made in such a competitive environment, Roderick (2006) has clearly identified the existence of informal networks within this relatively small population. As a result, it is likely that if careful attention was not be not paid to fully protecting the identity of the participants, the information produced by their interviews might be traced to its source with potentially damaging consequences.

There are several reasons why anonymity is essential for this sample population. Firstly, if a player has had a long career within the game his experiences (teams he has played for, managers he has worked for, achievements within the game) are also likely to be known amongst numerous other former and current working 'football people', formers colleagues and peers etcetera. Secondly, many other participants in this study are likely to still operate either in a professional or informal capacity within the football environment. As the sample for this research study was recruited via a snowball approach (Patton, 2002), word of the study could have possibly leaked into the wider population of football networks. Although it is unlikely that the identity of a participant may be deduced by any reader, it is important to note that complete anonymity cannot be

guaranteed. For the ethical integrity of the study to be maintained, all of the participants were made aware of this at the outset of their interviews.

Given the familiar nature of football, confidentiality is also extremely important for the protection of any participants involved. To ensure confidentiality within the research process, any comments made by a participant cannot be linked directly or indirectly to their identity. A particularly affective means by which to achieve confidentiality it through the allocation of pseudonyms. Ensuring confidentiality protects the identity of the participant but also reassures them that their responses will remain outside of the broader public domain.

4.6 Data Analysis

4.6.1 Data analysis in poststructuralist qualitative research.

Patton (2002) has noted that the analysis of data is a process that involves transforming acquired data into applicable findings. Data analysis is an ongoing process that occurs continuously throughout any qualitative research project and can be done in multiple ways (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In essence, data analysis is the meaning making process of the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and this meaning making process takes different forms depending upon the paradigmatic traditions of the research approach adopted. Therefore, when undertaking data analysis, it is important to do so in correlation with the epistemological traditions of the paradigmatic approach that governs the research project as a whole (Markula & Silk, 2011).

This particular research project is a poststructuralist study; therefore any data analysis that takes place needs to stay loyal to the epistemology that typifies the search for meaning in poststructuralist research. From a poststructuralist perspective, the process of verification of the research process to ensure precise objectivity is not necessary. Rather, research from this paradigm concentrates upon clearly understanding the meaning making of an individual within the specific socio-cultural context to which he/she has been exposed to. In this study I went to great lengths to understand the way in which a retired footballer makes meaning with regard to retirement given the environments he has been/remains exposed to.

Although the necessity for objective verification of data is not of explicit concern for the poststructuralist researcher, this does not negate the need for poststructuralist researchers to undertake a comprehensive analysis process. Regardless of the nature of a research project, a well-conducted analysis process helps to provide a more convincing final analysis. The question of how a research study of a poststructuralist nature should analyse the data collected through the interview process needs to be considered.

As a side note, it is important to note that there is no one perfect means by which to analyse qualitative data. Often, the skill and attentiveness of the researcher is the most important element, no matter how well designed the data analysis framework appears. Part of this skilful approach involves the integration of self-reflexivity within the predisposed research framework. Patton (2002, p. 299) has noted that "Reflexivity reminds the qualitative inquirer to observe herself

or himself so as to be attentive to and conscious of the cultural, political, social linguistic, and ideological origins of her or his own perspective". Foucault was distinctly aware of the subjective nature of knowledge that every individual is exposed through their position within relations of power controlled by certain discourses. It is essential to note that a researcher is never neutral nor can they be totally objective in any investigation. Self-reflexivity is therefore a key element of a well-conducted poststructuralist research study.

In a qualitative research project, the first step in data analysis usually involves moving from one's interview material to developing interpretations that become the foundations for research findings (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Kvale and Brinkmann (2007) have noted that poststructuralist researchers require a clearly articulated theoretical framework for interpreting meanings in interviews. Patton (2002) has also noted that at the outset of data analysis a researcher needs to be able to "mould interviews, observations, documents and field notes into findings" (p. 432). It is also important to note that the process of reducing and highlighting patterns of significance within the collected data is not a separate exercise from data analysis, rather it is a crucial part of the data analysis process (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

It is generally accepted that disseminating qualitative data from a series of interviews occurs in two commonly accepted phases of data analysis (Patton, 2002; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Ritchie, Spencer and O'Connor (2003, p. 219) identified that data analysis is characterized by two key stages, "The first requires

managing the data and the second involves making sense of the evidence through descriptive or explanatory accounts".

Data management is an essential process to undergo as without it, the collation, review and understanding of material collected would be extremely difficult, if not impossible (Ritchie et al, 2002). Therefore, Ruben and Ruben (2005) noted that in the first phase of data analysis typical activities include; transcript preparation, concept identification, and theme and event identification. As well as these key steps, these authors also noted the importance of coding interviews to retrieve what interviewees have said regarding the key themes identified. These are essential steps, as raw data from interviews (although likely to be rich in detail), will oftentimes appear unwieldy and be intertwined in content.

Coffey and Atkinson (1996) have observed that many analyses of qualitative data begin with the identification of key themes and patterns. A large part of this process is that of coding data. This is the process through which the raw data collected is organised into conceptual categories and one that allows the researcher to "recognize and recontextualise the data" (p. 45). Commonly, each line of transcribed interview data is reviewed and tags or labels are assigned based upon a pre-existing conceptual framework, such as an interview guide. It is often within this primary stage of data reduction that the first semblance of logical structure is given to the collected data.

Markula and Silk (2011) have noted that researchers using a post-structural approach should clearly stipulate how they analyse their empirical

material through their theoretical lens. In addition, researchers should be cognisant of analysis techniques for their theoretical orientation. This recommendation will ensure that data is analysed in line with the theoretical orientation of the research project as a whole. This is a difficult objective given the lacuna of suggested approaches for analysing data from a poststructuralist perspective. Markula and Silk also suggested that a study of this nature should identify themes via the aid of a themed interview guide, analyse these themes for any intersections, discrepancies and locate any new themes and finally link or connect these themes to the relations of power at work that are themselves highlighted by the theory adopted and previous literature.

Once data has been reduced into themes or categories the next step of data analysis can begin, that of fully understanding the data that has been collected. The second phase of data analysis involves studying the managed data and developing an organised rubric that will enable the researcher to use coded data to move towards answering pre-arranged research questions. As Gratton and Jones (2010, p. 238) noted, the aim is to "make sense of your data so that evidence can be obtained to answer your research question". This means beginning to understand what the coded data collected actually means and how it might be used (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

The process through which data should be analysed and correlated thematically in a poststructuralist qualitative research study has been revealed above. Below, the specific approach to analysing data collected from the

interview process used during this particular research project will be discussed at length.

4.6.2 Retired footballer interviews: data analysis.

The manner in which data is analysed in qualitative research is dependent upon the theoretical framework and the specific objectives of the research study at hand. In order to achieve the objective of appreciating how the life of a footballer influences his retirement, this poststructuralist study utilised the disciplinary analysis of Foucault (1991). Consistent with a Foucauldian inspired framework, data was analysed in order to expose the precise elements of the disciplinary nature of professional football in the UK (discussed in chapter three), and how they relate to retirement. Through an analysis of the collected interview data, I considered the potential links between the disciplinary nature of football and the retirement experiences of its players. As noted in the research question, it is the intention of this study to understand how football as a "modern discipline" (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 100) disciplines those involved within the sport, and how this process potentially affected those individuals in retirement.

As chapter three demonstrated, there are without doubt elements of discipline within the professional football environment. My data analysis considered the impact upon retirement of having been a working professional footballer (in a disciplinary space) for an extended period of time. Also, to explore the retirement experiences of football workers, and to discover if using a socio-cultural lens to review these experiences could develop a fresh appreciation of this phenomenon.

Data was analysed and specifically governed by Foucault's (1991) disciplinary analysis, clearly outlined in chapter three. This mirrored the production of the interview guide, which was also generated using Foucault's analysis. Interview responses were considered to identify how career and retirement experiences were governed or influenced by the previously identified components and mechanisms of discipline that exist in a football space. For example, it is clear that working football takes place in a series of specifically designed 'enclosures' (Hargreaves & Bate, 2009), that activities are 'controlled' and 'developed' by the coaching staff (Christensen, 2009; Giulianotti, 1999) and that players constantly make sacrifices to maintain their working status (McGillivray et al, 2005; Roderick, 2006). How do these disciplinary practices and mechanisms influence the player into their retirement after they have been evicted from the working football environment? Do they leave a mark? Do they impact future behaviours in different realms? These are the questions that my data analysis allowed me to explore, as later analysis chapters will reveal.

My data analysis process revealed that the disciplinary practices and mechanisms of professional football produce a "plethora of individual bodies and understandings" (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 111). In my analysis, to uncover this plethora of meanings, I drew from the theoretical thoughts of Foucault (1991) and began to arrange understandings of discipline into a somewhat coherent map of retirement experience. This mapping process, governed by Foucault's disciplinary analysis helped to develop an understanding of the elements and effects of career discipline upon the experiences of retired football players.

4.7 Ensuring Quality in Poststructuralist Research

It is essential when dealing with any qualitative research that the conceptual framework devised is held accountable to present findings in a manner appropriate to the paradigmatic traditions from within the research derives. Markula and Silk (2011, p. 223) have noted that the "clearer researchers are about the paradigmatic assumptions, the easier it is to provide an appropriate assessment of the work".

Historically, the concepts of reliability and validity have been utilised to determine the quality of quantitative research. This particular research study is derived from a poststructuralist philosophy. Given that a poststructuralist perspective is ontologically incompatible with the philosophical foundations of positivist traditional research frameworks, measures of reliability and validity are not applicable here. However, this study must still be held accountable to a certain standard to ensure that it is appropriate and capable of contributing to the field of sport sociology. This section will discuss how this accountability is ensured.

It is essential to note here that qualitative research, and particularly qualitative research from a poststructuralist perspective, has very different epistemological basis than traditional positivist research (Lewis & Ritchie, 2003). As a result of this clear differentiation from traditional research, measures of reliability and validity to qualitative research are not necessary. Why is this? Markula and Silk (2011) noted that:

While the majority of judgement criteria for qualitative research use the term validity, it was originally assigned to ensure the objectivity of research and is thus an inappropriate measure for qualitative research that draws from a subjective epistemology. Poststructuralist/postmodern work emphasises the theoretical contribution in addition to the process and impact on the community. This departs from interpretive or critical research to place less significance on detailed, 'procedural' judgement criteria and call for a more in depth, theoretically driven, yet practically applicable, socially situated knowledge production process. (p. 220)

In post-structuralism, there is no consistent, trustworthy or dependable reality to uncover, therefore, no universal means by which to validate a piece of poststructuralist research exists, nor is it required. However, this does not mean that the importance of ensuring the quality of a research project is unnecessary. In fact, quite the opposite is true. In order to ensure that poststructuralist research is sound, alternative processes have been devised.

To guarantee good quality research from within the poststructuralist paradigm, the researcher must be able to display how their study is theoretically coherent and possesses sound, appropriately applied theoretical logic congruent with the stance of the original theorist. In this case, this Foucauldian study must ensure that the chosen theory is used in a manner that reflects a competent understanding of Foucault's work. This congruence must be evident throughout the research framework including in the choices of method and data analysis

adopted by the research study. A further barometer for the quality of research in this mould is evidence of critical self-reflection on the part of the researcher.

In order to remain loyal to the traditions of poststructuralist research, for the purposes of this study into retirement in British football, I chose to utilise the method of semi-structured interviews (Kvale, 1996). The semi-structured interview was chosen here to allow participants to provide detailed responses and to illuminate as many of the multitude of experiences or realities endured during their retirement.

The sound application of an analysis steeped in the theory of Foucault also distinguishes this study as an appropriate poststructuralist study. To ensure that the Foucauldian theory employed here is appropriate I have engaged with Foucault's (1991) seminal text regarding discipline 'Discipline and Punish: The birth of the prison', as well as considering the seminal Foucauldian texts that exist in the area of sports sociology (Rail & Harvey, 1995; Heikkala, 1993; Markula & Pringle, 2006; Shogan ,1999).

Finally, Patton (2002, p. 587) believed that "studies of all kinds can be judged upon their own merits according to the claims they make and the evidence marshalled in support of these claims". Although Foucault's theoretical toolkit has been applied to several athletic and sporting populations (see Rail & Harvey, 1995; Markula & Pringle, 2006), the in-depth adoption of post-structural theory to the population of retired British footballers is to this researchers knowledge, a first. Therefore, the important question to consider is this: in the eyes of retired

footballers, does this study accurately represent how retired footballers experience retirement?

In summary, this study adopted a research methodology informed by the theoretical thoughts of Foucault (1991), specifically his suggestions with regard to discipline and the production of docile bodies. In doing so, this study has begun to "open up the dimension of mystery that surrounds athletes' retirement experiences" (Denison, 1996, p. 352), in a similar, but perhaps more theoretically informed manner than has been done so previously. Correspondingly, it is hoped that this study has contributed to the development of a "healthier environment for high performance sport" (Johns & Johns, 2000, p. 221) including for those who will and already have retired from the sport of professional football in Britain.

5.0 Enforced Retirement: Immediate Experiences of Eviction from Football

"*Coming out of the full time game is a lot harder than people imagine. Many retiring players are just trying to find a job. They are in the same boat as people who are just coming out of school*" – Paul (participant)

Denison et al (2013), Markula and Pringle (2006) and Shogan (1999) have utilised the thoughts of Foucault (1991) to consider how techniques of discipline establish docile bodies in sport. In this chapter I look at how docility influences the immediate experience of retirement from football, and in chapter six I discuss the longer-term legacy of docility for post-career experiences. In this first analysis chapter, I use Foucault (1991) to explore how the techniques of discipline found in British football (presented in Chapter three) affected former players as they negotiated the initial moments of retirement. If one is to fully understand retirement, close attention must be paid to the socio-culturally determined experiences of an individual player's career, as well as those experiences he is confronted with in retirement. This is an approach that currently does not exist in any sports retirement literature, especially not in the anti-intellectual realm of British football (Carter, 2006; Kuper & Symanski, 2009).

In this chapter, I explore the initial effect of enforced retirement from football by considering the negative and positive connotations associated with this transition. For many, a sense of devastation and challenging periods were simultaneously juxtaposed with a deep sense of relief and escape from an overtly disciplined lifestyle. I suggest an alternative reading of the reasons for these

ambiguous emotions that utilises Foucault's (1991) understandings of discipline to critique the contemporary culture of football. This is instead of engaging in an objective analysis of an individual player (an approach that has dominated past research). Through this lens, an awareness of the factors that influence retirement from sport can be developed and utilised to stimulate more ethical retirement negotiation for elite players.

5.1 Retirement from the 'Modern Discipline' of Football

Giulianotti (1999) has illustrated how a football club is organised into a structured hierarchy that maintains surveillance over the players residing within it. Along with performance in training and matches, the relationships a player engages in on a day to day basis also go a long way to determining his position within the hierarchy of the club. A player understands his place or his 'rank' within the hierarchy by acknowledging the spaces that his relationships force him to occupy, as well as the activities he is directed to perform within these spaces (his 'function'). These directions are commonly prescribed by those to whom a player is subservient within his immediate hierarchy and can lead to difficult outcomes for the player. As Charlie noted, he was pushed down the hierarchy by a manager's attempt to force him out of a club:

> The manager was treating me like a piece of dirt. I wouldn't even repeat some of the things that he said. He was pulling me off the football pitch, turfing me out to the reserves, making me go and train with the youth team. He was doing everything to push my buttons to get me to leave.

Charlie was not the only player to experience negative relations as a professional player where disciplinary elements were manipulated to enforce docility. Difficulties with the relational aspect of the profession were numerous as many players recalled confusion and frustration in negotiating the daily interactions of a football environment. A sense of lacking the knowledge of how to conduct oneself within the various required relationships of football was not uncommon, as Andrew noted:

> Looking back on it I didn't think I was very good at reading people or talking to people. I was quite insecure, didn't have anything to judge myself against and I was intimidated by older players. I don't think I ever really got over that.

Many retired players reflected that they were simply not able to alter the pattern or impact the direction that their football relationships (and subsequently their careers) were taking. This led to a sense of helplessness with regard to altering their situation within this competitive and ever changing space. This was made all the more challenging when their position as un-required players was made explicit to them while still under professional contract. For example, several of the players interviewed found themselves under professional contract but ostracised within the football club, not even being played in the reserves. Finding themselves rooted to the bottom of the club's hierarchy. Arthur recalled that:

> It was the same thing every-day, circle ball, keep ball, five a side, and go home. The coaches weren't interested in you because they wanted to be

with the first team squad, you were in the 'bombed squad' and that was

tough...

For many of the interviewed retirees, significant time was spent recalling

such examples of the negative and challenging aspects of a professional

footballing career. Often a sense of frustration was recalled because the players

felt they had, despite years of discipline and hard work, hit a brick wall that was

not of their own making. At this time, several of the players recalled stagnation

and a feeling of helplessness with regard to their own fate as footballers. For

many, these days became the *first moments* when the possibility of being forced

into retirement became apparent, and as such are important to note. Roderick

(2006) has indicated that for many players the spectre of retirement is intensely

real once a certain stage of career has been reached. The responses of the

interviewed players support this observation. Retirement was, for many of the

players interviewed, a 'Sword of Damocles', constantly hovering above them.

This was especially true once they fell from favour and moved down the hierarchy

within their clubs.

Markula and Pringle (2006, p. 102) noted that "the disciplinary techniques

employed within sport settings...produce a multitude of subject positions such as:

losers, benchwarmers, social players...lackadaisical, unfit, unskilled, injured...and

of course ill-disciplined". Cushion and Jones (2006) have identified how in a

football development environment with younger players, coaches categorise

players into 'favourites', 'peripherals' and 'rejects'. The recollections presented

by the participants here strongly supported that this categorisation continues into

the first team professional realm. The former professionals noted that once they became categorised as rejects or as was mentioned a number of times, became part of the 'Bombed Squad', their experience of professional football became much more challenging. This was in direct juxtaposition to what they had expected after having 'made it' and signed a fully professional contract (mirroring the findings of McGillivray et al, 2005).

This realisation of being a member of the 'Bombed Squad' where coaches 'weren't interested' could be classified as the first step towards eviction from football. Players in this position reside at the foot of the hierarchy with little hope of climbing the ladder again.

In general a rejected player is no longer seen as useful to the football club and his 'function' as a docile body is perceived to have been lost. These players are shunned. They are ignored, forcibly made unwelcome, and are no longer subjected to any observation, judgement or examination (as Arthur noted, no coaches even observed their training). As the influence of disciplinary mechanisms designed to ensure a players docility begin to wane, players become sensitive to this alleviation of surveillance. This is a warning sign for many experienced players. For many the realisation of this waning surveillance and lack of interest from the coaching staff led to a significant disenchantment that stimulated their first thoughts and concerns of an impending eviction/retirement. As Ron mentioned "When that happened, I became disengaged, and I lost my enthusiasm, and that's when I thought...I'm washing my hands of it you know?" Without imposed daily surveillance, working footballers begin to notice their lives

changing. It is clear that a reduction in surveillance leads to uncertainty in the life of a footballer, the key factor identified as being problematic for this population (Roderick, 2006).

Docility in football is typified by the obedient individual, who understands his place in the institutional hierarchy of the football club. This position is perfectly described by Andrew, who noted that:

> I was low maintenance. I would help people out, pick up the equipment, be on time and work hard. I never kicked up a fuss when I wasn't playing or being asked to play in the wrong position.

In this particular quote, Andrew clearly reveals his propensity for docility by admitting his willingness to adapt any particular position or 'function' asked of him by his hierarchical superiors (coaches). This docility led to him unquestioningly carrying out his working role regardless of how this impacted his career as a player or as an individual. Dennis also recognised the need to adopt the role of a docile footballer in order to survive as a career progressed.

> Every time you went to the next level there was more pressure, but I felt that throughout my professional life, once you have done something a number of times there is a level of understanding, you know what you are getting into, so you start to relax a bit more and perform.

Dennis' comment illustrates that the docility imposed by life as a footballer allowed effective performance and to an extent, a level of comfort in the role. A player's development was continuously monitored and controlled by a coaching staff whose job it was to produce them in a certain way. In short they were

coerced to develop technically for a function, and to develop obedience to the clubs hierarchy. The step up in expectations when performing required first team activities changes as a player's rank and 'function' also change. Moving up the hierarchy of a football club demands a higher level of discipline, and as Dennis noted, compliance is essential. It is required in order to manage the increased level of difficulty associated with the day to day demands of a being in the first team squad. For a first team player, increased sacrifices were required, as Paul noted:

> The other negative thing was the amount of sacrifice involved. If you wanted to keep your place in the first team, like my mates were going out on a Friday night, going and getting pissed and I knew I had a game on the Saturday...You've got to discipline yourself quite a lot and you do lose friends because of it.

Compliance to the expected norms of their football clubs allowed players to perform their working roles without endangering their jobs It also clearly restricted an awareness of the role of football in determining how a player understood who he was, or the direction that his life was taking during his career. Andrew further explained:

> I never really felt in control of it while it was going on. I always felt that it was passing me by. I spent a lot of time in a bit of a daze really…Emotionally it gripped me, looking back on it I don't think I relaxed or had the chance to absorb what was going on.

Furthermore the participants commonly reported a sense of toeing the line and a loss of understanding of who they were. Foucault (1991) noted that significantly docile bodies become more and more 'functional and anonymous', and this was clearly felt by Mark, who recognising his hierarchical position in his workplace he,

> Just got on with it. You find your place in the pecking order, find you niche and keep yourself to yourself. I never really felt like an individual when I was playing, I just felt like a collective of 6 or 7 young professionals that no one gave a shit about.
>
> Markula and Pringle (2006) noted that "when docile the body becomes

useful as it can be moulded as a vehicle for the technologies of domination" (p. 74). The responses above have clearly illustrated how this occurred as players got on with their life in an unquestioned, often restricted manner. Mark recalls a surrendered sense of individuality, a classic example of Foucault's (1991) description of how docility is a vehicle for the dissemination of power in modernity.

Importantly for this study into retirement, I suggest that this docility (acquired through exposure to the technologies of domination prevalent in a football context) has significant effect upon the individual during the initial steps into retirement. Across the entire sample of 25 retired players the reflection of similar activities, relationships, feelings of surveillance and the exposure to disciplinary practices shows that a football career rendered these players as docile bodies. Exposure to this disciplinary space has created a shared and unquestioned

understanding of what it means to be a competent, durable and successful professional. All those interviewed were extremely clear in their recognition of the necessary characteristics required to survive in this job. The cohesion amongst these responses illustrates the widespread assumption that, as Arthur noted, "You need to be the right type of person to be a footballer". So what is this template of a typical footballer that Arthur described?

5.1.1 A disciplined footballer.

*For coaches and managers, there exists a direct connection between 'success' and the **type of person** you need to be to achieve* (Roderick, 2013, p. 14).

The overwhelming consensus was that the identity of being 'A footballer' is characterised by someone who is disciplined and who conforms, regardless of circumstance. This individual uses his acquired discipline in order to survive the rigours of his profession and buys into a club's culture. He is also obedient to the expectations placed upon him, regardless of any reservations he may have. Finally, a footballer must be competitive, often to the point of being irrational, as Paul noted, "If you play heads or tails with a footballer, he's going to want to beat you".

This 'footballer identity' was described by the retirees as being centred on durability, engaging in self-sacrifice and regulation, and displaying blind commitment and dedication to a role. When asked what it meant to be a footballer, Dennis mentioned:

I learned that you had to take it seriously. At the academy level you could get away with messing about, but when you made that step up to play with older professionals who have been around you think 'I've got to take things more seriously outside of football now'. You begin to get good money and want to always be in the first team, so its sink or swim; you learn to be more professional.

Lawrence revealed that to be a footballer you have to be emotionally restricted and compliant when he noted:

You can't afford to be "Big Time', or show much emotion. I've had loads of emotion taken out of me I think. In football you can't look at things emotionally otherwise you get too involved. I had to step away from that and look at it from an objective point of view. Otherwise I couldn't do my job, I would get too frustrated or angry or spit my dummy out and want to stop.

Ron said that the expectations surrounding a football role were all or nothing:

Football has to be your number one priority if you want to make it. I wasn't interested in anything else but football. But, it is cutthroat and ruthless so you have to be prepared for anything. You have to be strong and give it everything that you have; otherwise someone else will make it instead of you.

A footballer is an enduring, obedient man, a man who 'kicks up no fuss', who 'takes things on the chin' and 'gets on with the job'. For the most part, a footballer surrenders his autonomy and becomes a mechanical part of the machine

of the football club, a cog in a "multi-segmentary machine" (Denison et al, 2013, p. 394). To the outside observer, this lifestyle seems very repressive, so why does this docility persist, and why do footballers conform to this restrictive way of life?

Despite the acknowledged sacrifices and a stress associated with working football, having 'made it into professional football' was a wonderful experience for these men. Several quotes explain why they were willing to engage in this seemingly repressive lifestyle. Ian mentioned that as a result "Football was part of me and in my blood". Lawrence noted that football was "The love of my life, because everyone wants to be a footballer". Colin noted that when he was at a League club and involved in the first team he was "living the dream". Eli reflected that he really savoured the moments when he realised he had achieved his childhood ambition, when he noted that, "It was incredible as a youngster and as a member of the first team squad. I got to wear the kit and be on the field and involved on a match day. Even as an eighteen year old I was still in awe".

Every player interviewed expressed a certain sense of fulfillment at achieving their lifelong goal of playing professional football. They also expressed satisfaction at finding a place where they felt accepted and at ease. For many players, the football club environment, despite its aggressive and competitive nature, was where they felt that they belonged (Hornby, 1992; Wacquant, 1995, 2004). Highly competitive and context specific 'Banter' helped to cultivate a unique and almost sacred space that they felt privileged to be part of. Being able to take part in this 'Banter' and being accepted into the first team unit led to a heightened experience of belonging, as Colin mentioned:

> Football matured me very quickly and I grew up fast. I was still a kid when I made the first team and I was mingling with adults. They took me under their wing and invited me on a couple of social nights. All of a sudden I felt part of the group and it was great, I was flying.

When questioning why footballers persist in such a seemingly treacherous environment, another important factor that must be considered is that of role clarity. Many footballers are not well-educated individuals, given the need to 'put all their eggs in one basket', at an early age (McGillivray et al, 2005). Therefore, when presented with a working role and a clear 'function', many footballers were grateful and happy to get on with the task in hand. As Jeff noted:

> I'd only ever wanted to be a footballer. I'd never really considered any other vocation. Life was very straightforward, and I just thought 'I'm going to play football' and that 'I don't need to worry about anything else'.

From these responses it is clear to see that despite the uncertainty of a football career, this vocation still provided the participants with; an understanding of who they were, a clear role as a culturally respected male in society, and a constant space where (through the regular absorption of discipline) their lives had established focus and direction. It is because of these sustaining elements that an eviction from football becomes such a challenging moment, and it is this moment that the rest of this chapter will explore.

5.1.2 The immediate retirement experience.

For Foucault (1991) retirement would perhaps be described as the eviction of a formerly useful docile body from a familiar localised disciplinary space (within which the individual had been repeatedly exposed to multiple techniques of discipline). Enforced retirement is defined here as the cessation of being part of a playing staff at any of the institutions that make up British League and Conference football. This eviction is typified by the painful loss of belonging, clarity of identity and a safe space. How does an understanding of the composition of this disciplinary space and an acknowledgement that it produces docile bodies help understand retirement? It is because the experience of residency within football is what needs to be considered when attempting to understand the subsequent universal challenge of enforced retirement. Below I consider the initial impact of enforced removal upon a docile footballing body.

5.1.2.1 Challenging times.

Many participants suggested that overall, their experiences from football 'thickened their skins' and 'built character' in the long-term (see chapter six). However, almost every single player also reported an initial period of difficulty, confusion, and uncertainty upon the initial moments of their enforced retirement. This usually came in the form of a gradual realisation that their career was over and their elite or professional status was to be lost or taken away. This finding is unsurprising and mirrors the overwhelming body of existing research that has previously approached this enforced transition phase in football (Gilbourne, 2002;

Roderick, 2013) and other elite sports (Blinde & Strata, 1991; Kerr & Dachyshyn, 2001; Lally, 2007).

Many, but not all of the players' admissions of difficulties were somewhat reluctant and the retirees were more likely to emphasise the positives of their retirement. There was a definite desire to not display any weakness and to display a British 'stiff upper lip'. This is also unsurprising given the emphasis placed upon suppressing negative emotions in the football environment (Roderick, 2006). However, once the participants became more engaged and comfortable within the interview setting, many challenging and often painful experiences were recalled. These centred on the end of their careers and the loss of their professional status. These feelings occurred in no particular order and ranged from despair to confusion, illustrating the dangers of speculating universal commonality in the initial experience of enforced retirement (as has been the dominant trend).

One retiree, Andrew, noted that there were several challenging moments after his enforced retirement. A director informed him of his fate in the back corridor of the football club where he had been a player for five years. Andrew noted that he, "felt terrible, I felt let down and massively disappointed. I was angry, as I was driving home from the game I was devastated, I cried all the way home". On another occasion shortly after his release from the same Conference team he recalled:

I remember driving to a local park and sitting on a bench for hours crying my eyes out, ignoring phone calls. I was just thinking 'What the fuck am I

doing?' and that football was shit and everything was going to pot. I just

needed something else.

Nathan also reported a moment of dejection upon his release from a Premiership

club:

> When I was released from Club Y, it was all I had ever wanted to do. I
>
> went and sat in the toilet after speaking to the coach at the training ground
>
> and cried on my own, because I had to deal with it.

> Along with the upsetting moments recalled by the players, many reflected

that their enforced retirement was not a complete surprise. Coupled with their

feelings of loss of status as a professional footballer, almost all felt a sense of

wariness about the future and what their lives now had in store for them. As Jeff

noted, when recalling his ejection from a Conference team:

> I wouldn't say I was low because it was on the horizon, but when you get
>
> the reality of it, it does hit you a little bit. You start to think what do I do?
>
> Where do I go from here?

Lawrence also identified this wariness and worry as being a challenging period as

he initially came away from a League One club:

> What do I do with the rest of my days? It left me stuck in a rut. What am
>
> I going to do? Literally what am I going to do? There was quite a big
>
> phase where I had no focus. Not through want, but because I had nothing
>
> to focus on.

Brian also spoke to an anxiety over his future:

> I remember at the time wandering around on the beach thinking, 'How am I going to get money? I can't even pay the mortgage'. I went to the cash point and I couldn't even take any money out. Then the realisation hit me hard. Up until then I had been wrapped in cotton wool.

Other players identified that along with confusion about the future and the sorrow of missing out on a childhood ambition, there was a distinct amount of pain associated with having to deal with failure. This pain stemmed from the perception that they had not lived up to a prescribed pathway through life, as Eli recalled:

> I think I was bitter for a very long time...It has been ingrained in me that I was the best...It was incredibly difficult seeing the younger players taking your place...I felt embarrassed, because people can't wait to see you fail...It was depressing. The first time I had ever experienced failure.

As the quotes in the above section have identified, although the removal from the professional game came for a few as a nasty shock, in many cases it was anticipated by the players. For example, Jeremy identified that he "saw the writing on the wall". Butt and Molnar (2009) have identified this as a prominent experience for retiring athletes who recognise the imminence of their career termination before it actually takes place. Roderick (2006) also clearly identified that this was a distinct possibility in the British game, where the realities of losing one's professional status are not hidden; rather they are often at the forefront of a player's mindset.

Most discussions surrounding retirement entailed a coming to terms with the process that players were no longer wanted/required, rather than dealing with a sudden trauma. It is important to note that when many of the retiree's experienced a moment of despair it was almost always as a result of the *culmination* of the process of retirement rather than a single traumatic event, what Denison (1997), using Denzin's (1994) framework, named a 'cumulative epiphany'.

Many players revealed a distinct sense of desolation at the realisation that their career at the highest level was no longer a reality. It would be foolish to ignore the tangibility of these difficult times and how painful they can be to the individual. What is important to note however is that these painful times were for the most part the culmination of a lengthy stressful period. On reflection, once the dust had settled, the players interviewed identified that these feelings of despair had *not occurred in isolation* from other perceptions of the impact of their retirement. Rather, on reflection the participants believed that these negative emotions arrived at a particularly traumatic time, perhaps compounded by the confusion of what was happening to them during this unpleasant but not unexpected event. Stier (2007) has noted in his study of retired tennis professionals that retirement was *"Challenging for the players but was nonetheless not as dramatic as much of the scientific literature suggests"* (p. 108). Although it is important not to ignore the pain experienced as a result of enforced retirement, this study, like Stier agrees that it is more important to emphasise a broader appreciation of enforced retirement, rather than over-emphasising the

dramatic. For example, many of the above recollections reveal a strong undercurrent of relief, despite the sadness of losing one's professional status. The factors contributing to this sense of relief are explored below.

5.1.2.2 Relief.

Roderick (2006) speculated that for many retiring players, exiting the sport of professional football would be considered a relief, predominantly due to the intense physical demands and uncertainty that exists during a playing career. Although the retirement transition was recalled by most of the participants as a challenging time, almost every participant also echoed Roderick's supposition by saying that once out of the professional game; they experienced a distinct feeling of relief. Many felt as though they had 'dodged a bullet' by getting out of the game at the time that they did. For example, Charlie noted:

> For most people, coming out of the pro game and going into non-league
>
> would probably have been more of a struggle, but I actually *thrived off it*
>
> because I was having such a poor personal time at Club Z.

This quote reveals how life as a professional footballer can be extremely repressive and when this career is terminated, there is often a deep sense of relief of a relinquishment of pressure and expectation. This included the amount of sacrifice required by the modestly paid professional football player. For example, Will discussed now that he is out of the professional ranks he is more stable:

> I think I'm happy with where I am. I don't look back too often at being a
>
> pro and thinking 'I wish I still was'. To be honest I'm happy that I'm not
>
> a League Two or Conference player now. I'll be honest that wouldn't

interest me, travelling like they do on a Tuesday night and a Saturday for not a lot of money. If I had a chance of being a Premier League player or a Championship player, I would take that for sure, but that is the pinnacle. To play Conference and Lower League football you have to sacrifice...with what you have to sacrifice I would still choose to have the life that I have now.

Will is happy with his current job in football rather than remaining at the lower levels and enduring the hardships he clearly identified. This response is definitely in line with the reported uncertainty of the role of a professional footballer identified by Roderick (2006).

It is clear from Will's response that although at the outset a career in football appears glamorous (McGillivray et al, 2005), the harsh realities of the game mean that there are intense sacrifices required to sustain oneself as a professional. Many of the players interviewed bemoaned this level of sacrifice for minimal recompense, therefore the cessation of a day to day football existence led to a distinct sense of relief.

Charlie noted that his fortunes as a professional player were to a great extent controlled by his manager. As his superior, his manager directed the activities he could perform and the spaces he could occupy. Once released from his role as a professional player Charlie noted that he *thrived* because he no longer had to occupy a space or perform an activity he would rather not (e.g., training with the reserves or youth team). Charlie's escape from the hierarchically ordered football club meant an escape from the specific spaces and activities that rendered

him as a docile footballing body. For Charlie, this escape was clearly a cathartic release and explains to a certain extent the constant reporting of relief experienced by the retirees. This is also evidenced in Dean's account of his first job away from football. Dean said that:

> I started working in a warehouse and the difference...I felt brilliant, working in that warehouse for six months. It was the best feeling I've ever had in a job, ever. Because, I'd gone from football, being under pressure every day I got up. Going from training knowing I had to perform to working where I thought 'I do not give a fuck...I haven't got to do anything...I'm just going to chuck a few boxes on'. No-one was there telling me I was chucking the boxes on in the wrong way, and it was just great to have that.

The effects of residing within the 'Modern Discipline' of British professional football have been shown to be restrictive and limiting in many ways. Exiting this realm (despite the obvious challenges discussed above) was often seen as a way to relinquish the constant pressure of football. This is unsurprising as previous research has shown that relief at an enforced or voluntary retirement from sport is common (Allison & Swain, 1991; Kerr and Dacyshyn, 2001; Stier, 2007).

A socio-cultural reading of relief is in stark contrast to previous sports psychology research upon individual sports retirement. Sports psychology research findings indicated that relief stems from an individual no longer having to possess characteristics or having to perform a certain identity, this is a 'New

Beginning' (Kerr & Dacyshyn, 2001). From this athlete focused perspective, relief stems from the release of the strain of having to maintain previously learnt self-imposed qualities. The athlete 'let's go', 'dis-identifies' (Roderick, 2013), and is emancipated. His identity as an athlete no longer has to exist and he is pardoned and is free to carry on his life. Sports psychology research suggests that relief floods over an athlete as a result of finally letting go of an 'athletic identity' (Brewer et al, 1993; Sparkes, 1998) that he had been "hanging on to for dear life" (Sparkes & Phoenix, 2007, p. 9). Again here *the athlete* is the centre of focus; he is the location where the change occurs. A socio-cultural reading of enforced retirement however, requires a different, subtle reading of the source of relief in retirement. In moving the source of relief *away* from the athlete, I stimulate alternative thinking surrounding relief in retirement, a reading that considers the very nature of sport itself. The relief experienced by Will, Dean and Charlie stems not exclusively from a lessening of demand upon the athlete. Nor does this relief emerge as the athlete himself deals with his quandary, overcoming it himself. Rather, relief is experienced as a result of the movement away from a power ridden, localised disciplinary context.

Foucault's (1991) notion of the Panopticon can be helpful to explain why the source of relief needs to be considered rooted in a location other than the athlete himself. Although Foucault went on to use the Panopticon to explain how the entire social body becomes disciplined via a technique that enables widespread coercion (Denison et al, 2013), he also noted initially how panopticism "works to exercise power within enclosed spaces" (Markula &

Pringle, 2006, p. 80), for example, in a football club (Cushion & Jones, 2012; Giulianotti, 1999; Roderick, 2006). In a football club the presence of daily hierarchical surveillance mirrors the panoptic guard tower Foucault presents. This imposition exposes the professional to an inescapable gaze, which in turn leads to the parallel self-regulation and compliant behaviour reported by the interviewees.

The retiring player leaving a professional football club *is removed* from this intense and specific 'panoptic gaze' and hierarchically ordered lifestyle. As a result, the techniques of discipline that previously rendered the player docile begin to wane and their immediate effect upon the player significantly lessens (but not completely, as chapter six explores). It is this reduction in the level of discipline being imposed upon the athlete that needs to be considered as the source of retirement experience if we are to truly encapsulate the experiences of relief in enforced retirement. Importantly, in order to understand relief from professional football, it is not simply the player who needs to be considered. Instead, the primary focus must be the nature and composition of the environment from which he has been evicted, as it is the removal which catalyses his feelings of relief.

The movement away from the life of a professional player allows the effects of docility to begin to fade. The retiree slowly begins to notice the waning influence of discipline acting upon him and a more lasting concrete sense of relief is allowed to flourish. His new encounters are therefore negotiated with less restriction. Retired players noted that when they left the game, they were not so occupied with thinking about the sport or their status within it. This provided

them with a sense of freedom and less energy was expanded dwelling on the role of football in their lives. For example, when he dropped out of the professional game and began to play Non-league football, Will noted that "I didn't begin to think about football until Saturday morning or lunchtime. So it gave me some freedom." And, Dennis also mentioned that after his movement away from full-time Conference football, despite being disappointed to no longer be competing at that level he felt that, "football is no longer a worry anymore. When you get back to reality and you come out of that level of football, it's no longer at the forefront of your mind".

Arthur provided an insight into his feelings of relief when he noted that performing as a professional football player became less central to his day to day life. Although he admitted to being conflicted at leaving the game he also noted:

> I kind of accepted it and thought 'I'm happy with this, I'm not going back into professional football'. I was in a bit more of a relaxed state. In some ways I enjoy the time without it, because I spent so much time with it as a focus. It is nice to have a period where it is not so prevalent so I can experience other things, because football has taken up so much of my life.

Beyond the relief at no longer having to spend so much energy focusing upon football, many of the retired players expressed relief at being able to develop new relationships and to interact with a broader spectrum of people in their new lives. As Andrew noted:

> I made a conscious decision to get myself out of the football bubble...meeting new people who weren't in football was amazing for me.

It got me away from the twenty-four seven football culture, where you live with the lads and see them all the time. I used to go to all the footballers' houses and it was twenty-four seven banter and you just couldn't relax, you couldn't have a serious conversation. For the most part it was all about one-upmanship...There was no way you could have a conversation like the one we are having now...so by living with other people, you could interact like real people do and meet new people who are more like minded.

Brian also demonstrated his relief after leaving football:

Interviewer: What is your relationship with football like now?

Brian: Nothing. Don't play it. Not kicked a ball. I don't miss it. I don't miss people telling me what they think of me, that I wasn't very good. My Dad always questions me 'Don't you miss it?', and I say 'I've had enough of it'. It's a fact. I don't want to be associated with people who constantly judge you.

Interviewer: Do you prefer the job you have now?

Brian: Yeah, because I hated the scrutiny. I do not miss the fans and the press slating me or the manager hammering me. I'm done with that.

In previous research into British football, Roderick (2006) speculated that retirement would provide relief from the demands of an intense physical environment and uncertain employment conditions. This projection is substantiated by the players' responses. The interpretation of relief I present here using a socio-cultural lens disturbs previous assumptions surrounding the

experience of relief in enforced sports retirement. It is the relief of the removal of a docile body from a disciplinary football culture that is the key factor influencing these reported experiences.

5.1.3 Impact of eviction on retirement experiences.

It is clear that although distinct commonalities exist, there are no definitive retirement transition experiences for British professional football players. I suggest that it is dangerous to prescribe a concrete pathway through retirement. Rather, as Roderick (2006) and Stier (2007) have claimed, retirement should not simply be deciphered as either a 'social death' or as a dramatic 'rebirth' (Coakley, 1983) but rather as an ongoing ambiguous process that includes a tendency to either ends of this spectrum of emotion. This is neatly summarised by Will who noted that he took a range of emotions from a career in football. For Will, his career, "wasn't always a great time, but there are definitely pluses and minuses that you *take* from football". It is this ambiguity that needs to be deciphered primarily through exploring the impact of removal from an intensely disciplined localised space.

Using Foucault's (1991) analysis of discipline, I suggest that the socio-cultural nature of the football environment precludes certain prevalent transitional experiences. Importantly this includes how a removal from this space governs how a footballer initially negotiates retirement. Existing examinations of retirement have attempted to promote a universal process or pathway through retirement, focusing on the individual characteristics of individual athletes. Given the range and ambiguity of retirement experience revealed in this study it is

perhaps naive to characterise universal accounts of retirement from football. This is primarily due to the difference and multiplicity of career experiences and varying relationships each player will have been exposed to during a career. I suggest that in order to understand relief in retirement, considering retirement as governed by exposure to, and removal from, spaces of localised disciplinary power, makes sense. Doing so allows an appreciation of the confusing and apparently paradoxical emotional experiences of retirement. Players who were rendered docile to enable them to perform effectively in a certain space are removed from this space and exposed to new relations of power. It is therefore the spectrum of emotions that arise as a result of the enforced removal from a localised disciplinary space that the remainder of chapter considers.

Foucault (1991) believed that all relations of power should be seen as fluid in their composition. This means that regardless of their incumbency, dominant relations of power are always open to negotiation. However, the hierarchical, closeted nature of the localised space of anti-intellectual British football (Giulianotti, 1999: Kuper & Symanksi, 2009) tends to suffocate any alternative voice that could destabilise its current network of power.

Once a player is removed from football he is usually no longer in such a restricted social space. With his release he is exposed to new social networks and with them, alternative relations of power. Within these new networks he gradually will begin to hear and assimilate the perspectives of the voices that were previously disallowed in his footballing space. He becomes exposed to foreign, 'marginalised knowledges' surrounding what it means to be a successful British

man, and this can be confusing. Along these lines, Nathan noted that, "Football detaches you from what your actual reality is going to be when you come out". Enforced retirement is the eviction of an individual from a particular space and is a process that prevents him from completing his previously prescribed activities. This eviction forces players to confront a new reality away from the uterine (Kay, 2009), familiar culture of the game. As a result of enforced retirement, the everyday effects of disciplinary techniques are no longer felt as tangibly by the retired player as he is no longer directly exposed to them. Neither does he have to complete the disciplinary practices imposed upon him during his career. All of a sudden, a retired player is no longer exposed, nor has direct access to, the relations of power which enabled and directed him to understand what was required of him on a daily basis. This removal is a definite shock to the system and is the reason that the initial retirement period is such a challenging time for a player.

5.2 Conclusion

Enforced removal and the reduced exposure to the techniques of discipline found in football have many perceived positive aspects for the retiring player. This is despite the associated confusion and pain reported. It is the removal and prevention of access to the structured techniques of discipline that creates confusion, presents a challenge, and stimulates feelings of relief for the retiring player. With the removal of discipline a retiring footballer is presented with an entirely unfamiliar day to day experience, an experience ungoverned by familiar social rules and without clear instruction. Even for the hardiest player this is a

time of real confusion and disarray. As discussed, this is because a football career

provided the footballer (as a docile footballing body) with:

- an understanding of who they were,

- a clear role as a culturally respected male in society,

- a constant space where (through the regular absorption of discipline)
  their lives had established focus and direction.

This apparently stable circumstance or way of knowing themselves was, for the

players, the only familiar formula for how to operate as a successful individual

known to them. This explains why it was held on to so tightly and why it was so

painful to let go of. With the removal of this pattern, new and unfamiliar ways of

knowing and conducting oneself are required, yet the capacity to perform any

alternative is, due to prolonged residence within a localised disciplinary space,

underdeveloped. It is this deficiency (highlighted by enforced removal) that

creates such challenging feelings for the retiring player; however, as has also been

discussed, this removal is also met with a distinct sense of freedom and

opportunity.

It is important to close this chapter by noting that these feelings of relief

rarely are a watershed or do they provide complete 'closure' for these players

upon their retirement. The idea of a 'new beginning' (Kerr & Dachyshyn, 2001)

or a 'rebirth' (Coakley, 1983) and a fresh slate from which to start again, is a very

welcoming, but ultimately unrealistic notion. Given the level of reflection and the

variety of responses it is clear that retirement from professional football has

multiple effects upon a retiring player. These are effects that cannot simply be erased at a certain point just because an individual's life has changed.

Although the life of a footballer is seen by the retired players as restrictive and limiting in many ways, the relief of removal from this lifestyle was, like so much of their careers (Roderick, 2006) always tempered by fear or the unknown. As Nathan identified:

> A lot of the boys who had no educational background were genuinely scared of what the future held for them after football...because at that level, League One, they were earning relatively good money for their age, but it wasn't going to be enough, that when 35 comes around and they retired they would be able to live off it...We had one player who used to joke 'I'm going to work in Safeway's after this'. I wasn't even sure he would even get that kind of job because he was so unreliable; even at Safeway's you gotta be on time!

Despite relief in retirement, significant concern at what the future holds is a factor that needs to be considered when studying retirement in this population. Therefore, an exploration into the longer-term negotiation of retirement will form the basis of the following chapters.

In conclusion, the responses here illustrate that the effects of removal from the disciplinary professional football environment are both painful and cathartic. Retirement from football needs to be considered in less clear cut terms and as more of an ambiguous experience (Stier, 2007), dependent upon the composition of the power relations that rendered a player docile during his career. Players are

also aware that retirement is a tricky terrain to negotiate and this is revealed in the fear and anxiety most every player mentioned. It is this fear of the future that stimulates the need to adapt; therefore the next chapter will consider how a player adapts in order to negotiate retirement over the longer-term.

6.0 'Confessions of a Retired Footballer'– The Long-Term Negotiation of Retirement

"A programme of control aimed at disciplining the body has far reaching and unplanned consequences" (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 197).

6.1 Introduction

In chapter five, I considered the immediate impact of retirement from football. This chapter considers how performing a career as a docile "footballer" impacts upon a player's long-term retirement experiences. In short, as they continue to negotiate retirement, does a retired footballer feel a lasting legacy of the experiences gained during his career? To answer this question, the longer-term, residual effects of learned docility upon the post-career endeavours of retired players are explored in detail.

Several authors have perceptively used Foucault's analysis of discipline to highlight how docility occurs in an elite sporting context (Heikkala, 1993; Markula & Pringle, 2006; Shogan, 1999). As yet however, none have specifically considered the long-term legacy of career acquired docility in relation to on-going retirement. Above, the immediate impact of removal from a football space, governed by certain stable relations of power, has been discussed. In this chapter I reveal how these same career experiences have a lasting legacy upon how a retired footballer approaches his post-career life.

Chapter five has suggested several examples of how the lives of retired players are initially altered by retirement. This chapter uses Foucault (1991) to more closely consider the extent to which a footballer's long-term perceptions have been directly influenced by his exposure to a football career. These include

his new environments, his endeavours, his relationships, and his identity. In this chapter I reveal how retired players' docility is associated with character development, the correction of weaknesses and the inculcation of confidence. Specifically, I examine how players continue to engage in confessional practices in retirement. I reveal that these men project certain desirable traits associated with a successful and adaptable retired player. I go on to utilise Foucault to explain why this occurs, including the reasons why retired players continue to engage in these confessional practices as a means to negotiate post-career challenges.

6.2 Betterment Through Football?

"Football doesn't build character...It finds out who has it". – Brendan Rodgers

(2012) – 'Being Liverpool' – ESPN Documentary

Roderick (2006) noted that in the football environment negative emotions are suppressed and not to be revealed. This underlying sentiment was clearly reflected by the retired players who chose to predominantly report positive experiences of their retirement. For the most part it was reported that football helped retirees to learn how to negotiate all manner of new challenging realms. For example, in response to the question, has football helped you in your current position? The interviewees overwhelmingly responded that yes it did. Bobby answered:

> I think I'm made of pretty tough stuff. You know that if one door shuts,
> you can make another door open…It gives you thick skin and teaches you

how to take knocks. It also teaches you how to turn a negatively quickly

into a positive.

Whereas, John mentioned:

Football definitely helps in many ways. It makes up the kind of

personality you are to an extent. Has it changed me as a person? To an

extent it probably has because I've learnt some things from it. Football

has made me more confident, taught me to be louder and to make myself

heard more and given me a stronger backbone.

Mark also mentioned that football was a learning experience:

It has set me up really. I mean it's turned me into a tough and thick

skinned human and it has taught me a lot. Whether its time keeping, the

respect aspect, the hard work...also being grateful as well. Professionally

and emotionally it has really benefitted me...It has taught me an awful lot

and has made me the young man that I am now, and I'm pretty happy with

that.

Paul noted that football was helpful in knowing how to protect himself from

others:

There are no places for shy and retiring types in a football club. You can't

show any fear whatsoever, otherwise you crumble and they have got you

where they want you. Football made me resilient that way.

This selection of quotes reflects how retired footballers perceive how they

have become successful at new activities in new realms. This is due to their belief

that through their experiences in football they have developed the toolbox to

expand and adapt. In other words, the participants' responses indicate that the practices of discipline they engaged in and the reinforcing mechanisms that stimulated their docility have produced bodies also capable of productivity in alternative environments.

For many retirees football helped them acquire the tools for proactive personal development. Often, this was as a result of the enforced daily exposure to the opinions and critiques of expert coaches and older professionals with whom they had direct interaction. This is a classic example of the constant examination that Foucault (1991) identified as necessary for the production of docile bodies. For example, several of the participants discussed how they have learnt to set goals and speak up for themselves in their new careers. This was as a direct result of having to do so as young men in the football realm. For example Lawrence noted that, "I always perform well when I'm given targets...It has stood me in good stead for how I live my life today...It has all stemmed from football, wanting to be better, wanting to achieve". Arthur also spoke of something very similar:

> I think subconsciously that drive is always there. To want to do well in whatever you put your hand to, you want to do your best at it. If it's housework or if its business...Whatever it is, there is that drive there to want to do something well. I learned that as a YTS (Youth Training Scheme), trying to get to that next stage every year.

Paul, a former Premier League professional, noted:

> When I was a player and the gaffer asked me to do something, there were
>
> no questions asked. You just got on with it. I bring that obedience into
>
> my life now. If people ask me to do something for them, I just do it.

As well as stimulating obedience to authority, daily exposure to expertise from a young age was seen as having other effects. This included an awareness of how to learn/mine the resources and assimilate feedback from experts and role models in the football hierarchy. Lawrence stated that football teaches you to learn from people:

> Football has helped me to reflect sooner rather than later and to value
>
> people's opinions if they are in a position to give one...When its (advice)
>
> come from a position of authority, it's made me understand that you need
>
> to listen to the hierarchy.

This admission of the need to listen to expertise has many implications for the retired player. This illustrates that players develop the capacity to absorb disciplinary power to make oneself as productive as possible. This is a classic example of an individual accepting Foucault's (1991) concept of docility in order to achieve a socially prescribed role or task, and also shows how a retired player may accept his rank in any new hierarchy. It also reveals how and why he may happily display a learned subservience in a post-career position.

This study has revealed that a common belief exists amongst retired players that a lengthy exposure to a working football context provides the means by which to become a successful individual. This is not just from a playing perspective, but also in future roles after the termination of a career. Although

being in football ultimately taught them to be a disciplined and productive football player for a team, it was also perceived as preparing the retired player to perform his role after retirement with a certain level of competence (whether it be coaching, teaching or manual labour). The retirees perceived that their new roles were completed with minimal difficulty as a direct result of the skills and the competitive attitudes of success, durability, competence and achievement learned through football. For example, when asked about what he had learned from football, Ian mentioned that what you learned from football you,

> Take it into daily life. You go into football and you have to be competitive. Whatever you do in life I suppose, it drives you on, and it gives you a push to succeed in that because that is what you did in football.

The retired players also reported that lengthy exposure to the harsh realities of football allowed an enhanced appreciation of their capabilities. This allowed them to receive an education in self-awareness, specifically a stark and revealing lesson with regard to any flaws and strengths of their own character. For example Colin noted that "Football really teaches you about yourself, about how to test yourself. Yes, football taught me a lot about myself". And Ian revealed that "You learn to manage yourself you know? You feel yourself doing something that ain't right but then you know, you say... hang on...you gotta do it this way". Eli also commented on this theme noting that, "I utilised the traits that sportsman have that I developed, and I utilised them to achieve as an academic".

Accelerated experiences within football prepared retired players in ways that cannot be learned away from this particular sporting environment. As Paul noted:

> Football also taught me to be independent. I moved from home and started a brand new life. It taught me how to incorporate new friends into my life and how to get to know new people. I'd take that as a positive from the game. It has shaped me as a person, definitely.

Another particular example of the benefits of football was the perceived ability of retired players to be able to negotiate criticism and inculcate feedback in a more professional/healthier manner than peers who have not had exposure to a professional sport background. Tim mentioned:

> In the office environment you learn a lot quicker than other people in the same boat. They can't take criticism and they take a long time to adapt when the manager gives them a bollocking or they have a disagreement with a colleague. I've had a bollocking from Joe Jordan and had older players call me every name under the sun for giving the ball away.
>
> Anything else now is a walk in the park; it's like water off a ducks back.

As Cushion and Jones (2006) identified, a major effect of remaining obedient to the hierarchies that abide within football is that players learn to accept and digest regular (often abusive) criticism from a position of expertise. Consequently, retired players believe they are more durable in social situations (including new job positions) and also that they possess a learned ability to distribute criticism in a constructive fashion. Throughout this study retired players often referred with

pride to a learned ability to withstand, decipher and react to criticism. This is seen as a major positive and a skill that is not possessed by those in the general population without a 'football upbringing'. Several players indicated this, including Lawrence who said that:

> People can't take criticism well. I think football has taught me to take criticism, and also having received criticism in different ways, football taught me how to get the best out of other people, using constructive criticism. So it's taught me loads that you wouldn't have thought it would teach me.

John also noted how this affected him:

> It definitely helps. When you get criticised in that environment (football) it is so harsh and you are so young. You have to learn to be able to deal with it. And now, when you get criticised it is in a totally different way so it is a lot easier to handle.

As well as noticing that negotiating criticism received in a football environment prepares an individual for later roles, Lawrence also highlighted how he developed a distinct awareness of how he responds well to positive feedback in his current working position. When talking about reassurance or verbal reward from a superior, he said:

> I seek it (rewarding feedback). We have quarterly appraisals and stuff and when I'm told I do well, then they (employers) can see I'm happy. Then when I get a chance to speak, I've said, 'Thanks for praising me' and 'When you do praise me its good and you can see that after you praise me

I go on and do well'...I kind of do extra to get that. It puts you in a good mood.

6.3 The Legacy of Confidence

It appears that there are significant practical positives associated with the capacity for adaptation and confident movement into new realms in retirement. On the surface this is heartening as this progression is a necessary transitional step in order for the retiree to re-appropriate his attention. This prevents an unhealthy dwelling upon circumstances that can no longer be altered (Roderick, 2013). 'Once you are done, you are done', was a common sentiment reported by the players. Despite this, a football career seems to install a huge amount of confidence that appears to remain and become transferable into new realms. As Bobby noted, "being good at something gives you an air of confidence". The legacy of this career acquired confidence will now be explored.

For the retirees interviewed, confidence is a large component of an adaptable and healthy understanding of their identity. This level of confidence has been cultivated through a career and most of the retirees firmly attribute their confidence to their multiple footballing experiences and relationships. An overriding response from the participants indicated that their careers in football had provided them with a 'thick skin' and a personal pride developed through a sense of accomplishment. This was developed primarily because of the realisation that they had achieved a difficult objective (reaching and remaining at a professional level for a period of time). For example several quotes reflect this sentiment. Colin noted:

> I don't regret doing it (playing football). It's nice to say to people that you were a footballer and also to know yourself that you made it. Not many people can say that they did it, so people respect that you have been a footballer

Lawrence also identified the positives of having made it to the professional level:

> Yeah it's good (having been a footballer). Without being too smug or anything, you've got a kind of one-upmanship...It kind of gives you that edge in life, even if people don't know it, it gives you that little bit more confidence. Because you have got something to come back with and say 'Have you been a pro footballer?'...I would never say that to anyone else though, but I would definitely say it to myself.

Many of the participants also reported that this sense of pride and accomplishment has equipped them with a confidence that they now choose to apply in their new realms. Several responses indicated how the confidence gained from a football career served them well, for example Brian stated:

> My career in football led to me being confident around people I guess. Knowing that actually I have got something going for me, and that I can do things, when sometimes (in the past), you question it.

Others echoed this sentiment as Ian noted, "I think being involved in a football circle gives you a confidence in all walks of life. Being involved with the banter makes you more outgoing" and Colin also agreed, noting that "Having played football at a certain level helps you with pressure situations".

Other responses clearly indicated how it is the relationships and environment of football that is at the heart of confidence development. Jeff clearly makes this link:

It (football) helped me become a more confident person. I'm a lot more confident as the years have gone by, especially going into situations where I don't know people. For example things like presenting or preparing a meeting. Football has definitely played a part in that, well not football itself, but the environment that you are in. When I was younger I was really nervous when I had to talk to a manager or a chairman, but now when I speak to people in positions of authority I am a lot more relaxed.

Paul revealed how football allowed him to be confident in alternate social contexts such as social gatherings or in a job interview. He said that:

Football taught me to be confident with people I don't know, to be confident and to be happy. It helps you, for example, if you are at a party with people you don't know. You are not scared to speak out. Like I said, going in to a changing room full of former Premier League players, big personalities, you get used to it. Then later in your life you are not afraid. Like when you go for a job interview it gives you a massive boost. You are kind of used to being a strong personality.

From the participants' responses, it is perhaps possible to suggest that actually achieving the initial aim of making it as a first team player in the professional realm (to whatever degree) seems to allow or permit the player a pragmatic outlook upon their career and the effect of football upon their lives.

This is in direct contrast to the findings of Brown and Potrac (2009) who considered the experiences of youth players who failed to reach the objective of first team men's football. The youngsters in Brown and Potrac's study who failed to reach the professional first team level experienced significant "adjustment difficulties" (p. 144). However, for the most part, the players in this study negotiated their transition into retirement with a great deal of pragmatism, despite their initial confusion.

The retirees' responses indicate that reaching the professional ranks allows a significant inner strength to negotiate the disappointment of an early, enforced removal from the environment of the professional game. Furthermore, a tangible record (league appearances, professional contracts and memorabilia, such as a Cap or framed shirt) of a player actually playing at the professional level provides an incredible fulcrum of confidence that is taken forward. Confidence gained from football was not only seen as important during a playing career, but also in retirement as it enabled success and integration to a new social and working environment. For most respondents, having this fulcrum of confidence appears to be a concrete positive that they are proud of. As a result it is promoted as a lasting legacy of a period of their lives during which they invested significant physical, emotional and social endeavour. As Mark indicated, "I invested my life in football and therefore as a result, everything in my life is something that *I* have created. It hasn't been put on my plate".

The responses of retired adult players are a reflection of an unwavering belief that they are adaptable individuals, a belief inspired by the disciplinary

context of football. They also perhaps reflect upon a more fully formed and uninterrupted interpretation of their retired position than the adolescent understandings reported in Brown and Potrac's (2009) younger sample. In Brown and Potrac's study the teenage players' early release and failure to reach the professional first team level was an "event that had a significant impact upon their sense of self" (p. 151). For the adult players interviewed here, although periods of difficulty were common (see chapter five), the overriding sentiment surrounding retirement appeared to be much more about moving forward and using the experiences gained through football for their own betterment.

As a final note on the role of confidence in retirement, several players admitted having to rein in their confidence upon entering a new working environment away from football. For example, as Harry identified, when he got his first job away from football, he noted that he was,
"Maybe a little too confident and cocky at times, I certainly have had to tone my nature down as much as anything else". This final quote reflects the fact that for many footballers in new realms, learning how to manage their projections of who they are is a challenging process. It is perhaps for this reason (among many others) that so many players choose to remain within the football realm, a realm within which they feel comfortable, knowledgeable, and familiar. The experiences of retired players who remain within the game are explored below.

6.4 Staying Within the Game

Several retired players voiced concerns regarding the deficit of work experience and a lack of diversity on their CV's. Paul confessed:

The other side of the coin is that your football background goes against

you. I was 27 when I did my first interview and all I had on my CV was

my football. So interviewers would look at me and think 'Football,

football, football...he's come in for a computing job and he's got no

experience". I knew I could do the job, but looking at my CV it goes

against you. Right now I'm finding it hard to get a job that is career based

with such a limited CV. But, if you are going for a job in sport or staying

in football, it does, your football background helps you considerably.

Brian also spoke to this by saying:

Football is quite cruel. If I had studied for those ten years to become a

doctor, who knows? Instead I have no qualifications from the game, just

memories. Although I have experiences that 99% of the population would

give their right arm for, it doesn't pay the mortgage when you're not in the

game anymore. The only thing it qualifies you to do is stay in football.

Football experiences in general were described as positive for those attempting to

continue to work within football. Football experience and tacit knowledge of the

game, is regarded as a necessity for those who continue to work in a football

context (many of the retired players in this study continue to work in football).

Football has been identified as nepotistic and endowed with closed social

networks (Roderick, 2006). Many of the retired players interviewed were

sceptical as to whether they would have been afforded their new occupations

without having the football experiences that they were 'lucky' enough to have.

Consequently, players suggested they would not have gained employment in

football clubs without the culturally valued experiences they had acquired through 'making it' as a professional. Retired players who continue to work within football describe their playing experiences as fundamental to their accumulation of tacit knowledge and as the essential factor that precluded their entry into their current job. This is typified by Will's response when asked about his current role as a director of football at a British University:

> I have been very lucky. I always think I have been very lucky to have been in football all my life. I wasn't an experienced pro, I didn't have ten years as a pro...I've had a 'not too bad' career and I've always had a job in football. But I look back and think I haven't done too badly so far to still be in football. Football is very hard to get into, so I consider myself lucky to have a job. Although I was disappointed at the time (when released), I haven't done too badly.

Professional football is a vocation that a minimal number of those who attempt achieve (Brown & Potrac, 2009; Parker, 1996; Roderick, 2012). Therefore, any experience of this exclusive environment is highly regarded and seen as paramount for future employment in the sport. The perceived level of empathy required, and the understanding of player experience coupled with 'insider knowledge' is considered to be acquired only through 'going through it yourself'. In order to work in football, the participants noted that you have to have been exposed to its various ups and downs. Several retired players stated that football taught them how to help the players with whom they now work to

negotiate the various challenges of attempting, embarking on or surviving a professional career. As Will continued:

> I'm not an expert, but I am experienced. I'm experienced at what it is like to get released, what it is like to be offered an apprenticeship, which not many players get. Even less players get a pro contract (which I did), so I think I'm experienced...I remember going back to the age of 16 and remember how hard I worked, so I know what is required.

Although football has provided these individuals with knowledge and experiences of the game, there is also a cautious recognition that despite the education the game has provided them, they are limited with regard to what they can do as an alternative. Will for example, concluded our interview:

> I'm not qualified in anything else. Not in medicine, engineering, teaching, whatever…I've not got that. My profession is coaching, that's what I've done. That's what I've worked in and that's all I can do. If I got sacked tomorrow I'd have to go and find another coaching job...or try to.

6.5 Putting Your Best Foot Forward

The adaptability, confidence and self-belief gained from football that was reported by the majority of retirees in this study seem positive in many ways. However, I suggest that this notion of adaptability in the face of the adversities of retirement is not without its dangers. One could argue that this process of increased awareness and development is in actuality not a diversification or indeed an expansion. Rather, perhaps these men have become very adept at simply learning how to perform what is required of them, whatever it is that they

are doing. For example, despite being a retired player, Nathan revealed how the constant drive to achieve (as a component of a disciplined player) has had a long-lasting impact upon how he negotiates his life:

> I guess that perhaps I see achievement as being how I view success in my life really...I've never really thought of it until you just said that. If I'm achieving or I can feel that I am working towards something, which makes me feel better about myself and gives me a purpose.

In this sense, it is quite clear that retired players do not really diversify away from the docile sporting bodies that they have learned/had installed/had inculcated through their exposure to the 'Modern Discipline' of football. What could be observed as happening is that they are applying the characteristics of a docile sporting body to their new role, whether within football or not. This transfer process illustrates how retired players seem to acquire a potentially healthy adaptability to new realms. It also significantly hinders any real awareness of how a retired footballer might discover a fresh understanding of who he is in retirement.

This discovery illustrates that there appears to be a significant deficit of any real critical examination of how retired players have come to understand themselves as retired individuals. However, despite the blinkered outlook it provides there is an undeniable pragmatism associated with this adaptation process. Football has allowed a transition into retirement and a new role to be negotiated utilising previously acquired strengths and capabilities. These include the capacity to work hard, to avoid trouble, to be productive, and to exhibit

confidence, (classic symptoms of an efficient, docile body). This also includes

the ability to assess a situation, a skill that was repeatedly seen as beneficial in

new working environments, as Brian noted:

> **Interviewer**: How does your football background help you in your current

job?

> **Brian:** The ability to suss people out. I remember doing my personal
>
> training qualifications and we were sat in a room of 25 people and I was
>
> looking at each one and thinking, you ain't going to make it, and I was
>
> right. Out of all those people, only 2 or 3 are still in the industry today.
>
> That comes from football, working people out off the bat. You are forced
>
> to do it so you become very good at it, like when you got a new player
>
> coming in, you could tell right away by the way he held himself and talked
>
> if he could do a job or not.

Ron also noted that football equipped him with unique skills that enable him to

deal with his new reality and to avoid the pitfalls of being exploited:

> You learn how to play the game. You don't really say what you mean;
>
> you say what people want you to say. As a result you start to withdraw in
>
> order to protect yourself. But, now I can spot things, can recognise flaws
>
> in people's character, and can sum them up quickly. As a result I now
>
> know how to manoeuvre my way around different situations. You become
>
> far more suspicious of things. I went into football seeing the good in
>
> everybody and trusting people's word, whereas now I am almost the other
>
> way. I don't believe what people say. I second guess them until they

prove me wrong. It is sad, but I was naive as a kid and now I am aware. It

helps you look after yourself in life, so those painful things don't happen

again.

It is clear that retirees believe that the harsh realities of football contribute to them

being able to decipher certain social situations and to handle themselves

accordingly. A retired player, through multiple confessional practices during and

after a career, begins to know himself in a new way, a way "previously unknown

to the confessing individual" (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 85) and as a result can

act appropriately in trying circumstances. However, despite these apparently

beneficial connotations, what is vital to recognise is a retired footballer's inability

to escape the original understanding of who he is based on a humanist self-

construct.

The retired footballer struggles to recognise himself as an individual that is

an "*effect* of the workings of power and not some inner essence" (Markula &

Pringle, 2006, p. 40). A footballer's reliance on his old or learned skills 'from

football' reveals an inability to develop an understanding of who he is that is *not*

rooted in a humanist appreciation of his own identity. And, despite a belief that

he has 'moved on' being central to his retirement status, this is not necessarily an

autonomous achievement, rather a consequence of docility incited by new

disciplines prescribed by new relations of power. As Foucault (1991) noted,

individuals are produced in power relations based upon what knowledge is

produced about them. For example, the perceived adaptability that has emerged

as central to retirement experience should perhaps be considered as a consequence

of broader relations of power, rather than as a player's evolutionary achievement. This inability to escape a humanist standpoint is magnified by the retired players' willingness to attribute the success or failure of a footballing career firmly at their own feet.

These retired professional footballers repeatedly described how they responded pragmatically to their retirement and loss of professional status. By reaching the conclusion that there was a deficit in their own characters or abilities as players or individuals, retired players continue to conform to the ethos of individualism that pervades elite sport. Retired players also continue to contribute to the idea that football is a harsh place and that only the lucky few survive through a combination of luck and the possession of 'character'. Finally, this admission of individual deficit allows a sense of catharsis. This catharsis is required to re-appropriate a retiree's focus from a playing football ethos towards the ethos required to be successful in any new realm he encounters.

For retired football players, a major long-term effect of docility is an inability to fully comprehend how their lives are being shaped in retirement. Retirees continue to act in a docile manner after they exit football and as a result are prevented from critically examining their footballing experiences and relationships. Other forms of knowledge that may help a retiree understand his identity in retirement, are obscured (Foucault, 1972) during and after a career. This study has revealed that because of the obscurity of alternative knowledge, oftentimes retired footballers have been coerced into adopting a perspective that centralises their own endeavours as paramount to their career and retirement

outcomes. This tunnel vision leads to an uncritical acceptance of the potentially damaging or unethical components of this modern discipline (this despite the multiple revelations of Roderick, 2006 and Cushion & Jones, 2006 that football is full of damaging interactions). It is quite clear that British football culture as a modern discipline has contributed immensely to the framing of how footballers understand who they were, and consequently, who they see themselves now as retired professional sportsmen. It has also revealed that retirees contribute to this by the projections of themselves they choose to display. This is an area that the next section considers with more detail.

6.6 Confessions of a Retired Footballer Player

Foucault (1991) highlighted that the manifestation of power relations creates subjects through the process of subjection. Foucault (1983) also noted that an individual becomes "subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge" (p. 212). Currently, predominantly unchallenged relations of power are at play in British professional football. These stable networks are what sustain knowledge of football in Britain (including that truth about what it means to be a docile footballing body). This allows for the creation of subjects (footballers) who can be controlled and rendered docile for the means of the club/country involved. Because of this dominant knowledge, individuals who have attempted to understand themselves as subjects in a football space do so with limited access to alternative knowledge, restricting their resources for a varied subjection process. The responses displayed in this chapter logically demonstrate an unquestioned compliance (and

for the most part attribute positive development) to the hierarchical surveillance and prescribed activities and relationships of British football.

Foucault (1991) noted that individuals themselves are party to the process of subjection, as they engage willingly in prescribed activities and contribute to their own discipline through engagement in confessional techniques. Several participants confessed that exposure to football as a profession shed light on their own character. The impetus placed upon individual endeavour as key to success both during a career and in retirement highlights the importance placed upon individualism commonly found in elite sport (Denison, 2007). This issue is re-visited in greater depth in chapter seven.

Many retirees reported that football highlighted weakness or a deficit in character. For example, Nick, who had been a first year professional at a Premier League club and, despite having played for a League One side, mentioned:

> I think I had a flaw in my make-up and that I didn't have enough desire to be a professional footballer…Ultimately football has to be everything to you to make it…and I don't think it was for me…It rests on my shoulders. I was given opportunities and a certain extent I took them, but to a certain extent I let myself down.

Other players also questioned their ability to have remained in the game at the professional level. Colin stated:

> I don't know if I would have had it in me to continue to be a professional footballer...I never really put myself forward. I let others push themselves in front of me.

Brian also commented:

> The reason I didn't progress, touch wood, I was lucky with injuries, was
>
> the mental side of the game. I fell down on it, pure and simple. That's
>
> why I didn't get to where I should have got. I would constantly beat
>
> myself up every Saturday night after a game.

Although many players confessed to lacking the required qualities to excel in the
game, football was also seen as the solution, as it taught the players the means to
amend their 'deficit of character'.

Markula and Pringle (2006, p. 84) noted that the individual's engagement
in confessional techniques, "is done by questioning their own normalcy". The
majority of retiree's responses clearly indicated that a significant level of fault for
their inadequacies as footballers (that led to their enforced retirements) rested, as
Colin said, 'upon their shoulders'. Other responses indicate that the reason for
failure as a professional was either as a result of their own impatience or their
inability to 'stick it out', as Will noted, "Things might have changed. I wasn't
patient enough to hang around". Furthermore, for those players who did attempt
to broaden their experience through the acquisition of alternative education, guilt
at not maximising their football opportunities was evident, as Will mentioned, "I
got two A levels and did my B coaching license when I was 17. I had all these
things in the air but as a result I probably didn't put everything into football".

Each confession confirms Foucault's (1991) understandings of how
disciplinary power filtrates throughout an environment. Rather than initiating a
critical outlook of the football environment, each player chooses to locate the fault

firmly at his own feet. This has dual effects for the individual. Firstly, during their career, the player becomes further locked into the disciplinary 'Panopticon' of this elite sport (as mentioned in chapter five) and secondly, further into retirement, a player's identity is not questioned.

Although I suggest here that confessional practice occurs predominantly during a playing career, the subsequent confessions of individual fault reported indicates that these confessions continue well after their enforced removal. For example, Brian continued to confess his failings as a player long after the termination of his career:

> I still don't think I'm good enough at anything that I do. Although I come across and look confident, it's not real and I struggle to believe in myself...When I meet new people and my mates say 'He used to play for *Club B',* I say, "Yeah I was rubbish', just to get it in there before anyone else might say it.

For many retirees, the relinquishment of a football career provided the refreshing realisation that they could begin to consider their lives in a new way. Commonly, it was apparent that this process occurred once the retired player confessed that the role and vocation associated with a football career was finally completed. Therefore, for the majority of the players interviewed, a significant stepping stone out of retirement was the notion of arriving at a place where a retiree could confess that he was 'at peace' with his career experiences. Sadly, for Brian, this meant undervaluing his accomplished football career.

Foucault (1978) identified that the re-inscription of the procedure of confession was central to producing the truth about an individual. In their quest for 'normalcy' post-career, several retired players, like Brian, were found to confess their own failings as players, allowing them to fit into an acceptable template of a retired footballer. This process further locked them into their new disciplinary lifestyles (Markula & Pringle, 2006). This confessional sentiment is reflected in this quote from John.

> I didn't fail through lack of effort...Some people are not good enough and that's it. That was always my philosophy. It is a big pool. Everybody wants to be a professional footballer, all my mates wanted to be, but I never shouted about the fact that I was, because ultimately there is always going to come a day when there is someone better.

In the above quote, John, much like Brian, readily admits his limitations as a player. This was a theme that was replicated by many players throughout their interviews. During their careers the processes of constant surveillance and self-regulation meant each participant was 'normalised' to be productive in his role as a footballer. However, as a result of their vocational background, once evicted and in amongst the general population they found themselves as "out of the norm" (Foucault, 1991, p. 83). To negotiate this unfamiliar out-casting, the retired player clearly re-engages in a process of confession surrounding his new state. Through confession, the retired player gradually projects that he is capable of 'not being a footballer'. Before his regulative confessional, this truth was incapable of coming to light and was hidden from him (Foucault, 1978).

Clearly football has long-term impacts for retired players. I suggest that ingrained docility has an important legacy that needs to be considered if we are to better understand the retirement experiences of former professional players. I have demonstrated that in football and in retirement players learned a distinct tendency for constant confessional practice in the process of their own subjection. What then are the positive and negative effects of this tendency for confession as it pertains to retirement?

Chapter five concluded that once removed from the realm of football through an event such as enforced retirement, a player finds himself placed into an unfamiliar alternative realm, exposed to fresh networks of power. A major result of this acute subjection and exposure to discipline is that when an individual player is subsequently exposed to different relations of power he is able to display the required behaviour of a new system of surveillance with little difficulty, possibly even adeptly. It could therefore be purported that this capacity for adaptable behaviour is a major effect of residing within the intense modern discipline of football. But, how does this occur?

This chapter has identified multiple examples of retired players claiming adaptation to the new positions and relations of power to which they are exposed. Contrary to the discourse of adaptability that these players perhaps believe they are adhering to, it is healthy and helpful to suggest an alternative interpretation of these 'adapting' experiences. The admission of Lawrence that in his new job, he actively seeks the positive appraisal of his boss indicates that he has a clear awareness of the movements of disciplinary power in this new realm.

Furthermore, his admission illustrates a distinct desire to absorb this power in order to be a successful (read docile) employee. This revelation supports the idea that because of past exposure to discipline, retired players become adept at learning/realising how to become productive docile bodies in alternate realms. Lawrence's response highlights that when exposed to alternative relations of power, retired footballers, in an effort to stabilise and negotiate their new environments, seek out means of becoming disciplined. It could be purported therefore that retired football players adapt to new discipline by staying the same, by seeking ways to allow disciplinary power to manifest upon their body. This occurs wherever that location may be, in an office, on a building site or in an elite football coaching environment.

To conclude this section, I suggest that in retirement, as a result of the panoptic gaze of the society within which they reside, footballers are coerced to project certain 'truths' about themselves. These 'truths' promote the image of a retired player who is a durable individual, who has adapted to new circumstances with relative ease. These are men who claim that they have utilised the skills learned in a disciplinary context to internalise the required qualities of a functional and contributing member of society. Football has prepared these men for 'the outside'. In other words, the experiences of a career in football have equipped these men to become good 'neo-liberal citizens' (Hindess, 2002). Furthermore, retired players are influenced by contemporary society to promote this training as a positive 'rite of passage' that has steered them towards this important achievement. My final chapter will explore in detail this expansion of a

new post-career identity. Specifically it will consider how this dominant

expansion narrative has emerged from neo-liberal, humanist discourses that

bombard these men as they search for a new purpose to their interrupted lives.

7.0 Retired Footballers and 'The Narrative of Expansion'

I made a conscious decision to get myself out of the football bubble...meeting new

people who weren't in football was amazing for me. – Andrew (participant)

7.1 Identity in Retirement

In each of the above analysis chapters the short and long-term impacts of eviction from football has been explored. In this chapter, the long-term negotiation of a retiree's perception of his post-career identity is considered. As Gearing (1999) has identified, little is known about this stage of retirement from football. This chapter begins to shed some light on this unexplored area.

So far, Foucault's (1991) analysis has been applied to reveal the effects of career induced docility upon retirement. Foucault warned that this process of disciplining does not stop once an individual is removed from these isolated arenas. He also warned that the disciplinary process continues, and occurs in a different manner as a result of the new relations of power found in alternate spaces. Despite retired players no longer being exposed to the intense surveillance of a football environment, society as a whole takes on the predominant role of exercising power, albeit in a "diffused, multiple, polyvalent way throughout the whole social body" (p. 208). As chapter six revealed, in order to remain 'normal', retired players assume the behaviours of a newly disciplined, resourceful citizen in their post-career lives.

To maintain an adaptable profile, the retired player attempts to create a new identity distanced from his old 'footballing' identity. Roderick (2013) noted that footballers attempt to 'dis-identify' with their previous lives, an ambition that

is achieved through the manipulation of their identity. Once 'dis-identified', a retired player is free to re-write his identity by expanding himself. This has process has been labelled as 're-storying' and promoted as a healthy way to negotiate retirement (Carless & Douglas, 2009). This chapter investigates the merits of this process of 're-storying' and the attachment to a 'narrative of expansion', as it purports to the fortunes of retired footballers.

Foucault (1991) utilised the Panopticon as a means to describe how power is exercised upon a social body, where self-surveillance is one of the keys to achieving docility. As active players, a learned docility was in part produced by the 'panoptic gaze' of their football clubs. So far I have demonstrated that as retirees move away from football they escape this gaze (to an extent) and enter into new social realms and experience new functions and relationships. Importantly for this chapter, within these new settings, these men have to begin to re-understand who they are. Here, I address retired players' responses and consider the merits of a post-career expansion of identity for this specific population. A large element of this analysis focuses upon the existence and the effects of retirees adopting an 'expansion narrative' in retirement.

The adoption of this 'narrative of expansion' is stimulated by exposure to alternative spaces, relationships and day to day practices in retirement. Once strictly observed, examined and judged on a daily basis, retired players are now exposed to an alternative exterior gaze. In this chapter I provide an interpretation of players' responses through a lens that is cognisant of the role of power in how retired players view their post-career identities. Foucault's disciplinary analysis

and the disciplinary mechanisms he discussed, including that of the Panopticon, have helped to reveal the impact of the alternative forces of power that influence how retired individuals describe themselves.

7.2 The 'Narrative of Expansion'

In this chapter I identify a 'narrative of expansion' and problematise adhering to it as a strategy for the negotiation of retirement. This expansion narrative is neatly illustrated by Paul's fears for his future after leaving a League Two club:

> It gives you a real kick in the balls, because I could do a job if given the opportunity. I look at my Mrs., and God bless her, don't tell her I said this, but I'm jealous of her. She worked her way through the ranks to have a career, whereas I'm now coming up to thirty and am struggling to have a career, purely because of my limited CV. So it is harder because you've got to add more strings to your bow. You've got to go and do online courses, go back to college and all that.

Matthew, speaking of his decision to go to University after leaving the game noted that, "I feel a lot more comfortable about the future now in general. I know now that I have more strings to my bow and am building myself up for life after football". Paul is distinctly aware that equipping himself for a new career path is a necessary endeavour. Matthew feels safer after investing in an expansion of himself through education. This need to expand is an unquestioned notion that appears prudential; however I suggest that it is dangerous. Foucault (1983) suggested that, "not everything is bad, but everything is dangerous, which is not

the same as bad" (p. 231). In this chapter, not only do I explore what is beneficial for players surrounding this pervasive 'narrative of expansion', but also I consider what is potentially dangerous about it. How does this apparatus for dealing with retirement impact upon retired players' approaches to their new lives? What does a problematisation of identity expansion as an assumptive pathway mean for sports retirement research? And, how will it impact the way recommendations are made to change sport and help its players?

To address these questions, I adopt the mindset of Hickey and Kelly (2008, p. 491) who emphasised that "the contested nature of a professional identity in context might lead to more sophisticated thinking about how athletes might better prepare to not be athletes". An awareness of the contested nature of identity in retirement will enable a more critically-informed problematisation of current 'truths' about retirement and help find new answers to the questions posed. Until now, considering the effects of discipline as having an influence upon the development of identity has been modestly utilised in sports retirement research. This research identifies this as a problem and also exposes the reasons for this status quo.

Smith (2008, p. 17) identified that "sport has fallen victim to the cult of self-improvement via self-discovery", noting that "it is the foundation on which much sport psychology is built". This has been evidenced in the above review of sports retirement research where the athletic identity has remained the central focus of study (Adler & Adler, 1989; Brewer et al, 1993; Carless & Douglas, 2009; Coakley, 1982, 1992; Lally, 2007; Lavallee, 2004; Roderick, 2013). I

problematise retiring athletes continuing to adopt self-improvement as their

maxim for their days after sport. I also highlight that retired players continue to

see themselves as "something that can be objectively and scientifically defined,

described and developed" (Hickey & Kelly, 2008, p. 482). This prevents players

from developing alternative ways of knowing themselves, or a critical

examination of football. So, why else is this narrative of expansion problematic?

It is a problem because it is primarily based upon an ill-fated assumption

that in a sporting career (and in what follows in retirement), a transactional

equation between endeavour and success flows uninterrupted. And, as Smith

(2008) warned:

Believing that 'you can be anything you want to be' is actually a rather

easy doctrine. (At least until you realise the idea has led you up the

garden path.) The fallacy that desire and determination hold the key to all

success appeals to the inner adolescent in us that cannot bear the thought

of hard work going to waste. I try, ergo I succeed; the world is just, so I

will prevail; there is a fair distribution of justice, so I will be lauded. Such

a shame it isn't true...The truth is that determination and desire are

necessary but not sufficient. We have to try like crazy; we have to retain a

relentless sense of determination; we have to make sacrifices and take the

road less travelled. And yet still there are no guarantees. Even after all

that we may come up empty-handed. That is the bleak but unavoidable

logic of anyone who has deep ambitions. (p. 104)

In sports retirement an overemphasis on the experiences of an individual and his capacity for post-career expansion takes the focus away from career experiences. As Scott (1991) highlighted, "when experience is taken as the origin of knowledge, the vision of the individual subject…becomes the bedrock of evidence on which explanation is built. Questions about the constructed nature of experience, about *how (emphasis added)* subjects are constituted… are left aside" (p. 777). Shifting away from an athlete centred approach allows for a truly social examination of the sporting context in which a career is undertaken, and therefore an insight is given into how a subsequent retirement may be framed.

There is no question that the participants in this study experienced the feelings reported in the interviews conducted, however, as Scott (1991) mentioned, it is essential to consider that they are not indicative of a singular truth about retirement. And, although not incorrect or false, neither are they absolute. Rather they should be viewed as momentary and reflective of the period within which the retired player finds himself. Although in this study I promote players' responses as evidence, as Scott forewarns, I am not promoting their responses as experiential truth, rather as a signpost to what really needs to be considered. That is, the localised relations of discipline that impact professional footballers during their playing careers and in retirement. How then does one identify the impacts of these technologies of discipline upon a player's identity in retirement?

Markula and Pringle (2006) identified that Foucault's work should be adopted as a tool to help sport researchers think differently, to "continually challenge the way the sporting self is constructed in the power/knowledge nexus"

(p. 213), in order to ask new questions in sports research (Rail & Harvey, 1995).

Therefore, the new questions this chapter asks are these: what can be learned

through the problematisation of contemporary humanist understanding of the self

in sports retirement? And, how has this standpoint influenced the manner in

which retirement from sport has been thought of thus far?

In order to answer these questions, I utilise Foucault's tools of analysis to

problematise the "internalised norms" (Rail & Harvey, 1995, p. 165) that retired

players are exposed to in modern society; norms that influence how retired

players are made subjects in the broader social body after they exit football. It is

the consequences for the retiring player of adhering to this unquestioned truth that

is central to this final analysis chapter.

7.3 What Next for the Retired Player?

My participants often confessed a deficit in their characters or in their

educational and vocational worth. This was typified by Paul, who noted that

when he exited the professional game he was without a steady job and was

distinctly conscious of his limited experience.

> **Interviewer:** How did you feel when you struggled to find a job after
> football?
>
> **Paul:** I felt bad. I know the stereotype of footballers, but I know myself
> and I could do a job. I am educated enough, and I am not a 'thicko'. But
> you can't really argue with them when you have nothing else to show.
> You get jealous of other people in jobs. You think, 'I could do what you
> do, but you've got education and you're a step ahead of me'. At the

moment it's difficult to get jobs as you know, and I'm going in with this footballer CV and the rest have work experience. It is a black mark against you. If you're going for a computing job for example, you having been Captain of a League club means jack shit to them. They think 'He's been a footballer, but he's not there anymore...we can't take a risk on him'.

As a result of the predicament reported by Paul, a dominant idea emerged that in retirement, after an initial period of conflicting thoughts and emotions, an expansion or diversification away from the life of a footballer becomes a necessity. Furthermore, in the eyes of the retired players this becomes an essential venture. This expansive ethos was suggested by Carless and Douglas (2009) as the crucial means to negotiate retirement, and the acceptance of this truth amongst the players was extremely evident. As Ron noted:

If I had continued with football I would have ended up being 'one-dimensional' as a person. I've met my wife and lots of friends that have given me a better life than if I had continued the football route...The reality of professional football didn't meet my expectations.

Many existing socio-cultural considerations of retirement suggest a narrative of expansion as the healthiest way to negotiate the transition of retirement (Carless & Douglas, 2009; Denison, 1996; Hickey & Kelly, 2008). It has been posited that, in this sense, retirement should perhaps best be considered as a 'New Beginning' (Kerr & Dachyshyn, 2000) or 'Re-birth' (Coakley, 1983).

This notion is supported by Dean, who mentioned that, "the best thing to do is to try and move on from it (football) and to not constantly run it over in your mind".

Foucault's (1991) project was to explore the means by which an individual could understand himself within power relations. A key tenet of this analysis was the firm rejection of utilising a humanist self as the starting point for understanding this process (Markula & Pringle, 2006). Foucault's aim was not to discover the roots of identity but rather to illustrate how 'normalcy' is the achievement of dominant power relations (Cahoone, 2003).

In the modern society that retired players find themselves, a dominant pathway to 'normalcy' has been prescribed. This pathway highlights a post-career expansion of their identities as the key endeavour that players must undertake in order to survive. This was exemplified by Ron's desire not to remain 'one-dimensional'. I identify here that through the unquestioned adoption of an 'expansion narrative' as their anchor, retired players "take responsibility for their own supervision" (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 79) and try to reinvent themselves.

In chapter six I identified how the pervasive influence of individualism influenced retired players to project an adaptable, newly disciplined version of themselves. This newly disciplined retiree had to be seen as competent and thriving, despite the rigours of having to adjust to the challenges of retirement. I suggest that later in retirement, the societal importance placed upon individualism bombards retirees in a panoptic fashion with another effect, specifically that in retirement players begin a quest for identity expansion. A retired player becomes

"his own overseer" (Rail & Harvey, 1995, p. 166) and as such, seeks the 'normalcy' expected of him, which not only includes the need to adapt but importantly, the need to expand. Andrew revealed how this expansion, or 're-storying' process helped him to find solace after his career ended:

> I'm much more pragmatic now about the whole thing than I was. I've found something else that I'm really good at, so I'm not relying on being a footballer anymore. I've got other things now; my life isn't just about being a footballer. It is hard to detach from that, and I still struggle but I am definitely better, I've got something else in my locker...I'm also much more open now, less guarded about being emotionally close to people.

Here Andrew is clearly happy to have diversified as an individual and taken responsibility for his own development, broadening his horizons. His quest for identity expansion as a retired player is in full swing. Belief in the doctrine of the orchestrated development of a humanist self is clearly widely prescribed (as it has undeniable benefits) but, due to its limitations, this belief also sets a dangerous precedent for evicted footballers (the world, after all, is not controllable). Further disappointments should not be considered totally avoidable, as Smith (2008) noted, the outcome of the effort transaction doesn't always add up, during or, importantly here, after a career. Subsequently, this 'narrative of expansion' in sport deserves scholarly critique.

7.4 The Dangers of 'Re-Storying' in Retirement

In the above section the pervasive influence of a 'narrative of expansion' has been identified as having a panoptic influence for retired players. Throughout

modern society, dominant ideas surrounding the nature of expansion are prescribed and are responsible for the maintenance of knowledge about how a retired footballer (as a functioning member of society) is to conduct himself appropriately. Here I attempt to further illustrate how this unquestioned idea has impacted knowledge of contemporary sports retirement. The long-term impact of this dominant transition pathway upon the lives of athletes is also discussed.

Like Andrew, many retirees indicated that in order to 'deal' with the confusing period around the time of retirement, they needed to 'reinvent' themselves. Carless and Douglas (2009) have identified this process and named it 're-storying'. This 're-storying' also occurred in relation to how the participants viewed their relationship with football. As Ian revealed:

> When people ask me "why do you keep playing non-league football?" I say, "So I can keep fit, keep healthy, interact with people I have known for a long time and to continue to meet new people". That social side of it is the important part of it now.

Carless and Douglas (2009) noted that for a healthier progression into retirement, an emotionally healthy athlete should find it fruitful to "transgress culturally preferred performance stories in favour of a discovery orientation" (p. 55). According to these authors, this shift in approach allows the athlete to "resist the performance narrative definition of 'success' to create a personally meaningful criterion of 'success'" (p. 55). Ian's quote illustrates that in order to negotiate his transition away from the professional football environment, he continues to play non-league football but essentially with a new and different 'discovery' approach.

Ian's 're-storying' mirrors Carless and Douglas' suggestion and is a narrative that was repeatedly evidenced by numerous participants throughout the interview process. This was especially evident when retired players described their reasons for continuing to play non-league football or their involvement in other new physical or social activities, especially the capacity to travel, to meet new people, or to play golf.

Instead of adopting a sensitivity to the complex workings of power that have governed an individual's experiences, the existing approach (based on the foundation of humanist thought) is one that presents an immense and perhaps unrealistic challenge for the individual athlete. Currently, in order to expand and take safe passage into retirement, a retiring individual is told that he must attempt to resist and manipulate for his own means, multiple relations of power in his post-career life. This individual-centred approach renders the calculation and observation of entrenched relations of power as secondary or even ignored at the expense of concentrating upon the individually piloted process of self-management for survival.

In the process suggested by Carless and Douglas (2009), the possibility of de-stabilising or developing an awareness of the relations of power that arrive at the location of the athlete is absent. It is hidden beneath an emphasis upon the expansion of an athlete's storytelling capacity and self-development. Instead of ignoring the role of power, Foucault's (1991) approach suggests that developing a greater sensitivity to the workings of power, in this instance those that operate upon and influence an individual during and after his career should be the focus if

positive change is to occur. I advocate that for meaningful change in the experiences of retired players to occur, a focus must shift from the individual athlete to examining the power relations of the sporting and post-sporting spaces within which the athlete resides. This requires a mapping and greater understanding of the processes and spaces within which players develop and from which they are eventually cordoned.

In this study, distinct similarities with the research of Carless and Douglas (2009) emerged; however, I suggest that the responses in this study reflect not simply the 'truth' of the notion of self-expansion but rather the pervasive acceptance and compliance towards it. The popular language of the contemporary sporting world is rooted in humanist thought where "words such as character, attitude, work ethic, courage" (Hickey & Kelly, 2008, p. 483) are commonplace. This language highlights the need to entertain the role of power when considering retirement from sport. My findings must not be read as support for this one true way to 'survive' retirement. Rather they are a warning sign that points to the dangers of the unquestioned idea that an athlete must prepare/cultivate an individualistic, humanistic self in order to negotiate safe passage through the journey of retirement (Oriad, 1982). This means of coping in retirement, although it has clear positive connotations, also unfortunately firmly remains centred on the athlete and not on the workings of power that frame him (replicating the ethos of past sports psychology retirement research). As it stands, the individual and his experiences remain central to the understanding of the phenomenon of retirement; a circumstance that is currently preventing the necessary shift in thinking if an

evolution in sports retirement research is to occur. This is the danger of an unquestioned identity expansion as a pathway through retirement.

There were many examples of an unquestioned self-understanding that was used as the basis for explaining change in retirement. For example, several retired players mentioned how constant disciplinary practices and criticism from coaches prevented the development of an in-depth reflection about who they were and their abilities from a neutral perspective. As Dean noted:

> It is quite difficult for some (footballers) to be self-critical...because I think people are constantly criticised in football and you are told. I think there is a real difference there. I think some players reflect back and they don't evaluate themselves, they are just remembering what people told them. So they convince themselves 'Yeah, that was my problem'...I think that if I analyse myself now, and that is a skill I think I picked up in university rather than through football, I think I can actually analyse myself properly.

This quote reveals how, once exposed to alternative spaces, narratives and cultural interactions a retired player feels that he can assess himself through a more critical, unbiased lens. A lens uninfluenced by previous voices found within the disciplinary, hierarchical football club. It is Dean's belief that exposure to new ways of thinking from university has allowed an expansion to take place (specifically with regard to his contemplation of his own abilities). Dean identifies having the capacity to analyse himself 'properly' now. The restrictions of his previous football space have been lifted; a removal that now allows

alternative voices to inform his opinion of who he is and what others think of him, outside of a football context. When he was a player, Dean's docility was a barrier for him with regard to his awareness of the expansion narrative. However, as this barrier begun to erode, he has consciously embraced retirement and alternative ways of describing himself.

Despite Dean reporting a 'freer' context within which he could evaluate himself, as chapter six identified, the legacy of his docility does not simply disappear when a player finds himself exposed to alternative contexts. The power being exercised upon Dean has not simply disappeared, rather it has changed form and developed to produce an alternative impact upon his understanding of himself. This new arrangement of power relations provokes Dean into 're-storying' himself as an experienced individual, capable of analytical thought as a result of his post-career expansion.

It is apparent that this 'narrative of expansion' being represented illustrates that it is not simply an adjustment of the retired players' understandings of themselves. Rather, it reveals how exposure to alternative relations of power (fuelled by humanist self-knowledge and new disciplinary spaces) leads to the internalisation of different priorities about how to cultivate oneself. A new disciplinary process begins, one that is aimed at 're-storying' oneself to become a functioning member of a larger society away from the confines of the game. This process is reflected in Nathan's admission:

No matter what I've done throughout my life, I've wanted to be working towards something, so university after football was brilliant, because even

though I wasn't working, I was still working towards something and felt

like I was achieving...I think for me, to feel like I am achieving is an

important factor. At Club X, I knew that that had been taken away,

because I was just delaying the inevitable.

The 'expansion' experienced by retiring players is a process where other prevalent

societal ideas about who they can choose to be become available, and become

internalised. As Nathan noted prior to leaving the professional ranks:

Football was me. My success was judged on whether I was good at

football or not. Being there (university) taught me that I was actually

good at other things and perhaps I had previously not placed any

importance on that because football was the one thing I wanted to do.

The emphasis on an individual cultivating a change through his own

autonomous choices correlates with contemporary understandings of the humanist

self-prevalent in society. Denison (2007) has noted how this is also common in

elite sport:

Once an athlete determines his or her goals, and plots a path to achieve

them, he or she should be able to carry on freely in this direction until they

are attained. This means that all responsibility for change falls upon the

individual athlete...all prospects for a healthy life are seen to be within us,

and it is our responsibility for it to emerge. (p. 379)

These expectations are not only a problem for an elite athlete but also for the

retired athlete. The same expectations and responsibility to achieve his own ends

follow him into retirement. It is clear that to negotiate retirement successfully an

athlete must continue to work on his identity to endure the process. This was noted by Paul and Matthew who mentioned the need, to 'add strings to their bow'.

If we return to Ian's statement, we can see that in retirement he actively seeks to use non-league football post-career, as it permits him to be physically fit, thoughtful, socially capable, and gregarious. Here, Ian is a subject who is not passive, but is actively involved in pursuing his new expected normalcy (Peterson & Lupton, 1996). This active engagement should perhaps be viewed as a measure of the strength of the expectations found in the panoptic culture within which he resides as a retired footballer, rather than a significant shift catalysed by Ian's autonomous search for 'change'. This is an excellent example of the power that certain circulating discourses influenced by neo-liberal societal patterns can have on the retiring player. When a player exits a focused disciplinary lifestyle, the once camouflaged discourses become more visible to that player in retirement. These discourses begin to steadily influence and condition the possibilities of what he can think, do, say or feel (Cruikshank, 1999). As McDermott (2011) noted:

> Where the modernist narrative continues to hold sway, the self is widely conceived through autonomy, rationality and individual responsibility; it is thought of as a fixed, coherent entity that strives for personal fulfillment and that seeks meaning through acts of choice. (p. 200)

The responses from Ian, Dean and Nathan indicate that once in retirement it is common for footballers to attach themselves to the modernist narrative that McDermott (2011) identified. They do so to make sense of who they are, and also

to uncover what their next responsibility in society must be. Adhering to an expansion narrative in retirement and 're-storying' oneself in a post-athletic manner (as promoted by Carless & Douglas, 2009) is commonly reported project that players attempt to achieve a socially influenced normalcy. This gradual awareness and need to reach a moment of 'awakening' was starkly revealed to players in retirement, as Nathan indicates, "retirement made me realise how important it is to have other aspects to your life, because you never know when the football is going to end". After developing such awareness, for many players a pragmatic approach was presented as a strategy for dealing with the difficulties of retirement and also for anchoring themselves to the 'normal', non-football playing population. This involved utilising hindsight, as Nathan noted:

> I'd got to the point when I had got what I could from football and it wasn't the be all and end all. I knew that I could have successful a career afterwards...For your own sanity you have to be able to move forward and not dwell on it, and not let it negatively affect you, you've got to make yourself believe it happened (retirement) for a reason. It wasn't my fault, because you might think if it is my fault, you're going to keep going or alternatively, blame someone else and keep holding that torch. All these sorts of thoughts have a negative influence on your future so I've had to try and put them in a box and just accept that what happened was meant to be.

After a period of exposure to environments other than those typically visited as a professional player, many of those interviewed were happy to confess

pragmatic acceptance and reflection. At this point several (but not all) retired players reported a sense of catharsis and freedom to investigate the alternative aspects of life available for a 'normal' young male in British society.

7.5 Conclusion

It is clear a retired player is of the belief that embracing the prescribed 'narrative of expansion' helps him come to terms with his eviction from football. By adopting this narrative a retired player is provided with the new focus of expansion and a new objective to develop a new post-football identity (Gearing, 1999). I have identified that the retired player, once separated from his football life, is exposed to new technologies of domination, which in turn affect his subjection in retirement. As this occurs, he is encouraged to engage in the pursuit of a 'post-career normalcy' typified by an expansion of his identity. Attaching himself to this re-storied, expanded identity is his long-term strategy for negotiating his eviction from his previous space of belonging.

Carless and Douglas (2009) advocated that this identity expansion should be viewed as a positive process. Although there is clearly much truth in this position, this chapter has demonstrated that it is a taken for granted, unquestioned belief that impacts retirement, and as such, required further examination. Nathan identified that retirement is not simply a straightforward process of life becoming easier through an expansion away from a football. Exposure to alternative relations of power presents a completely new set of challenges for the retiring player. It is not simply a process of developing from an empty vessel into an expanded, fulfilled being. Foucault's (1978) revelation of the omnipresent nature

of power means that the continuing struggle for the understanding of oneself never ends, nor is there one 'true' way to go about this venture. Nathan, again, described this struggle:

> One of the problems with going to university and realising what was out there was that now my focus isn't on one specific job that I know that I definitely want to do...now I have all these confusing options, and I quite like the idea of perhaps ten different fields of work...but I've never been in those situations so I don't know what they expect or actually entail. Until now it has all been so foreign to me.

Nathan further mentioned that despite several benefits to securing a new job away from the playing side of football, it does not circumnavigate a complicated existence. When asked about how he felt in his new job after leaving football he further noted:

> I still struggle with it...When I take a reality check and reflect; sometimes I think 'I'm not where I want to be'. I want to take my job to the next level. I don't know why I am able to do that (*maintain his aspiration for success*)...because of the experiences I have had I guess, that have opened me up to the wider things in life.

This revelation indicates that, despite clearly believing in and following the expansion narrative, Nathan is still pursued by his drive/need to succeed; a characteristic that he attributes to a residue from the attitudes developed and honed via his footballing experiences.

Nathan's responses present some important questions. Is this post-career individual that we are presented with really an expansion of who Nathan is? Or, is he simply continuing to utilise his past capacity for docility to succeed, channeling this positive ability into his new role? Has his understanding of how he sees himself actually changed/expanded? These are questions that, up until now, have simply not been asked.

Most all retired players arrive at a point of acceptance before ploughing forward into a phase of self-expansion; however, it is extremely dangerous to promote this as a universal truth. Given that each retiring athlete has been exposed to different relations of power, technologies of domination and varying degrees of fortune, it is presumptuous to be able to generate a formatted pathway and to allocate it to each case. It *is* evident, however, that a pervasive belief of necessary creative self-expansion is dominant amongst this population. This is a narrative fuelled by the influence of contemporary attitudes and accepted understandings of the humanist self, which, as already mentioned, is a stance of which Foucault was deeply sceptical (Markula & Pringle, 2006).

Despite these entrenched attitudes and understandings of identity amongst retired players, inconsistencies arise from the given responses. These inconsistencies mean that retirement and the subjection of retirees should be considered as a phenomenon that remains in flux. Nathan's revelation that in retirement he remained entirely focused on success as a barometer for his personal worth, despite previously confessing feelings of liberty is an example. Here, Nathan exhibits a confusing and paradoxical reflection of retirement that cannot

be compartmentalised as simply as it is using current thought. Nathan followed

the dominant narrative to negotiate retirement but ended up having similar

feelings despite his 'expansion'.

I have highlighted that amongst this population there is a distinct

confusion in retirement. This confusion is born from an unproblematised belief in

prescribed narratives of truth that retired players follow in order to achieve a

stable, re-storied identity in retirement. I suggest that when these truths are

unravelled, as has occurred in this chapter, they reveal their socially constituted

and fluid nature. Perhaps this confusion can be traced to disconnected

misunderstandings of identity, or the ways in which one perceives oneself that are

derived from these domineering narratives of truth. Murakami's (1998, p. 261-

262) description highlights how this confusion arrives when he noted that, "You

were made somewhere else. And even this idea you have of remaking yourself,

even that was made somewhere else".

Building on Foucault (1991), Markula and Pringle (2006, p. 99) have

noted that the way athletes understand themselves, including their belief in the

need to expand post-career, are "constructed via *experiences* that are *linked* to the

workings of discourse, power relations and disciplinary techniques". These

experiences do not occur in the isolated core of an individual, rather they are

governed by the spaces they occupy and the relationships they engage in within

these spaces, old or new.

I believe that my study has revealed that it is not simply the signpost (the

player) that needs to be studied, worked upon, expanded or cured, but rather it is

the complex disciplinary practices of the sport of British professional football that

most requires attention if appreciation of retirement from this realm is to progress.

Instead of prescribing a re-storying or expansion of identity, a more

comprehensive mapping or retirement experience will prove more fruitful in

suggesting alternative approaches to the challenges of retirement.

8.0 Conclusion: A Poststructural View on Retirement

My study has highlighted that the productive role of discipline in working British professional football has significant both short and long-term implications for those who experience enforced retirement. I suggest that in order to develop a better understanding of how to help footballers negotiate retirement, it has been helpful to use Foucault's (1991) analysis of discipline. In doing so, I have been able to problematise existing truths in football and in sports retirement.

Discipline is a key part of the sport of football and it would be folly to suggest its total elimination from this realm. If prescribed thoughtfully and intentionally, discipline can usefully improve the performance (Denison, 2007) and quality of life all athletes (including football players). In football, a modern discipline, the disciplinary techniques so clearly outlined in chapter three have successfully served to produce efficient bodies that have sustained a powerful and culturally valued industry for nearly 150 years. Is this totally bad or wrong? No. Could it in any way be problematic? Yes, and that is the point. Contemporary working football makes a player into an effective, functional being, but, due to the overt level of control imposed upon a player's every movement, in many ways football limits his development and can be a damaging experience.

My participants' responses have indicated that within the culture of football, players continue to be verbally abused, bullied, isolated, chastised and publically humiliated. Working players continue to live each day without knowing if their contract will be extended another season, and they continue to receive poor treatment from clubs if injured or no longer capable of contributing

to the first team. These responses mirror experiences already identified by studies into the game (Brown & Potrac, 2009; Roderick, 2006), categorised by symbolic violence (Cushion & Jones, 2006). Constant and strict control of working football practices, limit a player's capacity to survive the pressures of his working football role. Importantly this and can leave him impotent when he comes to negotiate his eventual retirement.

Compliance and the capacity to display docility are currently considered paramount in a player's development. The short and long-term effects of this compliance upon a player's retirement have not been considered until this research study. What my study has revealed is that across this population, retirement experiences are relatively similar. This is due to certain unceasing techniques of discipline that are currently sedimented in the working British football culture. These techniques are problematic, and as my results have shown, can contribute to negative retirement experiences. Accordingly, they need to be reconsidered if their negative impacts are to be reduced and other less dangerous approaches promoted in their place.

It is clear from my results that a player's development within the context of football contributes to how he experiences retirement. How can player development be re-conceptualised to reduce these negative long-term consequences that impact upon retirement? I believe that bringing a Foucauldian understanding of power into the realm of sports retirement research, and analysing the football environment through Foucault's analysis of disciplinary power, has provided the foundation for this re-conceptualisation.

8.1 The Benefits of Poststructuralist Retirement Research

Until now, knowledge surrounding sports retirement has largely been categorised into knowable silos, as either negative (Blinde & Strata 1992) or positive (Coakley, 1992; Kerr & Dachshyn, 2001), instead of as ambiguous (as Stier, 2007 suggested it should be). As a result, similar findings surrounding the nature of sports retirement continue to surface. Indeed, research from a range of approaches looking at retirement from British football produced similar results to those from other sports (Drawer & Fuller, 2002; Gearing, 1999; Gilbourne, 2002). This commonality is one of the reasons why I believe adopting a Foucauldian analysis has proved helpful in developing an alternative reading of retirement outcomes in working British football. McDermott (2011) has identified:

> One of the distinct contributions a Foucauldian perspective offers is its analytic objective of not adjudicating relations of power to determine if they are 'good' or 'bad'. Rather, its intent is to shift one's analytic focus to understanding the *effects* produced (*emphasis added)*. (p. 217)

Poststructuralist theorists believe that discourses (ways of knowing) are produced through dynamic and fluid power relations, which in turn frame our understanding of the social world. Thus, for poststructuralist researchers, knowledge, truth, and reality are inevitably political and all human beings are involved in their production (since all human beings are a part of power relations). Therefore, when attempting to understand how a footballer negotiates his retirement, my post-structural study has revealed that rather than focusing on an individual player's psychological state (Blinde & Stratta, 1992) or narrative

resources (Carless & Douglas, 2009), attention must instead be paid to the cultural

composition of football. Specifically, this includes the relational aspect of the

football space and the disciplinary practices that occur within it. It is within this

space that the crucial interactions of power that influence the working footballer

can be identified and isolated allowing for their potential disruption.

My post-structural analysis has approached retirement differently than

research born from the objectively measureable mindset of positivist research

(Drawer & Fuller, 2002: Lally, 2007), the interpretive perspective (Carless &

Douglas, 2009), or from the critical research paradigm (Giulianotti, 1999;

Roderick, 2013). Each of these approaches considers power as 'triumphant' and

identifiable at a certain knowable location or as being possessed by a powerful

group or individual. Using Foucault (1991) has enabled me to recognise

discipline as a technique of a subtle, calculated, omnipotent and relational power.

This power has infiltrated modern society and "invaded the major forms, altering

their mechanisms and imposing their procedures" (Foucault, 1991, p. 170).

Considering power in this manner makes it possible to re-consider how

individuals and their experiences are influenced in a completely different fashion.

Foucauldian thought does not try to allocate power to a certain location or

consider how to accumulate more power to change or resist marginalising

patterns. Rather, by observing how discipline is productive through the use of

hierarchical observation, normalising judgement and examination, one can

develop an alternative, more comprehensive notion of how power operates. By

considering how power operates in football to produce docile footballers through

an unchallenged panoptic arrangement, I believe I have exposed the associated retirement consequences. By adopting this more comprehensive, alternative understanding of how power produces individuals, my work has also provided the foundation for the development of alternative strategies for players to manage their transition out of football. Using Foucault (1991) has permitted my study to move away from focusing upon the retiring athlete as the central site where change needs to occur. No longer does the experience or the complexities of the individual athlete have to be the focal point in a search for an objective 'truth' surrounding retirement.

I suggest that to fully appreciate the impact of a football career upon an individual player in retirement, one must consider the impact of discipline and the composition of its forces he would have been exposed to over time, and crucially, during his development as a player. I also suggest that greater knowledge of the components of the disciplinary lifestyle of a footballer can help in developing innovative strategies for the tricky negotiation of the retirement transition. In this study I believe that I have illustrated the benefits of shifting towards a poststructuralist approach to retirement from football. In the following section, I evidence this by summarising my research findings.

8.2 Summary of Research Findings

Spielvogel (2002, p. 191) has identified that "the ways that bodies are contained, displayed and separated, as well as the ways that individuals organise and segregate themselves have direct consequences for social relationships and the distribution of power". My study has displayed that the interplay of bodies

that occurs during a football career has direct and continuing consequences with regard to learned patterns associated with the digestion and reception of power by an individual, subsequently influencing his retirement.

In involuntary retirement, footballers are exposed to alternative social spaces and are forced to develop new skills with which to filter their relationships and experiences as non-players. My research firmly indicates that the mechanisms that frame football players' subjection during their career clearly leave a legacy that influences their bodies and identities once they exit this sporting space. This is despite the fact that (for the most part) players are exposed to a much less intense lifestyle once evicted from the localised disciplinary space of a football club. I also suggested that how quickly and the way in which a footballer adapts to his post-career lifestyle, or if he ever does, is governed by the depths to which his experiences of discipline have influenced his actions, attitudes and relationships.

My three analysis chapters indicate that the primary effect of stabilised disciplinary practices found in the working realm of British football is that during their careers, footballers "embody conformity to normative behaviour and as such become obedient and docile" (McMahon et al, 2012, p. 18). This pattern follows them into retirement with varying effects. My research here has indicated that the body of a British footballer endures most every organised structure or practice one could think of in order to render him docile. A working footballer's life is a definitive example of a body exposed to the combinatory effects of disciplinary techniques. Every day a player unquestioningly performs a 'function' in a

designated 'enclosure' dictated by a training 'timetable' that is designed to

stimulate his progression. He also undergoes regular 'observation' and

performance analysis from coaches and is exposed to 'examination' in the form of

regular fitness testing, weight monitoring and heart rate monitors. Furthermore,

my participants' responses have revealed how footballers feel under constant

'surveillance' during their career and engage in self-regulation as a result of an

awareness of a 'panoptic gaze'. These responses clearly reveal the presence of

"disciplinary mechanisms of surveillance through their actions and practices"

(McMahon et al, p. 19) in the context of British professional football, and also

point to the fact that significant exposure to these mechanisms has long-term

consequences in retirement.

It is important to recognise that disciplinary mechanisms experienced

during a career relate to retirement. Until now, the long-term impact of being a

docile professional football player, regularly exposed to technologies of discipline

has remained unexamined. As mentioned, McMahon et al (2012) have identified

distinct connections between the disciplinary practices of swimming and the post-

career experiences of elite swimmers. In my study, Foucault's (1991) disciplinary

analysis has helped to shed light upon the retirement experiences of British

working footballers. Foucault identified that the collective coercion of bodies

can, and does render them docile. In my study I have identified that during their

development as players, young men are produced as docile bodies. I have

mapped the consequences of this docility as far as retirement. Recognising that a

player's docility is produced by the relations of power that subjectify and produce

him throughout his career provides a new target for change. I suggest that when investigating the impact of performing as an elite footballer, a researcher needs to examine the disciplinary techniques of football, and the games of truth (Foucault, 1987) that are found in elite sport (Denison, 2010; Markula & Pringle, 2006).

Foucault (1987) was clear in his belief that power relations are always present in a society because humans constantly attempt to determine the behaviour of others. He identified that games of truth are the unceasing interactions of power that are constantly in tension as this need for control is bartered. As a result, truth claims are promoted or devalued as the conditions and priorities of a society change. This is evident in football. Carter (2006), Giulianotti (1999) and Walvin (1978) have all mapped the evolution of football and established how it has changed to mirror major societal changes. For example the production of players in the romantic era of football differed greatly compared to how players were developed once football became a modern discipline after the industrial revolution.

Foucault (1987) did not deem it possible to reach a utopia by dissolving the coercive effects of power, but he did suggest that the best course of action is to attempt to disrupt dominant truths to insure that their domination remains at a minimum. In the following section I explore the games of truth that influence the docility of working footballers. In doing so, I illustrate how playing these games of truth can alter how a player might experience retirement. I purposefully target the unhealthy domination of an existing truth in working football. The truth that I

aim to disrupt is this: 'a footballer must acquire a specific mode of docility in order to efficiently perform his working role'.

8.2.1 A Foucauldian disruption of football 'truths'.

My findings indicate that Foucault's (1991) disciplinary analysis is not simply an abstract conceptual framework, but rather should be viewed as an applicable toolset that can help to produce a unique understanding of retirement from football. I believe that producing a player to be as docile as possible is a problematic 'truth' in football. Exclusively applying this approach to player production is a limiting outcome of this inherent 'truth'. Foucault's analysis has provided me a means to show the multiple effects of this 'truth' and to decipher how any existing disciplinary practice that sustains this 'truth' affects retired players. Not only this, but using Foucault has also provided me with the tools to reduce or 'minimise' the level of domination imposed by this 'truth' by disrupting and reconceptualising it. I suggest that such a disruption is a step towards encouraging the games of truth in football "to be played in a more equitable manner" (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 193). This should reduce the negative impact of this existing truth felt by retired footballers.

It is not realistic to suggest an abolition of all the panoptic elements of working football, or to eliminate every practice that is considered disciplinary. This would render many of the fruitful benefits of discipline (Heikkala, 1993) null and void. A potentially beneficial way to disrupt these truths is to utilise Foucault's (1991) insights regarding the powerful influences of a panoptic gaze and disciplinary techniques, to create a change within attitudes towards player

development. For example, Foucault highlighted that a panoptic state gives rise to experimentation through the exercise of power, a place to try out "pedagogical experiments" (p. 204). This is an experiment where the dominant means of punishment of players, hierarchies of a space and surveillance mechanisms are disrupted and 'played with' in an attempt to produce alternative behaviours in those being disciplined. Unfortunately, football clubs do not seem to be aware of the pedagogical potential that the panoptic arrangement actually has. Football clubs continue to flog the existing productive nature of this space, instead of constantly manipulating the panoptic arrangement of the football club. Doing so could induce alternative or varying modes of discipline and consequently produce players with different behaviours, characteristics and skill-sets. This current arrangement repeatedly creates obedient, docile bodies using an identical blueprint, in a typically modern fashion.

Research has indicated that football coaches believe in the merits and importance of this 'truth' and are not overly careful about how they control this particular sporting space (Cushion & Jones, 2006/2012). These authors have also identified that coaches do not invest much energy or time worrying about the side effects of how they produce a player; rather it is their intention to maintain an environment where players abide by hierarchical rules and do not question a coach's authority. As it stands, a 'truth' surrounding the development of British footballers is encouraged through the prescription and application of disciplinary techniques in an intensely surveyed 'panoptic' space. The primary aim of this development is the *production* of a docile player. Players are *produced* who are

capable of effectively and obediently performing their roles. My research has identified multiple negative consequences that occur in retirement as a result of this 'truth'.

It is not considered part of a coach's remit to re-conceptualise how he produces a player. His job is to produce players who function as successful, winning bodies. The result is that a working footballer is controlled and developed in a certain way by his club. Furthermore, he surrenders to the disciplinary power imposed upon him because he is scared of losing his job and with it, his identity as a footballer (Roderick, 2006). This status quo is maintained by the historical residue of relations of power in football due to football's role as a 'modern discipline' and producer of efficient and obedient neo-liberal citizens. However, Marshall, (1996), using Foucault noted that the neo-liberal agenda of producing morally autonomous individuals was destined to fail. It is therefore essential that this agenda be revealed and critiqued at any social point, including in the elite sport of football (see chapter seven).

Foucault's (1991) analysis provides a resource to enact change in the space of British working football, specifically through the disruption of truths found there. Firstly, his tools have enabled me to excavate the nature and the heritage of disciplinary techniques found in football. Secondly, as I will go on to explain, they can be used in an applied manner to reveal how existing techniques might be changed or altered to instigate a more ethical football culture. This action can help to disrupt the 'modernist knowledge foundations' (Markula & Pringle, 2006) of football.

I promote that this can be addressed by a re-conceptualisation of the way in which football players are developed/produced at all stages of their careers. I also suggest that alternative truths about player development need to be promoted. This disruption of dominant knowledge is what Foucault would advocate in order to re-work the relations of power found in football. Accordingly, football clubs should perhaps aim to develop players in a way that ignores the mechanistic ideals of *production* and instead concentrates upon increasing player utility and performance while reducing the docility, apathy and uncertainty players and retirees experience. This is not an emancipatory exercise designed to 'free' players from the tyrannical or hegemonic football state. Instead it is a recognition that because of the relational nature of power, football environments are open to change, and if certain practices are reconsidered, it is possible to develop players in a more ethical, less mechanistic fashion (with alternative results). As Markula and Pringle (2006) noted:

> Foucault was concerned about the ethical use of knowledge which in a rudimentary summary, related to promoting knowledge in a critically reflexive manner with a caring respect for oneself and the rights of others. More generally he hoped that this knowledge could be used to *problematise issues (italics added),* rather than simply developed into a formalised set of interdictions. (p. 196)

Following Foucault's ethos described in this quote, I have problematised the dangers for footballers who rely upon their career acquired docility to adapt and expand their identities in retirement. I have also spent considerable effort to warn

against a blind acceptance of this process of expansion and have gone some way to reveal the dangers of this enterprise.

One might ask, what suggestions do I propose as an alternative to this dominant and regularly prescribed retirement negotiation process? Similarly, one might ask; how can a Foucauldian reading of football be used to liberate these docile bodies? I suggest that this is not the kind of question that needs to be asked to address this issue. Foucault (1989) was very critical of instructing others on how they should act, including how they should resist an oppressive circumstance. He was also deeply against the promotion of "universal truths" or the prescription of "formulated blueprints for social change" (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 199). Correspondingly, as a Foucauldian researcher, I do not have the right to tell players in retirement how to negotiate their lives. I cannot emancipate them or equip them for the journey. What I can do however, is suggest the disruption of dominant truths that govern footballers' lives and in turn, offer them opportunities to create new subjectivities (Wright, 2004) that they may or may not choose to adopt.

This is *not* the same as prescribing a strategy for the diversification or expansion of a humanist self to prepare footballers for retirement. Although adopting a humanist mentality to strive for healthier retirees is obviously not an inherently bad project, it serves to re-emphasise the athlete as the location where work needs to occur. What I do promote is a disruption of the 'truth' surrounding the template of a working football player, and in order to comply with my Foucauldian ethos, I do so by 'evoking marginalised knowledge'. Foucault

(1980, p. 82) referred to marginalised knowledge in many ways including 'disqualified' and 'low ranking', but essentially he noted that promoting alternative knowledge "helps to circulate a greater range of discursive resources that allows individuals opportunities to understand themselves differently and potentially 'liberate' themselves from scientific and judicial knowledge" (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 201).

Foucauldian thought demands that to develop more equitable truth games in football one must promote alternative ways of knowing about what it means to be a footballer. To achieve this, one could aim to restore "ways of knowing that had once proven useful and could still be potentially employed" (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 201). Promoting marginalised understandings of what being a footballer means that the prevention of unnecessary disciplinary practices may be possible. This disruption may enable the production of less docile players, and as a result, significantly more manageable experiences when a football career ends.

A reassessment of player development is required if the negative aspects of retirement are to be addressed. The production of players must be reconsidered and it is the physical and relational environment of football that needs to come under greater scrutiny and should be the foci when searching for areas to enact change. I have repeatedly insisted upon focusing on how the environment of football produces retirement experiences; however this is strangely still quite a radical promotion. This is because there is, in 21st century global sport, an "increasing demand for elite athletes to enact a prudent orientation towards their career" (Hickey & Kelly, 2008, p. 492). Sadly, contemporary thought suggests

that players themselves are the ones who need to be responsible for their career

and retirement experiences (Denison, 2007). I disagree that retirement trauma can

be simply solved by equipping a docile retiree with the tools, 'coping

mechanisms' or 'narrative resources', to survive or re-invent themselves (as

chapter seven forewarns). In order to assist athletes in this increasingly hazardous

negotiation of their post-career lives, what must be considered is how a career is

framed by the disciplinary sporting environment within which it took place.

Doing so can pro-actively prevent negative retirement issues from recurring. I

believe that through an examination of the problematic truths in British football I

have begun to explore the processes of a footballer's career that influence his

retirement. By doing this I believe that I have, "opened new ways for thinking

about change" (Bolla, 1986, p. 52) for this population of retiring athletes.

8.2.3 Further thoughts.

I believe I have proposed a methodology that has enabled a panoramic

picture of football retirement. This is a picture that can be utilised in many ways,

but I suggest that it should predominantly be used to highlight how the workings

of power found in football need be considered when deciphering any human

aspect of the sport, including retirement. This research was not designed to

develop a skill set for retiring players to keep them 'on the right path', or to 'steer

them to safety'. Rather, this research has revealed that retirement from football is

indeed part of a complicated journey (Oriad, 1982), but that surviving the journey

is not simply about preparing the journeyman. An awareness of the make-up and

changeable nature of football and post-football contexts is an essential guide to

ensure a smooth negotiation of this journey. Players' futures in retirement are rarely completely mappable. But, finding a means to explain that the relations of power that influence their retirement experiences are fluid and can oscillate may prevent them from anchoring themselves to a new, yet similarly docile, identity (as so many have confessed). This may prevent them from suffering many of the challenges so commonly reported here.

Even more crucially, this research has highlighted that too many athletes attempt to negotiate their retirement in isolation, embarking upon the lonely process of working towards a new docility. The pitfalls of this isolating project can be avoided if more emphasis is placed upon gaining comprehensive knowledge of the social environments from which athletes have come from, and those into which they travel. Unreasonable expectations should not be placed upon an athlete to singularly navigate the tricky transition of retirement. Those motivated to help retiring athletes should assist them by educating them: explaining to them the likelihood that the people and places they will be exposed to in retirement will constantly change. Retired players also need to know that it will be necessary to understand these changes so that they can make informed decisions about how to react to new, unfamiliar circumstances.

Above all, my research has attempted to shed light upon the previously unknown retirement experiences of retired professionals from the working realm of British football. In doing so however, no model has been produced in order to 'conquer' this problem. Instead, I have suggested the application of Foucault's disciplinary analysis in order to problematise the taken-for-granted truths that

influence retirement from football. I have shown that a Foucauldian analysis does not aim to provide a universal solution to this troubling aspect of sport, however, it can be used to help re-consider how players might be produced.

Moorhouse (1998) demanded that football scholars need to think differently if they desire to understand the impact of football as it changes to match societal tides. Although academic knowledge has helped professional football to create and produce physiologically, psychologically and biomechanically expert players, social theory has yet to be applied to this realm with any success. This is because, in general, football researchers have yet to fully recognise the benefits of moving beyond the rigid disciplines of hard science. However, by thinking differently and adopting a post-structural research approach, my study has attempted to illustrate how the adoption of Foucault's (1991) disciplinary analysis can safeguard British footballers as transit away from the game.

8.3 Future Directions – Towards a Foucauldian Analysis of Docile Coaching

This research has shown that how a football player understands himself during and after his career is inextricably linked to the disciplinary space he inhabits. As Scott (1991) suggested, the relations of power that stimulate, regulate and prescribe experience are what need to be unpacked in order understand retirement. Therefore, the recollections of these players do not present a universal truth about retirement from football; however, by applying a post-structural analysis to their responses, I have highlighted the productive and restrictive impact of football as a cultural space. This includes a revelation of

how particular practices and expectations present in working football have significantly influenced their lives as post-players.

Using a post-structural approach has also revealed that those who occupy and compose a disciplinary space are compliant in the production of a docile footballer's body and his identity. They are players in the truth games that govern football. This includes spectators, directors and physiotherapists, but importantly, it includes the managers and coaches who are so invested in the control of the football space (Roderick, 2013). Truth games based upon the dominance of certain relations of power govern how these coaches and managers interact, discipline and punish these players. In turn, these decisions lead to the sustenance of the crucial context within which a player's subjection occurs.

To comply with Moorhouses' (1998) call to think differently about football, I suggest that future research looks at further understanding the process of player subjection. Perhaps focusing upon the role of the coach in the sustenance of the football environment that impacts player subjection? How does a football coach use discipline in his practice? What is the intended performance outcome of this practice? What can a post-structural reading of this coaching pedagogy reveal about potentially dangerous side-effects? I advocate through this study that rather than providing another rubric to 'fix' depressed, struggling or confused retired footballers, more research needs to take place to map out how dominant coaching practices have disciplinary consequences in all stages of working football. This study has shown that retirement is one area where players are clearly affected, but there will be many more moments in a football career that

are complicated by unnecessary docility. As a result, more investigations are required.

My research has not specifically focused upon coaches. However, I believe that my results have highlighted that alternative strategies need to be introduced into football coaching in the UK. Not only does the working football environment produce docile players, but it also produces docile coaches who, through their unquestioned practices, reproduce the existing norms of this space (crucially, these coaches are responsible for the development of players at all stages of their careers). These are norms that I have identified as being connected to players' retirement experiences. It makes sense therefore to appraise coaching approaches and practices in British working football to identify sites for change, or to begin what Foucault (1991) called a 'pedagogical experiment', as I suggested earlier.

When British working footballers are evicted from their job they are faced with difficult decisions and bombarded with new ideas about what to do next and how to do it. I propose the education of coaches so that they can fully appreciate the significance of the practices, relationships and the techniques of discipline expose players to. This educational agenda should produce less docile coaches (Denison & Avner, 2011) who are prepared to question their own practices and approaches. This includes recognising how current player development is fundamentally focused upon the production of docile players. Greater exposure to less docile coaches could lead to the production of football players capable of negotiating the transition into retirement and beyond with less difficulty than is

currently reported. These are players who may well be able to "better engage with complex phenomenon and 'real-life' conditions that require them to engage with higher states of adaptability and responsiveness" (Chow & Atencio, 2012, p. 2). This shift in coaching awareness has the potential to re-conceptualise player development, shifting the focus away from the problematic production of compliant, obedient docile players. Roderick (2006) has identified that uncertainty is the main cause of strife in the life of a footballer. Consequently, any developmental ethos aimed at reducing the uncertainty imposed by a compliant, docile lifestyle, should be considered a progressive step.

In order to avoid the negative outcomes of sports retirement, I, like Denison and Avner (2011), advocate that an informed dialogue between coach educators and those who work within the hierarchies of working British football clubs must begin. This is because it is these men and women who compose, direct and enforce the techniques of discipline that are utilised to develop players within this highly competitive space. It is essential that they are made aware of the long-term impact that the techniques of discipline they repeatedly prescribe have, upon retired players. There is a need to "understand the impact of coaching practice" (Cushion & Jones, 2012, p. 2), if we really want to understand retirement issues. Showing the coach how to reconsider the effects of his coaching practices to develop new, better informed ideas, should have the effect of reducing the negative impacts of docility. This process will not only influence the player during his career but, over the long-term, as he journeys through the various challenging transitions of elite sport, including retirement.

Less docile coaches operating within British working football will mean that a football player's career experiences will be injected with practices inspired by reflective thought. This will be instead of reliance upon stagnant historical practices that simply serve to examine and coerce. Dangerous coaching practices that aggressively normalise and judge players' actions and behaviours (much like those observed in the British football environment, Cushion & Jones 2006, 2012; Roderick, 2006), must be challenged if the unquestioned production of docile, restricted bodies who struggle with the tricky negotiation of retirement is to be arrested.

Changing unnecessary disciplinary practices is a micro initiative that is an effective way to begin macro changes to the working football space. It follows therefore, that for any negative retirement experiences to be remedied, what is required is a pro-active engagement with the existing techniques of discipline found in football. Below I explore how using Foucault can help with this ambition.

8.3.1 The manipulation of time, space and activity.

Gearity and Mills (2013, p. 9) have used Foucault to "critique disciplinary coaching practices". These authors illustrated how a coach can problematise his practices by noting that power is distributed through the arts of distributions, control of activity, the organisation of genesis and the composition of forces in a coaching context. I suggest that not only does a coach need to problematise these practices; he must manipulate them. A coach can do so by considering Foucault (1991) in order to reduce the level of docility a practice produces, changing the

way power operates in a coaching location. Re-conceptualised practices in football, influenced by a desire to avoid docility, could serve to change the way in which power is imposed upon a football player's body. Consequently over a career, experiences could be different to what they currently are, and hopefully, in retirement, experiences may also change and include less unnecessary challenges.

Power is distributed in a repetitive predictable manner in football. Coaches implement drills and sessions in a way that categorically aims to isolate and promote specific skills and behaviours and to maximise time and stimulate obedience. Could a coach not approach his drills and everyday training practices differently, altering the distribution of power? Instead of having a specific length of time for a specific drill or practice, why not end the practice without the governance of a specific time? Instead of constantly separating first team players from reserve team players and youth team players, why not integrate players on a more regular basis? Instead of enforcing the repetition of a closed skill in a highly artificially designed enclosure, why not allow the same skill to be practiced in a wider area? Instead of relying on running as a team for fitness purposes, why not allow alternative perhaps individual methods to maintain or develop cardiovascular fitness? Does every age group at a club have to meet certain expectations or practice in the predetermined manner? Can age groups be abandoned and less stringent practices interwoven throughout the football club?

The introduction of such practices would serve to stimulate a less disciplinary coaching environment for working footballers on a day to day basis. Over time the effect of this would be a less disciplinary lifestyle, consequently

reducing the difficulties associated with docility that I have identified players experiencing during retirement.

8.3.2 Hierarchical observation, normalisation, examination and surveillance.

Foucault (1991) made it clear that exact observation, normalising judgement, examination and efficient surveillance are crucial in the implementation of disciplinary power. Chapter three has considered the integral role that these elements play in contemporary coaching practices in working British football. Coaches observe, examine and survey through the disciplinary techniques they employ. This coaching surveillance needs to be reconsidered to initiate change in football player development and consequently, retirement experience.

Players at professional clubs are subject to regular and rigorous fitness testing and monitored ceaselessly by the sport science staff. Is it necessary to observe players so regularly and so aggressively? Can fitness levels not be maintained in a more creative way, without the robotic use of heart rate monitors, VO_2 max tests and fitness tests, such as the beep test and 12 minute run? Instead of training players through fear of failure to meet fitness standards, why not replicate the level of exercise expected but reduce the strictness of observation and incessant examination? Altering the existing methods that are used to identify talent could also be beneficial. Current talent identification trial processes are the epitome of hierarchical observation, as coaching staff congregate in a specific area, segregate trialists, designate them a function and

observe them within a confined enclosure, concluding with an their assessment of a player's abilities.

These examples indicate that player development is controlled exclusively through hierarchical observation, normalised expectations and to an almost obsessive degree, examination. This is not surprising given the role Foucault attributed to examination. For him it was "the centre of procedures that constitute the individual as effect and object of power, as effect and object of knowledge. It is the examination by which combining hierarchical surveillance and normalising judgement assures the great disciplinary functions" (p. 192). Why not reconsider these methods and re-think how to assess players without the incessant need for obvious examination?

Alternative practices categorised by a reduction in Foucault's key elements of discipline and specifically examination (given its rampant omnipotence in football development) may seem foreign or out of place to the experienced coach. However, over time, this change in coaching philosophy could have the effect of gradually reducing the overtly disciplinary practices that are harmful to the football environment and those who work within it. As a result coaches may also gradually begin to cultivate an environment that is intentionally designed with an awareness of how it will produce players. This is desperately needed as football is an overly aggressive (Cushion & Jones, 2006) and anti-intellectual working space (Carter, 2006; Kuper & Symanski, 2009). The football environment should encourage player development without resorting to existing authoritarian, mechanistic techniques of discipline. It should be an environment

where coaches apply innovative coaching practices and are cognisant of the consequences these practices will induce. Importantly, this will begin to eliminate the restrictive consequences that occur from coaches who depend upon unthinking traditional methods. This movement should encourage continual growth in football coaching pedagogy, disrupting the problematic football truths responsible for the cyclical production of docile players and dangerous retirement outcomes.

9.0 References

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10.0 Appendices

10.1 Appendix A: Foucauldian Interview Guide

1.0 Career Development

1.1 General

1) Could you describe the reasons why you became involved in football? What influenced your involvement?

2) Did you have an awareness of what being a footballer meant? How was this informed? Do you think this contributed to you arriving in the realm of elite football?

3) Can you ever remember being aware of any negative aspects of being an elite player before you became an elite player?

4) What do you think the general impression of professional footballers is in contemporary society? Do you think that there is a varying view for those who operate at a professional level that is not the very top? Why do you think this is?

5) What are your views of professional footballers now after your career has ended?

6) How do you think you managed the expectations of being a footballer growing up in youth programs and also as an adult first team player?

1.2 Specific

1) What are your earliest memories of actually training for football rather than playing? What sort of exercises did you do? In what environment? What kind of people and expectations were there?

2) How did you feel about the constant monitoring and fitness testing during a career, especially in pre-season?

3) Could you talk about how these expectations, exercises, activities, and relationships changed as your career progressed? (long answer.....develop this conversation). What parts of this process have stuck with you?

4) What was it like being a player that was part of a professional football club/programme on a day to day basis? How did it affect you being involved in the running of the club? Can you remember a typical training day and how you felt during the various elements of that day? Relatively the same or dependant on other factors? (Relationships/injuries/position in the team/experience in the squad?)

5) Can you describe the process of moving from being a youth team player into the first team? How did your day to day experience change? Expectations of yourself/from others?

6) What was the environment like? What were some of the positive elements of this professional lifestyle and what were some of the negative elements? How about in your downtime, away from the

workplace of the football club? In what ways do you think you being a footballer influenced your life while you were still playing?

7) When did you break into the first team? Were you ready for this step up? Do you think it came too early, or too late? Does this impact how you reflect upon your retirement?

8) Attitude is a word that is used extensively in football circles. On reflection how would you describe your attitude towards football when you were playing? Did you ever question this expectation of attitude?

9) How did you view your body while you were a professional football player? What was the effect of being a football player upon your body? How did this change as you went into retirement?

2.0 Retirement

1) Can you describe the experiences you had as you entered retirement? If you reflect upon those experiences now have your attitudes towards them changed?

2) Now that you have retired can you describe how being within the professional football environment for such an extended period of time impacted upon this process? Why do you think this is? Has this made things more challenging or easier? In what ways?

3) What was your immediate experience of retirement? How did this impact your life?

4) Looking back as a fully retired player what do you consider the important elements from your career when you reflect upon it?

5) Have you contemplated your career a lot since? Why do you think this is? What impact does this recollection have upon you in your post-player state? What elements of your career do you think about the most? Why do you think this is?

6) How would you describe your experiences of retirement now? Why do you think you view your retirement in this way? Has this changed from when you first left the game?

7) Has your relationship with the sport of football changed since your retirement? In what way? Why do you think this is?

8) Has having to develop the required attitude towards training and playing impacted upon how you have negotiated retirement? How has this influenced your post-playing life?